Concordat on Open Research Data

- This paper invites RKEC to advise SFC on it becoming a signatory to the ‘Concordat on open research data’.

Recommendations

- To note the Concordat on Open Research Data;
- To advise SFC on it becoming a signatory to the concordat.

Financial implications

- There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.
Concordat on Open Research data

Purpose

1. This paper invites RKEC to advise SFC on it becoming a signatory to the ‘Concordat on Open Research Data’.

Background

2. The Concordat on Open Research Data (the Concordat) was launched on 28 July 2016 by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), Research Councils UK (RCUK), Wellcome Trust, and Universities UK.

3. The Concordat is described as a set of expectations of best practice reflecting the needs of the academic research community. It is intended to help ensure that research data gathered and generated by members of the UK research community is made openly available for use by others wherever possible; in a manner consistent with relevant legal, ethical, disciplinary and regulatory frameworks and norms; and with due regard to the costs involved\(^\text{1}\).

4. The ten principles are:
   - Open access to research data is an enabler of high quality research, a facilitator of innovation and safeguards good research practice.
   - There are sound reasons why the openness of research data may need to be restricted but any restrictions must be justified and justifiable.
   - Open access to research data carries a significant cost, which should be respected by all parties.
   - The right of the creators of research data to reasonable first use is recognised.
   - Use of others’ data should always conform to legal, ethical and regulatory frameworks including appropriate acknowledgement.
   - Good data management is fundamental to all stages of the research process and should be established at the outset.
   - Data curation is vital to make data useful for others and for long-term preservation of data

\(^{1}\) www.hefce.ac.uk/news/newsarchive/2016/Name.109264.en.html
• Data supporting publications should be accessible by the publication date and should be in a citeable form.

• Support for the development of appropriate data skills is recognised as a responsibility for all stakeholders.

• Regular reviews of progress towards open research data should be undertaken.

5. The Concordat is available in full from RCUK’s website\(^2\).

SFC as signatory to the Concordat

6. According to HEFCE’s website the concordat is open for other organisations and groups to sign up to over time.

7. RKEC is invited to discuss the principles of the concordat and to advise SFC, in its capacity as a national strategic body, regarding it being a potential signatory.

8. It is argued that SFC signing the concordat would only add value or have weight if we were prepared to include reference to the concordat in university outcome agreements – for example, as we did with the ‘concordat to support on researcher integrity’ – thereby signalling to the sector the Scottish Governments expectations of it in this area.

9. We do not know how many, or if any Scottish HEIs, have signed up to the concordat. We have not consulted with the sector directly on this issue. We are aware that Universities Scotland has raised awareness of the concordat with its members.

10. Neither the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW) nor the Department for the Economy Northern Ireland (DfENI) has signed the concordat but we are aware that they are also considering the implications of doing so.

Risk assessment

11. There is a low to medium risk associated with this paper. It is recommended that a full analysis of the additional burden and resources required to comply with the concordat would need to be conducted prior to any final decisions.

Equality and diversity assessment

12. An equality and diversity assessment has not been conducted at this stage. Views from RKEC on any potential issues would be welcomed.

Financial implications

13. There are no direct financial implications associated with this paper.

Recommendations

14. RKEC is invited to:
   • To note the Concordat on Open Research Data;
   • To advise SFC regarding it being a signatory to the concordat.

Publication

15. This paper will be published on SFC’s website.

Further information

16. Contact: Keith McDonald, tel: 0131 313 6674, email: kmcdonald@sfc.ac.uk.