REPORT

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Annual Research Integrity Statement 2020-2021

1. General context

1.1. Oxford Brookes University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, ensuring that our research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, as set out in the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity. This concordat provides a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance, underpinned by best practice and support for the development of researchers. It also sets out expectations that Universities will have transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

1.2. The University already has policies covering academic integrity and how to deal with reports of misconduct which can be found, along with other support policy documents at: https://intranet.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/policies-procedures-and-codes-of-practice/ Policies relating to research involving human participants, including security-sensitive research: https://intranet.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/research-ethics/

Codes of conduct for staff:

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/human-resources/working-here/employment-policies/code-of-conduct-for-staff/;

Student Conduct Regulations and Procedure:

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/regulations/current/appeals-complaints-and-conduct/c1-2/.

The Annual Research Integrity Statement is reported to the Board of Governors each year, and the University also publishes it on its dedicated Integrity webpage.

1.3. This Research Integrity Statement covers the academic year 2020-2021 and summarises the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlines actions and activities undertaken in support of fostering a culture of research integrity, and provides a high-level summary of investigations (if any) of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

1.4. The Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships, is responsible for institutional oversight on matters relating to research integrity. She reports to the University's Board of Governors on an annual basis on any reports of misconduct (last report made in July 2020). She works closely with staff across the University ensuring that appropriate standards of academic integrity are maintained.

1.5.   The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships (or her nominee) presents at the university research induction programme for new research-active staff, part of the 'Your first three years' programme, run twice a year, which covers how researchers are supported and includes a section on academic integrity.

1.6.   In addition to processes relating to staff, research students are introduced to the University's academic integrity policies and procedures during their mandatory induction - which is run three times a year - and receive instruction about the University's stance on attribution and plagiarism in academic writing. As part of the Research Degrees Committee's Annual Progress Monitoring process, research students' work is reviewed to ensure they are working within the scope of the University's regulations and policies covering academic integrity. All students are required to submit a chapter of their thesis or piece of academic writing through Turnitin during the annual monitoring process. A training session on data management, storage, archiving and sharing is run annually and is open to all research students. In addition, as part of the formal Registration process, all research students are required to provide details of how their data will be stored and managed during the course of the programme, and how it will be archived on completion of the degree.

1.7.   The University has a well-established research ethics process (see also more details below), which adheres to the principles of the UKRI and ESRC ethics in research guidelines. As part of this process, all staff and research students are offered research ethics training and support both at faculty and university level. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) membership is made up of a Chair, appointed by the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC); the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer; Research Ethics Officers with expertise from each of the faculties; a Research Ethics Officer to oversee applications from the Directorates, an internal expert on data protection and information compliance; a PhD student representative and external lay members from the local community with no links to the University.

2.   Named contact for Academic Integrity issues

2.1.   The named contact for any initial issues concerning research integrity is Sarah Taylor, Research Support Director, who liaises with the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships on the appropriate way to respond to the concern, invoking the agreed procedures where necessary.

3.   Updates this year

3.1.   The University has continued with the measures it put in place to respond to the COVID-19 situation. Researchers had been told to cease all face-to-face interviews, unless their work was specifically related to COVID-19 and where interviews could be done remotely, they could proceed, but studies had to be placed on pause if they could not. Researchers contacted participants of trials to explain to them any changes or pauses and the reason for so doing. Over the course of the year this changed so that those researchers who needed to conduct face-to-face or in-person

research must complete a Covid risk assessment form, discuss the project with their research line manager, comply with any local Covid related policies, and on occasion get approval from the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships to conduct the research. This updated policy process applies to research on-site, offs-site and overseas.

3.2.   The Research Integrity webpage is being maintained, so that staff and research students can access the Academic Integrity policy and these statements:

https://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/research-integrity-statement/

The existing webpage, 'Research Integrity Resources', which pulls together a range of internal and external policies, codes of practice, guidelines and other information on issues such as data management, finance, referencing and plagiarism has been updated at various times during the last year to include guidance for research communities during the Covid-19 pandemic (UKRIO) and to add additional external links on Open Access (Wellcome Trust), reproducibility of research (UKRN) and good practice in authorship (UKRIO), as well as Vitae's Landscape Study into Research Integrity:

https://intranet.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/policies-procedures-and-codes-of-practice/research-integrity-resources/

Faculty Research Managers were asked to include a link to the Research Integrity Resources web page in their Faculty Research Induction documentation for new research-active staff and to add it to Faculty Google sites/intranets for established researchers.

3.3.   A Review of Research Support is being undertaken between May-August 2021, led by a senior academic in the University. They will then take on the Chair of UREC (this role is a fixed-term position and a new Chair is appointed every 3-4 years) and will also review the UREC processes over the academic year 2021-2022, making a final report to the University's RKEC .

3.4.   The University subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer attended the virtual annual UKRIO conference on 16 October 2020 and again on 19-20 May 2021.

3.5.   IT Services continue to provide their mandatory online training in data security and data protection for all staff, which includes sections on research data. The University achieved the globally recognised information security certificate ISO/IEC 27001 in June 2019.

3.6.   In our 2019-2020 statement we reported that the University had agreed to licence a series of online modules on research integrity, some of which were being updated by the supplier to reflect new legislation. However, as the UKRIO is committed to providing similar provision for the sector, we have decided to wait for that provision instead and will roll that out as mandatory training for all

research-active academics, research-only staff and research students. We are still waiting for the provision of this training from UKRIO.

3.7. The University has established the Open Research, Integrity and Governance Improvement Nexus (ORIGIN). This is chaired by a senior academic with responsibility for Research Integrity and Improvement and who has a seat on the University's RKEC. He is also the University's representative to the UK Reproducibility Network. ORIGIN is looking at ways to foster good research conduct through open research practices and strong research integrity, and to encourage openness and consistency in research governance across the institution. It meets twice a semester and its members are taken from existing support mechanisms (IT, Library, Research Support Office, UREC) as well as others interested in developments in these areas. ORIGIN has also taken on the responsibility for progressing work on Responsible Metrics. The University had set up a Task and Finish Group to ensure the University was in a position to sign up to DORA, which was completed in June 2020

3.8. The University had committed to resource a new post to support Research Data Management but this had to be put on hold as resources were needed to support other aspects of research in response to the pandemic. It is intended that funding for this post will be available from November 2021. The Research Data Manager will sit in the Research and Business Development Office working closely with the Library, IT Services, UREC and the ORIGIN group to support academic staff in their research data management and training needs.

3.9. The University continues to licence Studyline, a project and portfolio management software developed specifically for the management of clinical studies. The licence enables the maintenance of studies, as well as overall oversight, for all partners involved in those studies.

4. Events

4.1. The University's mandatory training programme for research-active academics and research-only staff, 'Your First Three Years', was redeveloped in time for the start of the academic year 2020/21 and became part of a broader umbrella accredited training programme, 'EXPLORE@Brookes' (EXcellence in Promoting Leadership Of Research and Education). Newly developed University Research & KE integrity-based training sessions now cover a wider spectrum and the number of mandatory sessions has doubled during 20/21, from three to six:
   - 1) 'University Research Induction' - Covers internal and external integrity policies, concordats, ethics and misconduct.
   - 2) 'Applying for External Research Grants' - Includes information on costing the project budget and support.
   - 3) 'Managing an External Research Grant' - Focuses on the responsibilities of the Principal Investigator in managing the project and managing staff. It covers where to find post-award

support, including open access and publishing, research ethics and data management, and detailed information on financial management of the project budget, auditing and reporting.

- 4) 'Navigating the Research Ethics Approval Process' (new for 20/21) - This session is mandatory for new starters whose research involves human participants, human material or personal data and is open as a refresher to all research-active staff. Covers procedures for obtaining research ethics approval from the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) and who can help at Faculty and University levels.
- 5) 'Open Research and Research Integrity' (new for 20/21) - Covers open and transparent research, responsible metrics and research integrity.
- 6) 'Data Management' (new for 20/21) - Covers data protection, data sharing and open access publishing and IT resources for research data management.

5.   Misconduct report

5.1.   There were no on-going investigations from previous years.

5.2.   One investigation took place within the year, which related to a PhD student. Following an initial investigation by the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships, it was established that the potential misconduct incident was related to the student's employment rather than their status as a research student at Oxford Brookes. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships therefore contacted the employer, who agreed it was their responsibility to investigate further and take action if required. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships asked two senior academics from different faculties to meet with the student to establish whether any lessons could be learned to improve training for research students. As a result of this, it was concluded that the student had attended all relevant training sessions, understood the issues that had arisen and had been well supported by their supervisors during this period. The investigators recommended that research student training programmes consider whether any additional emphasis is needed on good practice to comply with research integrity. This will be considered by those delivering research student training in the next academic year.

Professor Linda King
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Global Partnerships
06-05-2021

Approved Board of Governors meeting 8 July 2021