REPORT

OXFORD
BROKES
UNIVERSITY

Annual Research Integrity Statement 2024-25

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 on the Research Support Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice webpages. In addition, further information on research integrity can be found on the University's dedicated website or by contacting Dr Robyn Curtis, Research Culture & Practice Manager at rcurtis@brookes.ac.uk

1.3. Policies related to research involving human participants, including security-sensitive research, are located on the Research Ethics Policies and Procedures webpages.

1.4. Codes of conduct for staff are located on the Employment Policies and Guidance webpages. Student Conduct regulations and Procedure are found on the Regulations for Study webpages. The Annual Research Integrity Statement is reported to the Board of Governors each year, and the University also publishes it on its dedicated Research Integrity & Ethics webpage.

1.5. This Research Integrity Statement covers the academic year 2024-2025 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.

1.6. The Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation, is responsible for institutional oversight on matters relating to research integrity. He reports to the University's Board of Governors on an annual basis on any reports of misconduct (last report made in July 2024). He works closely with staff across the University ensuring that appropriate standards of academic integrity are maintained.

1.7. 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.

1.8. 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) acts as the parent committee to two Research Ethics Sub-Committees. It strategically reviews and updates University research ethics guidance, policies and procedures in the light of external best practice and of funders, professional, and statutory body requirements.

The Cross-Faculty Research Ethics Sub-Committee (CRES) and the Health & Social Care Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSCRES) each meet twelve times a year. They are responsible for the review of research studies by staff and postgraduate research students involving human participants, or the collection of human data or material, across all Faculties and Directorates. The membership is comprised of a Chair, appointed by the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC); the University Research Ethics 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 Research Integrity issues

2.1. The named contact for any initial issues concerning research integrity is Nigel Crook, Chair of the Research Integrity and Governance Steering Group, who liaises with the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Innovation on the appropriate way to respond to the concern, invoking the agreed procedures where necessary.

3. Updates this year

3.1. The University, as part of its ongoing commitment to Research Integrity, continues to review policy and procedure in line with changing statutory requirements.

3.2. A Research Integrity webpage is updated regularly, with new resources being added as they become available. It ensures that those at Oxford Brookes and the public can easily access the University's integrity statements, policies and procedures.

3.3. The Research Support & Governance Team continues to review and refine the Due Diligence process aiming to ensure a seamless transition from pre-award through to post-award. In the next academic year, it aims to published further guidance on Trusted Research and National Security Risks, in line with information received from the Government's Research Collaboration Advice Team (RCAT)

3.4. A review of the re-structured Research Ethics Committees, process and culture was undertaken during the academic year.

3.5. The University subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and the Higher Education Export Control Association. The Research Culture and Practice Manager will attend the UKRIO Annual Subscriber Day on 23rd May 2024.

3.6. 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, which was renewed in March 2024.

3.7. The Research Integrity and Governance Steering Group (RI&G) met twice a semester. It developed an Advisory Policy on Open Research, which was approved by RKEC and has been added to the Open Research webpage. To support this, a working group has been tasked with developing an Open Research Action Plan. In addition, it will review the new AI Policy and undertake a survey of research staff understandings of issues and practice around research integrity in the next academic year.

3.8. 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 training programme for research-active academics and research-only staff sits under the umbrella accredited training programme, 'EXPLORE@Brookes' (EXcellence in Promoting Leadership of Research and Education). The following six mandatory University Research & KE training sessions have a focus on integrity and run annually:

4.1.1. 'University Research Induction' – Covers internal and external integrity policies, concordats, ethic, IP and misconduct.

4.1.2. 'Applying for External Research Grants' – Includes information on costing the project budget, support available and applying a gender dimension to research, from planning the project design through to dissemination of results.

4.1.3. '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, data management, contracts and information on financial management of the project budget, auditing and reporting.

4.1.4. 'Navigating the Research Ethics Approval Process' – 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 Sub-Committees and who can help at Faculty and University levels.

4.1.5. 'Research Integrity' – Covers different aspects of research integrity and how they are incorporated into ways of working at Oxford Brookes. Training provides an overview of the University's Code of Practice for Academic Integrity, including principles of good research practice and procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct, along with the University's commitment to the external Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Concordat on Open Research Data, and DORA. This year a segment on Due Diligence and Trusted Research has been included.

4.1.6. 'Research Data Management' – Covers data protection, data sharing and open access publishing, IT resources and data management planning. This year an update was added on Data Transfer.

4.1.7. In addition to the 6 mandatory sessions, the University Research & KE training programme includes a number of optional training events, which also run annually, on, for example, IP, Open Research, EDI best practice and a new session for this year on AI in Research.

4.2. The Graduate College training delivered in the 24/25 academic year included the following sessions for research students and supervisors:

4.2.1. Copyright for research students: RADAR and submitting the electronic version of your thesis (students)

4.2.2. Supporting your research students to manage their research records and make a data management plan (supervisors); Publishing your research data, with particular focus on Oxford Brookes' institutional repository RADAR (students)

4.2.3. Training to Enable Supervisors and Research Students to Develop Applications for Ethical Approval (students and supervisors)

4.2.4. Managing your research records and your data management plan (students)

4.2.5. Research integrity at Brookes - a brief guide to general principles (students)

5. **Misconduct report**

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

5.2. At the time of writing, there were no new investigations initiated in 2024-25.

Professor Joe Tah
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Innovation

Approved by the University Research Integrity & Governance Steering Group on 30th April 2025
Approved by the University Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee on: 13th May 2025