Annual Research Integrity Statement 2016-17

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:
(http://www.brookes.ac.uk/research/policies-and-codes-of-practice/);
policies relating to research involving human participants
(www.brookes.ac.uk/documents/research/policies-and-codes-of-practice/ethics_codeofpractice/);
and a policy for research data management
(https://www2.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/managing_data/documents/dmpolicy.pdf).
The Concordat expects that an Annual Research Integrity Statement is made to the Board of Governors each year, but in compliance with a recent update, the University is also publishing this statement on its dedicated Integrity webpage (see 3.2).

1.3.   This Research Integrity Statement covers the academic year 2016-17 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. She works closely with staff across the University ensuring that appropriate standards of academic integrity are maintained. She (or her nominee) attends the induction programme for new research-active staff, part of the 'Your first three years' programme which is run every year and gives a presentation about the University, which covers how researchers are supported and includes a section on academic integrity.

1.5.   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.

1.6.   The University has a well-established research ethics process (see also more details below), which adheres to the principles of the RCUK 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); an experienced Administrator; Research Ethics Officers with expertise from each of the faculties; an internal expert on the Data Protection Act 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 academic integrity is Sarah Taylor, Research Support Director, who will liaise 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's Code of Practice for Academic Integrity, including procedures for investigating allegations of misconduct in research has been updated (April 2017) to reflect recent changes to practice, as recommended by RCUK.

3.2.   A new Academic Integrity webpage has been set up, so that staff can access the Academic Integrity policy, this statement and other appropriate resources: www.brookes.ac.uk/research/policies-and-codes-of-practice/research-integrity/

3.3.   The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) has updated the Code of Practice for the Ethical Standards for Research involving Human Participants. UREC continues to review research studies involving human participants for staff and PhD students. Undergraduate and Masters level research are devolved to each of the four Faculties for review.

3.4.   The University's Research Data Management Policy has been reviewed and updated to ensure that it is up-to-date with messages reflected in the Concordat on Open Research data, developed by a UK multi-stakeholder group and RCUK's Common Principles on Data Policy.

3.5.   IT Services have developed a decision tree which guides academic staff through the process of managing research data – from creation to archiving, which describes and identifies what options the University offers for storage and archiving. They have also developed processes for the proper review of new research project webpages, so that the implications of hosting and archiving data long-term are understood. A customised data management plan is also being developed for piloting, which will reference back to the decision tree and webpage process where appropriate.

3.6.   IT Services have recently launched mandatory online training in data security for all staff, which includes a bespoke section on research data.

4.   Events

4.1.   The University's induction programme 'My first three years' ran as usual during the course of the year with events in November, February and March (initial session repeated in June) and continued to include a section on the Code of Practice for Academic Integrity, as referred to above.

4.2.   The University hosted an Open Data Forum for the University Alliance, January 2017.

4.3.   The PVC Research & Global Partnerships and Research Support Director, working with IT Services, convened a meeting of all Research Leads to discuss research data management issues, January 2017. This led to the development of the decision tree for storage and archiving referenced above (3.5).

4.4.   A representative from the University attended 'Delivering and maintaining the highest standards of research integrity in HE' run by Westminster Briefing, London April 2017. Issues raised at this event were discussed with the Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and

Global Partnerships and Associate Deans of Research and Knowledge Exchange at their meeting on 1 June 2017. As an outcome of these discussions, we will enhance the Academic Integrity session within the 'My First Three Years' training programme in 2017-18 and investigate the possibility of introducing online training materials in future.

5. Misconduct report

5.1. There were two preliminary investigations in the academic year 2016-17, neither of which proceeded beyond the informal stage. There were no on-going investigations from previous years.

Professor Linda King
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Global Partnerships
5 June 2017