REPORT

Annual Research Integrity Statement 2019-2020

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 as well as Research Data Management, which can all be found 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 2019-2020 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 on 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.

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 (see 3.8 below); 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.   In the past few days the University has been putting measures in place in response to the COVID-19 situation. Researchers have been told to cease all face-to-face interviews, unless their work is specifically related to COVID-19. Where interviews can be done remotely, they can proceed, but

studies must be placed on pause if they cannot. Researchers have been told to contact participants of trials to explain to them any changes or pauses and the reason for so doing.

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 already-existing webpage called 'Research Integrity Resources' which pulls together a range of internal and external policies, codes of practice, guidelines and other information on issues such as authorship, finance, referencing and plagiarism has been updated:
https://intranet.brookes.ac.uk/research-support/policies-procedures-and-codes-of-practice/research-integrity-resources/

3.3. The University subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and the Research Ethics and Integrity Officer was scheduled to attend the annual UKRIO conference on 6 May 2020. She will now be attending the conference on the new date of 16 October 2020.

3.4. 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.

3.5. 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.

3.6. A subset of the University's Research Data Management Steering Group met in January 2020 to set priorities for the year ahead. The Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships is working to move the work of this Group to a new Steering Group, which will have a broader portfolio of supporting research integrity more generally. This Research Integrity Steering Group (RISG) will report directly to the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

3.7. The RISG will be chaired by a newly created academic lead role for Research Integrity & Improvement, as part of our commitment to good practice proposed by the UK Reproducibility Network.

3.8.   In addition, the University has committed to resource a new post. The Research Data Manager will sit in the Research and Business Development Office working closely with the Library, IT Services and the Chair of RISG to support academic staff in their research data management and training needs. *Note added 2/7/20: this post will be delayed to 2021/22 due to the need to make savings in QR in 2020/21.*

3.9.   The University has been assessing its established processes for clinical trials support to make sure these continue to be fit-for-purpose. We have reviewed and developed the post of Research Ethics and Integrity Officer who is supporting ethics processes and will be providing an oversight role to support clinical trials work. This new post started in November 2019.

3.10.   The University continues to review and assess existing ethical processes to promote an ethical research culture and ensure maximum compliance to the University's requirements. The University Research Ethics Committee established a working group to review the current Ethical Standards for Research Involving Human Participants - Code of Practice. This met between March and April and will be presenting a revised Code of Practice to the Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee later in the year.

3.11.   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.

3.12.   With regard to Responsible Metrics, a Task and Finish Group is working to ensure the University is in a position to sign up to the Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), with a longer-term remit to align with the principles of the Leiden Manifesto.

4.   Events

4.1.   The University's mandatory training programme for research-active academics and research-only staff 'Your First Three Years' ran as usual during the course of the year with events in October, February and March (initial session repeated in June). Research Integrity was covered in the three sessions of this programme in the following ways:

- Session one 'Research induction – strategy, policies and integrity'. This includes internal and external integrity policies, concordats, ethics and misconduct;
- Session two 'Applying for external research grants'. This includes reference to financial management;

- Session three 'Managing a research grant'. This covers the role of the Principal Investigators, including research integrity and post-award support which covers open access and publishing, research ethics, budget management and data management.

5. As part of the University's new proposed academic training and development programme (currently known as EXPLORE), we will be adding further mandatory elements to our research training programme, with additional sessions on Research Integrity and Data Management and navigating the process of research ethics approval. We aim to put all the new mandatory elements in place from the start of the next academic year.

6. **Misconduct report**

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

6.2. No putative misconduct cases were investigated at either the informal stage or formal stage during the year. The work of the new RISG (3.6), the appointment of a senior academic lead for Research Integrity (3.7) and a support officer in RBDO (3.8) will strengthen our efforts to promote good practice and provide training for staff, which will incorporate lessons learned from the investigation of previous misconduct cases and further work towards creating a culture in which staff and students feel able to report instances of misconduct.

Professor Linda King
Pro Vice-Chancellor, Research & Global Partnerships
01-05-2020

Approved Board of Governors meeting 16 July 2020