



Annual Research Integrity Statement – 2017

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity¹ recommends that an institution should provide a short annual (publicly available) statement that:

- provides a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and application of research integrity issues;
- provides assurances that the processes they have in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation;
- provides a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken.

This statement has therefore been prepared for Research and Innovation Committee² to summarise how the University of Oxford ensures compliance with the terms of the Concordat and meets the expectations outlined within this for both research institutions and individual researchers.

1. Supporting and strengthening understanding of research integrity

A summary of the University's policies and procedures for supporting and promoting research integrity is included as Annex A.

i. Training and professional development offered

There is a wide variety of training and other professional development available related to research. This includes:

a. *Online training*

There are online discipline-specific training courses³ available in research integrity (licensed from the company Epigeum Limited, part of Oxford University Press) which provide an introduction to research integrity (or 'the responsible conduct of research'). A separate online Epigeum course in avoiding plagiarism is also available⁴.

All of these courses are freely available to any University researcher or student and are widely promoted to researchers and students by the ethics committees, departments, faculties and Doctoral Training Centres,

¹<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2012/TheConcordatToSupportResearchIntegrity.pdf>

² As set out in Council Regulations 15 of 2002 (<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/520-122z.shtml>), Research and Innovation Committee has delegated authority to "approve on behalf of Council the annual statement of compliance with the national Concordat to Support Research Integrity".

³ <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/ricourses>

⁴ <https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:skills:generic:avoidplag>

including at induction and related training events. In 2018, Epigeum will be updating the research integrity courses (first published in 2012) and is keen for the University to be closely involved with their development.

In 2017, representatives from the Medical Sciences Division and Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division began work with Epigeum to contribute to the development of a new online programme entitled 'Research Quality and Reproducibility', which is scheduled for release in summer 2018.

A wider range of online skills training (i.e. including business, technology and creative skills) is also available to all University researchers and students via the University's subscription to <https://www.lynda.com/>.

b. In-person training

In addition to online provision, there is a wide variety of in-person training and other professional development available broadly related to research integrity (eg. Good Clinical Practice (GCP), human research ethics, animal research ethics, research data management, research methodology, research skills training) organised by the University's Academic Divisions, Departments and Faculties, Doctoral Training Centres, the Oxford Learning Institute and Research Services.

In 2017, a major focus of the Oxford Learning Institute's activity was a programme to support leaders and managers, including Principal Investigators (PIs). This has been developed and tailored by catering for both aspiring and existing PIs. In its first year, 180 researchers chose to join the programme. It includes a new workshop on 'Leading a Research Team'; downloadable induction resources for new PIs, including information on *What is development? Ways that staff can develop, Personal development planning, and Career conversations*. This programme has also developed an online learning community which has over 140 members discussing issues related to being a PI, sharing practice and receiving mutual support.

c. Induction

The Oxford Learning Institute ran a series of induction events on behalf of the University which included a half-day 'Welcome event for new researchers' to which all new research staff were invited. These sessions include presentations from Research Services and Personnel Services, as well as about other areas of professional development (such as from IT Services, the Libraries, etc.). These provide researchers with an introduction to a wide range of training opportunities (including research skills as well as personal development skills). At these sessions, research integrity-related policies are also highlighted.

Individual departments, faculties and Doctoral Training Centres also offered researchers and research students a programme of induction during their first few months in post. Information about research integrity and related policies is included as part of this induction and in graduate handbooks.

2. Reviews of policy, processes and guidance

i. Human research ethics committees

In 2017, the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC)¹ approved:

- updated guidance for researchers undertaking internet-based research (to include advice on consent issues and research involving the use of social media), developed primarily by the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee;

¹ <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics>

- a major update of its guidance for researchers who interview elite or expert participants, aimed primarily at researchers in the social sciences and humanities;
- detailed guidance, developed by the Medical Sciences Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC), for researchers about the differing processes of ethical review when using human tissue samples (and which process should be followed). This has been particularly welcomed, following a site visit inspection to the University in 2017 by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA), as the regulator of research involving human tissue samples;
- a new robust approach to ensure the mandatory registration of clinical trials reviewed and approved by the Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee (OxTREC) on a publicly-available register (and that corresponding trial registration numbers be made publicly available);
- the continuation of the 2016 pilot approach to monitoring higher-risk research studies approved via CUREC, to ensure that these are being conducted within the scope of the ethical approval granted;
- the formation of a Departmental Research Ethics Committee (DREC) for the Department of Computer Sciences (with effect from 1 January 2018). There are already 14 DRECs operating across the University, but this is the first in the Mathematical, Physical and Life Sciences Division. It has been established in response to the increase in research in the Department requiring ethical review and the need for local specialist advice.

ii. Research Data Management

IT services, Research Services, the University Information Security Team and the Bodleian Libraries continued to work closely together to provide advice and support to researchers around research data management. Related activities included:

- courses delivered termly, and on request for Departments, research groups and Doctoral Training Centres;
- offering a single point of contact for researchers to request advice and support on a range of issues, for example when formulating a research data management plan (often required as part of a research funding proposal), how to protect confidential data, setting up secure collaborative projects, and preparing data for publication and long-term archive.

Work began on overhauling the current University Research Data Management website¹, which will be comprehensively updated in early 2018. Work and consultation began on the review and update of the University's policy on research data management, which will be submitted to Research and Innovation Committee for review in 2018.

In 2017, IT Services worked on a number of projects to help researchers manage their data more effectively:

- The O365 project² will provide a simple large active storage service that will help researchers store and share data during a research project (due to be launched in early 2018);
- The Electronic Laboratory Notebook (ELN) project³ will provide a highly secure collaboration environment for research laboratories to maintain online laboratory notebooks that protect the

¹ <http://researchdata.ox.ac.uk/>

² <https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/project-portfolio/nexus365>

³ <https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/sites/itservices/researchsupport/SitePages/el%20evaluation.aspx>

provenance of ideas in case of patent defence or publishing disputes (due to be launched in early 2018);

- The Research File Service (RFS) project¹ aims to provide very large storage for data intensive research projects (due to be launched in autumn 2018).

iii. Research involving animals

The Committee on Animal Care and Ethical Review produced a comprehensive annual report to Council for 2016-17, summarising the work of the Committee and its seven Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies, as well as training and public engagement work undertaken. This report also covered the support measures in place to ensure compliance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986, revised in 2012 and commonly referred to as A(SP)A, and the requirements of the Home Office Animals in Science Regulation Unit. The report was published (and available online without restrictions) in the *University Gazette* on 7 December 2017².

iv. Export controls

Throughout 2017 the University continued its programme of activities designed to support researchers to meet their obligations under Export Control legislation, and enhance awareness of related obligations. This included communication and meeting with those departments most affected, periodic news items for researchers and research administrators, and updates to the Research Services' Export Controls web site³. Advice was provided to researchers to assist them with applications to the UK approvals' agency. In October 2017, the University received its first inspection by the Department for International Trade's Export Control Organisation, the aim of which was to ensure awareness of legal responsibilities and to assist the University to be fully compliant with UK export controls. Key points from the inspection's finding have been incorporated into guidance available on the Research Services' Export Controls web site.

v. Researcher Development

A new University-wide Researcher Development Forum was established in 2017 which will meet termly. Its aim is to contribute to an overall strategy for the University to underpin the professional and career development of research staff. It will provide a single point within the University for communication (internally and externally) on career and professional development for research staff and advise Research and Innovation Committee on matters relating to the career and professional development of research staff. It will also offer advice and appropriate input to the REF environment requirements as agreed with Research and Innovation Committee, with reference to researcher development issues at Oxford.

vi. Conflict of interest

Arising from the 2016 audit, by the University's internal auditors PwC, of the processes for controlling and obtaining assurance over the management of conflicts of interest, the Conflict of Interest Committee has overseen a range of activities to strengthen awareness of, and compliance with, the Conflict of Interest policy. For example:

¹ <https://www.it.ox.ac.uk/project-portfolio/research-file-service>

² <https://www.ox.ac.uk/gazette/2017-2018/7december2017-no5189/>

³ <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/export>

- the policy was revised and online guidance updated¹;
- to raise awareness, the Registrar and the Financial Assurance team have been in contact with Departments and Divisional offices to remind people of their responsibilities, to provide information and sample text for induction/training materials, and to offer further training and advice;
- a number of additional tools have been provided including: new guidance for University Departments on managing conflicts of interest associated with spinout companies (including advice on producing a conflict of interest management plan); an updated form for the approval of outside appointments to be held; and a template matrix for identifying and declaring complex conflicts of interest. The latter provides a visual way of recording an individual's different roles or interests.
- compliance is monitored through the annual declaration of interests and the re-established annual financial self-assurance exercise required of departments, which includes a set of questions on compliance with the Conflict of Interest policy and other University policies and regulations. This exercise provides a view of departments' assessment of their compliance, and is also a means of communicating information about conflict of interest requirements.

vii. Research involving human tissue

In 2017, the University established a human tissue governance team, based within Research Services, to support research with human tissue and compliance with the Human Tissue Act². In addition to providing bespoke support and expert advice, this team oversees University-wide provision of related resources and training.

viii. Research Support website review and development

In 2017, the University's Research Support website was comprehensively overhauled, which included a major update of the information provided to researchers and administrators about research integrity and ethics policies and procedures. This now provides a more coordinated overview of information about various aspects of research integrity (and the resources and training available to the University's research community). The new Research Integrity and Governance pages are available at <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance>

ix. External audit

As part of the RCUK Funding Assurance Programme (FAP), the University is subject to audit every three years by RCUK. The next FAP audit visit to Oxford is due to take place on 17-18 January 2018. The required pre-audit 'Self-Assessment Questionnaire' requested information about the University's processes for governing good research practice and investigating unacceptable research conduct (as well as numbers of allegations of research misconduct made to the University in the past three years, where such research was supported by RCUK). This was completed and returned to RCUK in December 2017. The outcome of this audit, as this relates to research integrity, will be reported in the 2018 statement.

3. External engagement

¹ <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/integrity/conflict>

² <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/human-tissue>

The University recognises the importance of collaborating with partner institutions, at a national and international level, to facilitate networking and good practice in how to support and encourage research integrity.

In 2017, external engagement included the following:

i. Russell Group

Members of the University's Ethics and Integrity Team are active members of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum, which seeks to share good practice and provide training and networking opportunities in research integrity matters. They continued to be closely involved with its activities, including attending and presenting at its workshops in April 2017 (held at the University of Southampton) and October 2017 (held at the University of Manchester).

In 2017 the Forum also worked with representatives of RCUK on the interpretation and development of its updated guidance to Universities on how allegations of research misconduct should be notified to the research councils, following the publication in April 2017 of RCUK's 'Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct'¹.

In addition to its meetings, this Forum has worked on behalf of the Russell Group to coordinate written responses to external consultations on research integrity matters (the most recent example being a response to the 2017 House of Commons Science and Technology Select Committee inquiry into research integrity). Professor Ian Walmsley, Oxford's Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) also gave oral evidence to this inquiry on behalf of the Russell Group in October 2017.

Following meetings of this Select Committee, the Chair (Rt Hon Norman Lamb MP) wrote to Vice-Chancellors of UK universities to seek further information about they comply with the terms of the Concordat. Professor Walmsley provided this information, on behalf of the University of Oxford, in a response dated 21 November 2017.

ii. League of European Research Universities (LERU)

The Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) continued to work closely with the LERU Research Integrity Thematic Group, which met in Brussels in May 2017 and in Utrecht in November 2017. This Group was closely consulted in the development of the 'European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity'², published in 2017 by the ALLEA European Federation of Academies of Science and Humanities.

iii. UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)

The University is a subscribing member of UKRIO, with the Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) attending the UKRIO annual conference in 2017. UKRIO provides confidential advice and assistance to Oxford staff and research students with questions and concerns about the design, conduct and reporting of academic research.

¹ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/rcukpolicyguidelinesgovernancegoodresearchconduct-pdf/>

² <http://www.avcr.cz/opencms/export/sites/avcr.cz/.content/galerie-souboru/ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf>

iv. World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI), Amsterdam, May 2017

The Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) attended the WCRI, (held biennially) on behalf of the University, to enhance awareness of global research integrity research and policy developments.

4. Investigations of allegations of misconduct in research undertaken in 2017

Under the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure¹, the Registrar is the senior officer nominated within the University with responsibility for responding to allegations of misconduct in research. In cases of misconduct in research which involve students, the Registrar may refer these allegations to the University Proctors for further investigation (the Proctors having responsibility for the investigation of possible breaches of University disciplinary codes and bringing charges against students accused of infringing these codes).

This Code of Practice and Procedure is due to be reviewed in 2018.

i. Allegations notified to the Registrar's Office

In 2017, the Registrar's Office received a number of allegations of misconduct in research, which were considered under the procedures set out in the above-referenced Code. These are summarised below. This also includes details of one allegation which was received in 2016, but where the ensuing investigation was concluded in 2017. Although cases have necessarily been anonymised, the table also includes brief information about further action taken (even if there was no evidence of proven misconduct in research).

No	Nature of alleged research misconduct	Outcome
1.	Allegation of plagiarism of study methodology (received in 2016)	Investigation concluded that there was no evidence of research conduct (and no corrections were required to publications). Not upheld.
2.	Allegation of plagiarism and around data ownership	Investigation concluded that there was no evidence of research misconduct (and no corrections were required to publications). Not upheld.

¹ <https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/>

3.	Allegation of plagiarism and misrepresentation	Complaint dismissed at the preliminary review stage.
4.	Allegation of misrepresentation of study findings	Investigation concluded that there was no evidence of research misconduct. Not upheld.
5.	Allegation of misconduct and undisclosed conflict of interest	Complaint dismissed at the preliminary review stage.
6.	Concerns raised around conduct of clinical trial	Preliminary review concluded that no further investigation was required but that guidance to the research team should be improved.
7.	Allegation of suppression of publication	Complainant expressed a preference for the matter to be resolved through informal mediation (rather than a formal investigation). Ongoing.
8.	Allegation of plagiarism	Complaint dismissed at the preliminary review stage.
9.	Allegation of plagiarism and conflict of interest in peer review.	Complaint sent to the University by a research funder. Ongoing (and will proceed to investigation).
10.	Allegation of denial of authorship	Ongoing.

ii. Allegations considered by the Proctors' Office

In 2017, the Proctors' Office investigated a number of student cases relating to research work submitted for examination (i.e. theses and dissertations, as well as extended 'research' projects or essays). These are summarised below (there was one 'carry forward' case from 2016).

Those allegations which were not upheld were regarded, after investigation, as being cases which were unfounded or poor academic practice, rather than warranting a referral to the Academic Conduct Panel or Student Disciplinary Panel. These cases were therefore returned to the examiners for marking in the normal way.

No	Nature of alleged research misconduct	Outcome
1.	Plagiarism (from 2016)	Not upheld
2.	Dishonesty (fabricated data)	Not upheld
3.	Plagiarism	Not upheld
4	Plagiarism	Ongoing
5	Autoplagerism	Ongoing

The University's Research Ethics Committees, the Clinical Trials and Research Governance Team and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) have all advised on the resolution of various additional concerns relating to research integrity, but which did not require assessment and investigation under the framework of the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure.

This statement was prepared by Research Services, with contributions to Section 4. provided by the Registrar's Office and the Proctors' Office.

It was discussed and approved at a meeting of the University's Research and Innovation Committee on 25 January 2018.

Annex A

Policies and procedures for supporting and promoting research integrity.

The University's Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure (<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/>) sets out the University's expectations and standards for research conduct for all its staff, students and anyone using the University's premises, facilities or funding for their research. This Code also includes the University's definition of misconduct in research and the procedure which will apply in the event of suspected misconduct in research. The Code states that this operates in conjunction with a range of other policies relating to research integrity. These include:

- Policy on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and personal data
<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics/committees/policy>
- Policy on the use of animals in scientific research
<http://www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/animal-research/university-policy-on-the-use-of-animals-in-scientific-research>
- Policy and procedure on conflict of interest
<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/conflict/policy>
- Public interest disclosure (whistle-blowing) code of practice
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/pid/>
- Policy on the management of research data and records
<http://researchdata.ox.ac.uk/university-of-oxford-policy-on-the-management-of-research-data-and-records/>
- Financial Regulations
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/finance/financialregulations/>
- University statement of health and safety policy
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/safety/hs-mgement-policy/univpolicy/>
- Intellectual property policy
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/182-052.shtml>
- Anti-bribery Policy
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/briberyfraud/anti-briberypolicy/>
- Anti-fraud policy
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/briberyfraud/anti-fraudpolicy/>
- Information Security policy
<http://www.it.ox.ac.uk/policies-and-guidelines/information-security-policy>
- University guidance on data protection
<http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/dataprotection/policy/>
- Data Quality and Assurance Policy
http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/pras/aboutus/data_quality/
- Export control – guidance on export control legislation
<https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/export>
- Safeguarding Code of Practice
<https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/safeguarding/safeguardingcop/>

These policies are subject to periodic review to reflect changes in legislation, regulatory and funder requirements as well as evolving research practice.

Links to a more comprehensive list of University research-related policies and procedures is available at <https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/policy/oxford>.