



Annual Research Integrity Statement – 2021

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity¹ requires employers of researchers to provide a short annual (publicly available) statement that must include:

- a summary of actions and activities that have been undertaken to support and strengthen understanding and the application of research integrity issues
- a statement to provide assurance that the processes the institution has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct are transparent, timely, robust and fair, and that they continue to be appropriate to the needs of the organisation
- a high-level statement on any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, which will include data on the number of investigations
- a statement on what the institution has learned from any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken, including what lessons have been learned to prevent the same type of incident re-occurring
- a statement on how the institution creates and embeds a research environment in which all staff, researchers and students feel comfortable to report instances of misconduct.

This statement was prepared and coordinated by Research Services, with contributions from Personnel Services, the Proctors' Office, Reproducibility Research Oxford, Biomedical Services, Bodleian Libraries, and IT Services.

It summarises 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.

It was considered and approved at a meeting of the University's Research and Innovation Committee² on 3rd March 2022.

¹ [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#)

² As set out in [Council Regulations 15 of 2002](#), 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”.

Introduction

The University of Oxford has a reputation worldwide for the range and excellence of its research and for the calibre of its researchers. According to the 2014 Research Excellence Framework, the official UK-wide assessment of all university research, Oxford has the largest volume of world-leading research in the country. Oxford's research activity involves more than 1,900 academic staff, more than 5,800 research and research support staff, and more than 6,800 graduate research students.

The excellence of research produced by the University of Oxford is intrinsically dependent on the integrity of its researchers. As set out in its Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Conduct and Procedure¹, the University expects all its members, including staff and students and those who are not members of the University but who are conducting research on University premises or using University facilities or funding for their research, to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the conduct of their research.

Key to supporting and enhancing good practice in research is a healthy research culture and environment, where researchers are supported to conduct research that meets the highest standards of academic rigour. The University's commitment to research integrity is reflected and embedded in its institutional systems and culture and an ongoing programme of review and improvement.

The University's Research and Innovation Committee² (chaired by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, and which reports directly to Council) has central responsibility for advising on policies which promote research integrity (also termed good practice in research). Its members include senior academic representatives from all four Academic Divisions, from Colleges, as well as student representatives. Research and Innovation Committee is supported by officers in Research Services and considers related developments and policy updates.

The Registrar is the senior named officer designated within the University with responsibility for responding to allegations of misconduct in research. The Research Integrity and Policy Lead within the Research Strategy and Policy Unit is named as a contact for those wishing to raise, in confidence, concerns about the conduct of University research, before any formal allegation is made³.

1. Supporting and strengthening understanding of research integrity

A summary of the University's policies, procedures and guidance for supporting and promoting research integrity is included as Annex A. These are subject to ongoing review and update.

i. Training and professional development offered

There is a wide variety of training and other professional development related to supporting good practice in research, available to research staff and students. The Research Services '[Integrity and Ethics Training](#)' [webpage](#) provides summary information and links to online and in-person training available which includes:

a. Online training

Online research integrity training modules are available⁴ (licensed from the company Epigeum, part of Oxford University Press) which provide an introduction to research integrity. A separate online Epigeum

¹ [Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Conduct and Procedure](#)

² [Terms of reference](#)

³ [Research misconduct guidance](#)

⁴ [Online training courses in research integrity](#)

course in avoiding plagiarism is also available¹, as is online accredited training in Good Clinical Practice² and other training for clinical researchers³.

All of these courses are freely available to any University of Oxford staff or student member and are widely promoted to researchers and students by Research Services, the University's ethics committees, departments, faculties and Doctoral Training Centres, including at induction and related training events.

The core online research integrity course has been designed to support researchers from all disciplines through some of the key issues that need to be considered when planning, conducting and reporting research. Amongst other topics, the course covers professional responsibilities, designing and conducting research, relationships (both with other researchers and the broader community and the public), scholarly publication, research dissemination and impact, issues in research governance and what to do if research misconduct is suspected. Other supplemental modules are available (which will only apply to certain types of research) covering:

- research involving human participants
- research involving animals
- conflicts of interest
- intellectual property
- export controls

Given the importance of training in research integrity (as emphasised in the [Concordat to support research integrity](#) and by major research funders when auditing the University), Research and Innovation Committee agreed at its March 2020 meeting that this should be compulsory for University of Oxford researchers.

In 2021, to supplement the core [research integrity online training modules](#), a new concise version of this course was introduced which is more suitable for more experienced researchers (eg. postdoctoral researchers and established academic staff). The [core introductory course](#) is compulsory for all University of Oxford research students (either on graduate taught courses or studying for research degrees) and is available to all University staff and students with an interest in this area. The concise refresher course (which takes around 45 minutes to complete) is available [here](#).

To implement Research and Innovation Committee's resolution that training should be compulsory, researchers are now reminded at various points to complete this training, eg. at induction, when submitting applications for review by the University's research ethics committees, when submitting research grant applications (when approving project costings in X5) and (for students) when applying to transfer status).

Consequently, the number of users taking these courses is increasing steadily. In 2020-21, 2,946 users completed the core research integrity course. 221 users completed the concise refresher course.

b. In-person training

There is also a wide variety of in-person training and other professional development available broadly related to research integrity and practice (e.g. Good Clinical Practice (GCP), human research ethics, animal research ethics, research data management, open access, research methodology, research skills training) organised and delivered by the University's Academic Divisions⁴, Departments and Faculties, Doctoral

¹ [Online course in avoiding plagiarism](#)

² [Online accredited training in Good Clinical Practice](#)

³ [Other training for clinical researchers](#)

⁴ [Medical Sciences Division Skills Training](#), [MPLS Division Training](#), [Social Sciences Division Researcher Development](#), [Humanities Division Researcher Development Support](#)

Training Centres, Bodleian Libraries, People and Organisational Development¹, IT Services², Biomedical Services³ and Research Services.

ii. Research Integrity web pages

These [pages](#), sited within the Research Support website, provide guidance on research integrity and ethics, including more information about the University's ethical review processes for research. This section has been designed as a gateway for anyone seeking further advice and guidance about research integrity, signposting users to related policies, procedures and training as well as downloadable leaflets with further information about research integrity and ethics.

iii. Research integrity checklist

This [checklist](#), structured in relation to different aspects of research integrity and reviewed annually, has been designed to assist supervisors and students not only to abide by the principles set out in the [University's Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure](#) but also to engage in a broader dialogue about research integrity and good practice in research.

It is publicised within training and intended for use by supervisors and students at the start of a student's research, and for discussion and review periodically throughout the project. It can also be used as a checklist for all involved in research who need to be aware of and abide by the principles of research integrity set out by the University, research funders, regulators, professional associations and the law.

iv. Reproducible Research Oxford (RROx)

Reproducible Research Oxford (RROx), was originally established in October 2016 and expanded in January 2019 into the local node of the [UK Reproducibility Network](#) (UKRN).

RROx organises range of activities open to all members of the collegiate University, including webinars and training events, and it coordinates several grassroots initiatives, with the aim of engaging researchers in multidisciplinary group discussions and learning to increase the reliability, reproducibility, and reusability of their research.

In 2021, RROx organised the fourth week-long Oxford-Berlin summer school, featuring lectures and workshops aimed at early-career researchers in the biomedical and social sciences. Lectures covered topics including: biases in research; reproducibility; best practice for sharing publications, data and code; meta research; the ethical conduct of research. 44 international participants were selected to attend the full programme, with hundreds more joining the lectures online. 16 of the 44 attendees were based at Oxford.

RROx also coordinated a train-the-trainer programme from the Carpentries, a non-profit organisation specialising in teaching researchers the skills they need to efficiently produce computationally reproducible workflows; and subsequently organised Software Carpentries workshops to facilitate the dissemination of related skills "horizontally".

RROx community members further contributed to training other researchers at Oxford by demonstrating their skills on specific topics during RROx community calls (e.g. how to produce reproducible manuscripts), co-teaching with the RROx Coordinator in the Divisional Skills Training programme (e.g. version control, simulation of data and data analyses, preregistration), and leading grassroots initiatives (e.g. statistical book club, [reproducibiliTea journal clubs](#)). RROx also contributed to the development or improvement of graduate

¹ [People and Organisational Development – Course listing](#)

² [ITLC Course Brochure for HT22 \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

³ [Biomedical Training courses](#)

curricula (e.g. Msc Digital Scholarship, DTC Statistics and Data Management).

2. Good research practice: guidance and related activity

i. Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure

This Code 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. The Code (available via the Human Resources website and [the University's webpages on Research Ethics and Integrity](#)) also provides the University's definition of misconduct in research and sets out the procedure which will apply in the event of suspected misconduct in research. This procedure includes the timelines that will be followed when formal allegations of misconduct in research are assessed and investigated.

Within the University, individuals are encouraged to challenge misconduct or poor practice in research and, before making a formal allegation of misconduct in research, to discuss concerns within their department or faculty as appropriate. Sources of advice and support for University members include:

- supervisors
- senior tutors
- directors of graduate studies
- heads of department
- research ethics committees
- Research Services
- UK Research Integrity Office (of which the University is a subscribing member)

ii. Human research ethics committees

The University's policy on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and personal data requires that all such research be subject to appropriate review.

In 2021, a total of 2,031 (1,711 in 2020) research studies were reviewed via the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC): 1,582 (1,281 in 2020) by the Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (SSH IDREC) and its associated Departmental Research Ethics Committees (DRECs); 305 (310 in 2020) by the Medical Sciences Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee (MS IDREC); 144 (125 in 2020) by the Oxford Tropical Research Ethics Committee (OxTREC).

The increase in numbers of applications and amendments reviewed by the SSH IDREC and particularly its DRECs can partly be attributed to the easing of pandemic-related restrictions on field work and other in-person research. It does, however, still represent a larger than expected increase in the year-on-year trend. The increase in MS IDREC and OxTREC applications seen in 2020 (partially due to the number of COVID19-related research studies undertaken) has not diminished.

In 2021, CUREC

- reviewed and updated its procedure for handling complaints received by CUREC and its sub committees;
- reviewed and updated the revised CUREC and IDREC appeal procedure used in cases where ethical approval for a research study is not granted;-
- reviewed and updated its 'Guidance around research Involving the deception of adult participants';
- reviewed and updated its Best Practice Guidance around internet-mediated research;

- reviewed and updated its Best Practice Guidance around social science research conducted outside the UK;
- approved a new application form for research using previously collected biological samples;
- approved new Best Practice Guidance on Mobile Application (app) Design (produced in collaboration with the Computer Science Departmental Research Ethics Committee).

All of the above documents have now been published on the CUREC website¹.

Following review of the structure of its subcommittees, CUREC agreed to the development of a technical advisory panel, in the first instance to support review of research related to the rapidly developing area of data science and Artificial Intelligence. The panel will be established in 2022.

iii. Clinical Research

In the case of clinical trials or research involving National Health Service (NHS) patients, ethical review and approval must be provided via the NHS Research Ethics Committees. Dedicated support is provided to clinical researchers through Research Services' Research Governance, Ethics and Assurance Team.

In 2021, sponsorship was provided for 113 new clinical research studies, of which 15 are Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products (CTIMPs). This included fast-track review of 13 COVID19 studies (of which 5 are CTIMPs). COVID19 work continued to be prioritised, but unlike 2020 when the volume of non-COVID clinical research applications reduced as a result of the pandemic, this needed to be balanced with the resumption of non-COVID clinical research.

The Team processed approximately 749 amendments. There have been 58 monitoring events. The portfolio-wide audit instigated in 2020, which covered 50 sponsored CTIMPs and their change management processes during COVID19, continued into 2021.

The Team has begun using an electronic signature system and a quality management system (QMS) These ensure that processes and authorisations are robust.

Two key challenges were addressed in 2021:

- COVID19 work continued to be prioritised, while the Team also supported the resumption of non-COVID clinical research. The work priorities includes not only review of studies and amendments, but monitoring and a significant level of ongoing advice and support
- Regulatory inspections: the Team has been involved in four Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) inspections and three international regulatory inspections during the pandemic. This reflects the high profile and consequent close scrutiny of University research.

iv. Research involving human tissue

- In 2021 the Human Tissue Governance group within Research Services continued to consolidate processes to ensure compliance with the licensing requirements of the Human Tissue Act 2004. The group supported research staff involved in 156 studies (90 in 2020), either at the time of set-up (Research Tissue Banks, CUREC-approved studies and studies with ethics approval from

¹ [CUREC website](#)

outside the UK) or at the time of closing (ensuring good governance for any leftover human samples);

- In addition, a human tissue governance policy was drafted, to be implemented at the Medical Sciences Division (MSD) level, detailing the requirements for University departments to put in place appropriate governance measures to support compliance with the Human Tissue Act 2004. Consultation with MSD departments is ongoing to finalise the policy, the implementation of which will be supported by the Human Tissue Governance group in 2022. The policy aims to establish a set of baseline governance processes in departments to underpin compliance with the Human Tissue Act 2004, including robust induction and leavers procedures, tracking of mandatory training and oversight of research tissue banks by departments;
- A large-scale audit of the eight Research Tissue Banks operating under the largest University Human Tissue Authority licence is ongoing, focusing on governance arrangements in place for the collection and distribution of human samples from these tissue banks, as well as the relationships between the University and other institutions involved in the operation of the tissue banks (NHS trusts, other academic institutions and commercial partners);
- The Human Tissue Governance group is also helping staff in new University buildings put in place robust processes to ensure research activities with human tissue samples are compliant with the legislation, in the new Biochemistry building in the Science Area in Oxford, and in the Institute of Developmental and Regenerative Medicine (IDRM) on the Old Road Campus.

v. Research data management

IT Services, the Bodleian Libraries, Research Services and the Information Security team continued to work closely together to provide advice and support to researchers regarding research data management.

2021 saw the development of a proposal for an extensive Research Data Management (RDM) Improvement Programme, drawing on the findings of the 2020 review of Oxford research data management support. The proposal was approved by the Research IT Board in May 2021, and will be implemented as funding and resources permit. The first phase of work included an overhaul of Oxford's RDM governance structures.

Ongoing activities included:

- offering a single point of contact for researchers to request advice and support on a range of issues, for example formulating a research data management plan (often required as part of a research funding proposal), protecting confidential data, setting up secure collaborative projects, and preparing data for publication and long-term archiving;
- training delivered termly via the IT Learning Centre and iSkills programme, and available on request for departments, research groups, and support staff. Courses continued to be delivered online throughout 2021, making them accessible to the many staff still working from home;
- maintaining the Research Data Oxford¹ website, a central source of information, advice, and details of resources relevant to research data management. Work is also ongoing to overhaul and comprehensively update the site and migrate it to a new platform.

IT Services continued to support a number of services to help researchers manage their data more effectively:

¹ [Research Data Oxford website](#)

- the LabArchives electronic laboratory notebook service¹ provides a highly secure collaborative environment for research laboratories to maintain online laboratory notebooks, protecting the provenance of ideas in case of patent defence or publishing disputes;
- the DigiSafe service², launched in 2020, offers secure long-term archiving for sensitive material, including both administrative and research data.

Other work focused on improving provision. For example, the Research File Service (RFS) project, which aims to provide 'live' data storage for research projects, continues to build a model that will work across the University's numerous divergent use cases.

The Sustainable Digital Scholarship (SDS) service³ was launched in February 2021. The SDS platform, provided by Figshare, is an online repository that allows researchers to store, work with, preserve, and share research data. The service is based in the Humanities Division, but is open to projects from across the University.

vi. Open Scholarship

The Open Scholarship Support department in the Bodleian Libraries formed in 2020 and plays a lead role in the delivery of support for Open Access, Open Research, and Research Data Management provision. It provides a central point for advocacy and strategy and enables the Bodleian to support new areas such as Reproducible Research, and to support policy developments in this area, i.e. Plan S, the UKRI OA Review and the development of Read and Publish deals. The department works in partnership with colleagues across the Bodleian Libraries, the University's academic divisions and departments such as Research Services and IT Services.

Throughout 2021, the department has played a key role in developing support and training for researchers, and focussing on strategy and policy development across the University. Highlights from this year include:

- running training for researchers on Open Scholarship related topics, including: copyright and licensing, Open Access, funder policies, managing research data, using repositories for research;
- developing the Open Access Oxford webpages with the latest information on funder policy in relation to a wide array of research outputs;
- managing the Open Access block grants for research funders on behalf of the University, including for UKRI, Wellcome Trust, British Heart Foundation, and Cancer Research UK;
- negotiating 'Read and Publish' deals on behalf of the University, managing the associated budgets, in order to ensure seamless routes to funder-compliant open access publishing for Oxford's researchers;
- developing and launching the Oxford Research Archive's COVID19 Collection. The University of Oxford has been at the forefront of the international response to the COVID19 pandemic. Much of this activity is reflected in the wide array of research outputs - journal articles, conference papers, working papers, preprints, and more – that have been produced in this area. The portal seeks to provide a one-stop point of access to all of these outputs from across all of the University's academic Divisions, by providing (where possible) the full-text of items held in ORA as well as links to Oxford COVID-related outputs held in a range of other locations.

¹ [LabArchives electronic lab notebook service](#)

² [DigiSafe web pages](#)

³ [Sustainable Digital Scholarship service](#)

vii. Research involving animals

The University of Oxford's Animal Use Policy requires that anyone involved in research that includes the use of animals is proactive in pursuing refinement, reduction and replacement (usually referred to as the 3Rs) in procedures involving live animals wherever possible. In addition, all researchers and animal care staff must ensure they engage fully in the approved ethical process of review and monitoring of animal-based research. The Animal Use Policy also commits the University to providing standards of accommodation and care that exceed, wherever possible, the minimum standards required by UK national legislation. The responsibility for provision and maintenance of the accommodation and facilities is devolved to the Director of Biomedical Services who, through cooperation with animal care staff and researchers, is charged with ensuring that animal facilities are managed and maintained efficiently and to as high a standard as possible.

The Animal Care and Ethical Review Committee (ACER) is required to report annually to Council on all activities concerned with research management and compliance with licensing. It produced a comprehensive annual report to Council for the calendar year 2021, summarising the work of the Committee, its six Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies (AWERBs) and a further sub-committee (that considers the application of the 3Rs in research), 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 is available online without restrictions) in the Supplement to the *University Gazette* of 17 February 2022.¹

3. New University initiatives to improve research culture and promote good practice in research

i. Researcher Hub / Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers

In April 2021, the University's Researcher Hub was launched². The mission of the Hub is to welcome, support and equip researchers and teaching staff employed by the University on fixed term contracts. The Hub will facilitate access to the wide menu of transferable skills training, personal and professional development initiatives and networking opportunities offered by Divisions, Departments, Colleges and central services.

In 2021, coordinated by the Researcher Hub, work began on developing a three-year action plan to meet objectives of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers³. The plan will build on the large amount of existing activity and best practice in researcher support, and was developed in close consultation with principal investigators, research support professionals and researchers at all career stages from across the collegiate University. It will emphasise the importance of meeting the highest standards of academic rigour, recognising and rewarding broader contributions to research, adapting University policies to the changing nature of research methodologies and publishing, and supporting the principles of open research. The plan will be coordinated centrally to provide consistency and support but will be implemented locally through Divisions and Departments so that actions can be tailored to the needs of differing research disciplines and their research cultures.

ii. Research Culture Strategy

In October 2021, Research and Innovation Committee approved an institutional plan to develop a strategy to advance research culture at the University of Oxford.

¹ [Gazette Supplement, 17 February 2022](#)

² [Research Staff Hub](#)

³ [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#)

This programme will focus on projects that are aligned to three inter-connected themes:

- careers: supporting research staff in their career development, with a particular focus on enabling and tracking career destinations of the University's research staff;
- research practice: supporting researchers to conduct reliable, reproducible, and transparent research and thus ensure that Oxford research is trusted as meeting the highest standards of academic rigour;
- valuing different contributions: recognising a diversity of talents and skills by valuing a broader range of contributions to excellence in research and ensuring that those contributions are evaluated fairly.

The three themes have been chosen based on a set of principles agreed by Research and Innovation Committee, including a focus on excellence, a desire to build on Oxford's existing strengths, and an opportunity to show sector leadership. The themes, and their constituent projects, will resonate to varying degrees with different disciplines and sections of the community. The chosen themes also align to the key priorities of funders and governments nationally and internationally.

The focus of the research practice theme will be to integrate activities across existing structures and initiatives at Oxford that are directly relevant to the practice of research and its improvement, such as open access, research data management (including FAIR principles), research integrity and ethics, reproducible and transparent research (including research software engineering), responsible research and innovation, and research impact.

Work is now underway, coordinated by the Research Strategy and Policy Unit and the Research Hub, to develop projects under these themes. Work undertaken under the research practice theme will be reported in future Annual Research Integrity statements.

iii. Associate Professor inclusive recruitment project

Initiatives such as the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)¹ have led the way in bringing global attention to the importance of taking a transparent and broad approach to assessing research. These have acknowledged the need to improve research quality through ensuring that researchers are recognised and rewarded for behaviours that lead to trustworthy research and improved research integrity. The University became a signatory to DORA in 2018.

In 2021, the University's Focus programme² facilitated the Associate Professor (AP) inclusive recruitment project. One of the aims of the project was to understand the impact DORA will have on the University's AP recruitment process and collaboratively identify practical solutions.

This project formed part of the University's implementation of DORA. The University's Code of Practice for REF2021³, which set out the process for selecting outputs for research assessment, already explicitly stated that research metrics should be used responsibly in accordance with DORA, excluding the use of journal impact factors.

Within the AP inclusive recruitment project, focus groups, interviews and showcase workshops were held to understand current practice, identify good practice already happening inside and outside Oxford, and

¹ [DORA](#)

² [Focus Programme](#)

³ [REF code of practice | Research Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)

practical solutions to achieve greater diversity in research assessment in accordance with the DORA principles. These showcase workshops were recorded and are available from the Focus website¹.

Since the conclusion of the Focus project, key University committees are being consulted on the deliverables from the Focus project.

The 2022 Recognition of Distinction round² has revised guidance around research outputs and explicitly states that 'the content of a paper is more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it is published'.

4. External engagement

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.

i. Russell Group Research Integrity Forum

Members of Research Services continue to be active members of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum, which seeks to share good practice and provide training, guidance and networking opportunities in research integrity matters. The group met and continued to operate virtually in 2021.

ii. League of European Research Universities (LERU)

The Research Integrity and Policy Lead continues to work closely with the LERU Research Integrity Policy Group. This Group met virtually in 2021 and aims to meet in person in 2022. Its current programme of work is focused on :

- Integrity in communications;
- Good practice in authorship;
- Cross-institutional research misconduct investigations.

iii. UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)

The University has had a longstanding annual subscription to UKRIO and, via this, has access to additional training assistance, UKRIO guidance documents, a register of UKRIO advisers for misconduct investigations, and assistance in developing and enhancing University guidelines, procedures and training. It also provides confidential advice and assistance to Oxford staff and research students with questions and concerns about the design, conduct and reporting of academic research.

Since the start of the pandemic, UKRIO has expanded its training and conference programme, moving this online and now organises regular webinars on a range of research integrity-related topics in addition to its annual conference (e.g. an introduction to research integrity; publication ethics; recognising responsible research practice). Unlike UKRIO's in-person conferences, these online events have been openly available without charge and have been well attended by members of the University.

¹ [Associate Professor Inclusive Recruitment Project Showcase | Focus Programme \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/focus-programme)

² [Recognition of Distinction 2022 | HR Support \(ox.ac.uk\)](https://www.ox.ac.uk/hr-support)

5. Assessment and Investigation of allegations of misconduct in research undertaken in 2021

As set out in the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure¹, the Registrar is the senior officer designated within the University with responsibility for responding to allegations of misconduct in research. In cases of allegations of misconduct in research which involve students, the Registrar may refer these allegations to the University Proctors² 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).

In 2021, Personnel Committee and Research and Innovation Committee approved new guidance³ for academic advisers assisting the Registrar with the review and investigation of allegations received.

i. Allegations notified to the Registrar

In 2021, the Registrar received a number of allegations of misconduct in research which were considered under the procedure set out in the above-referenced Code. These are summarised below and include details of two allegations which were received in 2020, but where the ensuing review was concluded in 2021. 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.	Alleged withholding publication of research results (Allegation received in 2020; review concluded in 2021)	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct
2.	Duplicate submission of manuscript / failure to follow existing good practice in research (Allegation received in 2020; review concluded in 2021)	Researcher has left the University (but should not have cited a University of Oxford affiliation in the journal article). Journal agreed to remove the University's name from the article.
3.	Alleged unacknowledged appropriation of the work of others, including plagiarism	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct

¹ [Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure](#)

² [Proctors' Office](#)

³ [Guidance on the process for investigating allegations of misconduct in research](#)

4.	Allegations re accuracy of research data, managing conflict of interest, failure to avoid reasonable harm	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct
5.	Allegation of falsification or fabrication of data	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct
6.	Allegation of falsification of data	Preliminary review showed a genuine error within a paper. Journal has issued a correction and the correction was also published on PubPeer. The error did not have a bearing on the conclusions of the paper.
7.	Allegation of falsification or fabrication of data	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct
8.	Alleged misrepresentation of data	Dismissed after preliminary review – no evidence of misconduct (researcher is no longer employed by the University; new employer was notified about the review and outcome)
9.	Allegation of plagiarism and unacknowledged work	Dismissed after preliminary review - no evidence of misconduct, but poor research practice. Referred to the Head of Department to manage.
10.	Allegation of misrepresentation of data	Investigation ongoing
11.	Allegation of misrepresentation of data	Relates to journal articles published in 2011. Lead authors have left the University (and science) and absence of raw data means further investigation is not feasible.
12.	Alleged misrepresentation of data, including the invention of data and the omission from analysis and publication of inconvenient data	Investigation ongoing

In cases where the allegations of misconduct were upheld or poor research practice was identified, feedback and learning on these has been provided to the departments in question to identify concerns and assist with future training, mentoring and induction processes for researchers.

ii. Allegations considered by the Proctors' Office

In 2021, the Proctors' Office investigated 9 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 were two 'carry forward' cases from 2020 (cases 1 and 2) and one case was ongoing at the end of 2021 (case 9).

Those allegations which were 'not upheld' were regarded, after investigation, as being cases which were unfounded or involved poor academic practice, and so not warranting disciplinary action. These cases were therefore returned to the examiners for finalising in the normal way.

No	Nature of allegation	Outcome
1	Plagiarism	DPhil thesis - not upheld
2	Plagiarism	MSc research project - upheld - mark of 0 - resubmission - cap at pass
3	Fabrication of data	DPhil thesis - no investigation – student subsequently withdrew from programme
4	Plagiarism	MSc dissertation - not upheld
5	Plagiarism	MSc dissertation - not upheld
6	Plagiarism	BA dissertation - not upheld
7	Plagiarism	MSt dissertation - upheld - mark of 0 - resubmission - cap at pass
8	Plagiarism	MSt dissertation - upheld - mark of 0 - resubmission - cap at pass
9	Plagiarism	MSc dissertation - ongoing

Cases received after 1 October 2019 follow amended regulations which allow the Proctors to make decisions previously made by the Academic Conduct Panel (with a right of appeal to an Academic Conduct Appeal Panel)¹.

The Research Integrity and Policy Lead, the University's Research Ethics Committees and the Research Governance Ethics and Assurance Team have all advised on the resolution of various additional concerns relating to research integrity which did not require assessment and investigation under the framework of the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure.

¹University Statute XI: Part C, s35/36 - <https://governance.admin.ox.ac.uk/legislation/statute-xi-university-discipline-0>

Policies and procedures for supporting and promoting research integrity

The University's [Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure](#) (last updated in 2020) 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 it operates in conjunction with a range of other University policies, procedures and codes of practice relating to research integrity. These include the following:

- [Policy on the ethical conduct of research involving human participants and personal data](#)
- [Policy on the use of animals in scientific research](#)
- [Policy and procedure on conflict of interest](#)
- [Public interest disclosure \(whistle-blowing\) code of practice](#)
- [Policy on the management of data supporting research outputs](#)
- [Open Access publications policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Intellectual property policy](#)
- [Harassment Policy](#)
- [Anti-bribery Policy](#)
- [Anti-fraud policy](#)
- [Information Security policy](#)
- [Data protection policy](#)
- [Export controls and research collaborations guidance](#)
- [Safeguarding Code of Practice](#)
- [Security Sensitive Research guidance](#) (reviewed and updated by RIC in 2021)

These policies are subject to ongoing 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 [on the Research Support website](#).