An introduction to the responsible conduct of research

The University provides information and resources about different aspects of the responsible conduct of research. Some of these are specific to certain research disciplines, others are generic to all research. >>>

>>> Specific topics:

- Clinical Trials and Research Governance: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/ctrg]
- Collaborative Research: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/collaboration]
- Conflict of interest: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/integrity/conflict]
- Human participants in research: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/ethics]
- Intellectual property: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/innovation/ip]
- Plagiarism: [www.ox.ac.uk/students/academic.guidance/skills/plagiarism]
- Publication and authorship: [researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/publication]
- Research data and records management: [researchdata.ox.ac.uk]
- Research involving animals: [www.ox.ac.uk/news-and-events/animal-research/animal-welfare]

External resources

- UK Research Integrity Office: [www.ukrc.org]
  The UK Research Integrity Office is an independent body which provides expert advice and guidance about the conduct of research. Covering all subject areas, it offers support in research integrity to the research community, including to individual researchers.
- US Office of Research Integrity: [ori.hhs.gov/education/products]
  The US Office of Research Integrity’s Educational Resources webpage provides free access to a range of materials and online training.

“The scientific enterprise is built on a foundation of trust. Society trusts that scientific research results are an honest and accurate reflection of a researcher’s work. Researchers equally trust that their colleagues have gathered data carefully, have used appropriate analytic and statistical techniques, have reported their results accurately, and have treated the work of other researchers with respect.”

On Being a Scientist: A Guide to Responsible Conduct in Research (2009), Committee on Science, Engineering, and Public Policy.
WHAT IS RESEARCH INTEGRITY?

The terms ‘research integrity’ or the responsible conduct of research are used by institutions to refer to a wide range of areas of research compliance, professional conduct and personal responsibility. For the University as an institution, research integrity is a commitment to creating an environment that promotes responsible conduct by embracing standards of excellence, trustworthiness and lawfulness.

Creating a climate that promotes research integrity requires awareness, openness and communication with regard to competing concerns and interests of various members of the research team, the research community and society as a whole. This takes time and effort, but everyone benefits in the long run.1


1 Description of research integrity is adapted from the US National Academy report Integrity in Scientific Research: Creating an Environment That Promotes Responsible Conduct/Science

CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONDUCT OF RESEARCH?

There are no universally correct ways to do research. There are, however, standards of practice which apply generally. Researchers should:

• be aware of the legislation, codes of practice and University policies relevant to their field;
• have the necessary skills and training for their field;
• be aware of the publication rules for the journals they want to publish in;
• ask if they feel something isn’t quite right;
• not ignore problems;
• be accountable to the University and their peers for the conduct of their research;
• consider all the implications of their research;
• not use their position, status or power to manipulate others;
• be honest and truthful in all aspects of research.$

For individual researchers, research integrity entails a commitment to a range of practices including but not limited to:

• intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research;
• accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports;
• fairness in peer review;
• collegiality in scientific interactions, including communications and sharing of resources;
• transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest;
• protection of human participants in the conduct of research;
• humane care of animals in the conduct of research;
• adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and their research teams.$

Concordat to Support Research

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