



## Report on compliance of Buckinghamshire New University with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity

- 1 The University is committed to upholding the principles described in the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*:
  - Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
  - Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
  - Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
  - Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
  - Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing process regularly and openly.

### Maintaining the highest standards of research integrity

- 2 In line with the Concordat, employees at the University are expected to conduct research according to the highest standards of rigour and integrity. These draw on the core elements of honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect.
- 3 To enable researchers to understand the expected standards required, the University has a Code of Good Research Practice, revised in 2018. This includes a research integrity checklist which lists key points of good practice throughout all stages of a research project and is applicable to all subject areas.

### The conduct of research according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards

- 4 In addition to the [Code of Good Research Practice](#), the University has a number of policies and procedures which support the University's commitment to Research Integrity:
  - [Intellectual Property – Policy and Procedures](#)
  - [Data Protection Policy \(updated 2018\)](#)
  - [Research Ethics Policy \(revised 2018\)](#)
  - [Open Access Policy](#)
  - [Raising issues of concern \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#)
  - [Health and Safety Policy](#)

## Embedding a culture of Research Integrity

- 5 A university-wide ethics framework has been in place in the University since 2013:
  - A University Research Ethics Panel reviews all ethics submissions from employees and research students and considers any other applications referred by sub-committees. Applications from all disciplines use the same form and model documents.
  - All schools are required to establish sub-committees to review ethics submissions for projects undertaken by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students.
  - All school ethics sub-committees provide standardised annual reports to the University Research Ethics Panel.
- 6 A procedure for monitoring and audit of ethics sub-committees is in place. An audit of all sub-committee reviews was completed for 20-21 and recommendations fed back to Schools. Sub-committees are now established for all Schools and disciplines.
- 7 'Ethics' resources have been updated and are now available on the BNU intranet, which is available to all staff and research students. Resources are accessible and continue to be updated in response to panel and researcher needs.
- 8 The University Research Ethics Panel meets monthly to ensure timely consideration of applications. The panel comprises members from all Schools, with some new members nominated annually, helping to promulgate good practice, ensure parity across the University and provide expertise from a range of disciplines. Observers to Panel meetings are welcome, both with regard to transparency and as a development opportunity.
- 9 The University is a member of GuildHE Research, enabling access to sector development events for staff and students and access to research development resources, such as the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner](#) to assist researchers in their professional development and career planning.
- 10 Since 2017, Bucks has been a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). Ethics panel members attend UKRIO annual conferences to support their development and this year have benefitted from the monthly UKRIO webinars.
- 11 Key achievements this year have included a continuation of approval processes during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, with timely provision of guidance regarding resumption of face-to-face interactions with participants. Current guidance will be monitored during the coming year to ensure safe continuation of research.

## Research Misconduct

- 12 A procedure for handling allegations of research misconduct is outlined in the Code of Good Research Practice and is linked to the University's disciplinary procedures.
- 13 In line with the Concordat, the University is committed to using transparent processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they should arise.
- 14 The University has a student complaints policy and set of procedures through which students are able to raise any issues or concerns.

- 15 There have been no formal investigations of staff research misconduct at the University in the 2020/21 academic year.

### **Commitment to Strengthening Research Integrity**

- 16 The steps taken so far have supported and strengthened research integrity at the University. The University is committed to reviewing progress regularly and transparently and to ensuring that decisions are communicated effectively.
- 17 The Research and Enterprise Committee will continue to review this commitment by taking the following actions:
1. Reviewing on a regular basis the number of applications for ethical approval considered by the University Research Ethics Panel and the Ethics Sub-Committees.
  2. Ensuring full coverage in Sub-Committee provision in light of changes in staffing and School structure.
  3. Considering actions to embed the principles of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* in the research activities conducted at the University.
  4. Ensuring that all members of the University Research Ethics Panel and its Sub-Committees receive training on issues relating to good research practice and working with human participants.
  5. Ensuring that all new academic staff receive information regarding research integrity, ethical processes and signposting for further resources.
  6. Audit of ethical review processes against core principles of the new UKRIO/ARMA guidance ("Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations", 2020).
  7. Ensuring research is adapted or paused in line with current government guidelines in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  8. Reviewing processes for allegations of research misconduct to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of the University.
  9. Receiving reports of any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been conducted.

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