



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

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 diverse and inclusive 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.

Promoting high standards of research integrity and positive research culture. Description of actions and activities undertaken

Description of current systems and culture

Policies and systems

- 1 In line with the Concordat, employees at BNU are expected to conduct research according to the highest standards of rigour and integrity. These draw on the core elements of the commitment 1: honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect and accountability.
- 2 BNU has a comprehensive range of policies and systems in place to ensure that research is conducted in accordance with standards of best practice. The University has a [Code of Good Research Practice](#), which includes a research integrity check list with key points of good practice throughout all stages of a research project and is applicable to all subject areas. In addition to this, the following policies of particular relevance to this concordat are the following:
 - [BNU Knowledge Archive Policy](#)
 - [Data Protection Policy](#)
 - [Health and Safety Policy](#)
 - [Intellectual Property – Policy and Procedures](#)
 - [Intellectual Property- Guidelines for staff](#)
 - [Open Access Policy](#)
 - [Research Data Management Policy](#)

- [Research Ethics Policy](#)
- [Whistleblowing \(Raising Concerns\) Policy and Procedure](#)

Communications

- 3 BNU has an internal communications platform which is designed to ensure staff have access to relevant news, blogs, training, events and intranet pages. In 2023/24, BNU conducted a full overhaul of its research intranet pages to ensure the information, tools and templates provided support researchers to understand and act according to expected standards, values and behaviours. For example, the newly published Research Data Management Policy has an accompanying area on the staff intranet providing information, tools, templates, tips and links to support the principles detailed within the policy.
- 4 In addition to the staff intranet pages, there is a revised communication plan to ensure that all staff are aware of key sector updates, seminars, workshops, training and funding opportunities.

Sector engagement

- 5 The University is a member of the following sector networks. Each network contributes to fostering a positive research culture:
 - Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU). A global network of 400+ universities with a shared commitment to building a better world through international collaboration in higher education. This network provides funding opportunities for both staff and students, projects, programmes, policies.
 - GuildHE Research. Membership to this group ensures that ensures that BNU has a voice in policymaking and remains informed of sector trend and processes, systems and engagement are aligned with best sector practices. Through the membership of GuildHE Research, BNU provides opportunities to staff and students for sector development and networking events. As well as membership subscription discounts to tools such as the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner](#) and the publication repository.
 - Oxford – Cambridge ARC Universities Group. This regional group provides thought leadership and networking, as well as hosting key sector speakers, annual research student summit and events.
 - Research and Enterprise Network for Universities (RENU). A voluntary network of university managers and practitioners who have a role in research, enterprise and innovation.
 - Research Vitae Membership. Supports the professional development of researchers through research and innovation, training and resources, events, consultancy and membership.
 - UK Council for Graduate Education (UKCGE). The representative body for postgraduate education and research, this membership provides training and events tailored specifically for research students and supervisors.
 - University of East Anglia (UEA). Online training programme for Research Students.

- UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO). A membership dedicated to promoting integrity and high ethical standards in research. BNU staff can obtain information, guidance and thought leadership pieces, attend webinars, roundtable events and the annual symposium as well as access to training.

Culture, development and leadership

- 6 In 2024, BNU launched its [BNU Inclusive Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy](#), with a key strategic aim to “[t]o build an inclusive research and knowledge exchange strategy that actively promotes diversity in all its forms, ensures equitable access to research opportunities, and cultivates an environment where all voices are heard, valued and celebrated. In doing so, we aim to foster a high-impact research community that reflects the richness of the world it seeks to understand and improve”. Activities are focused around three key themes: enabling, enacting and impacting.

The following activities are examples of ways in which a culture of inclusive research has been fostered:

- Delivery of the Research and Enterprise Conference 2024- Empowerment through Research: Bridging Academia and Society.
- Monthly program of internal seminars, colloquiums, training and workshops delivered across the year on core topics such as data collection and data analysis management.
- Externally delivered, self-paced research skills training, including access to a module dedicated to ethical research.
- Internal funding initiatives to support industry and HEI collaborations, as well as knowledge exchange.
- Development of an Early Career Researcher Network called ‘The Researcher's Plexus - an inclusive BNU network’ (planned launch in 2024).

Monitoring and reporting

- 7 The University is committed to reviewing progress regularly and ensuring decisions are transparent and communicated effectively. To achieve this aim, the following monitoring and reporting mechanisms are in place:

7.1 Policy Oversight Group (POG)

All policies are overseen, reviewed and ratified by POG. This ensures best practice and consistency across all of the University’s practices.

7.2 Research and Enterprise Committee (REC)

REC is a Standing Committee of Senate and has oversight of all research activities and ensures alignment to and compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity. REC reports to BNU’s Senate. REC meets twice per year and continually review this commitment by taking the following actions:

- Review and approve sub-strategies to the University’s strategy relating to:

research and the research environment; the delivery of the impact of research, knowledge exchange and enterprise and research degrees.

- Review and approve policies and regulations relating to research and the research environment;
- Ensure appropriate structures are in place to promote innovation and impact in research and the dissemination of good practice.
- Assure the delivery, standard and experience of research students.
- Receive assurance that: processes are enhancing the quality of research and enterprise within the University;
- Review the activity and decisions of the University Research Ethics Panel and the Ethics Sub-Committees.
- Review processes for allegations of research misconduct to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of the University.
- Receive reports of any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been conducted.

7.3 University Ethics Panel (UEP)

A university-wide ethics framework has been in place in the University since 2013:

- The UEP 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 UEP.
- School ethics sub-committees are audited annually by the UEP. A comprehensive audit of these committees was undertaken in June 2024 and recommendations were fed back to Schools.
- Ethics and research integrity resources are available on the staff intranet, for all staff and research students. A full review and update of these resources was undertaken in 2024. This included a newly written ethics policy and guidance document, which places greater emphasis on inclusive, liberatory, and sustainable approaches to research.
- All members of the UEP are required to undertake two online learning modules on ethical research to ensure they follow best practice. This is delivered through Epigeum, a leading provider of online courses in the HE sector. All ethics panel members continue to have access to Epigeum during the course of their tenure.
- UEP 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 to ensure transparency and as a development opportunity.

Research Misconduct

- 8 In line with the Concordat, BNU is committed to using transparent processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they should arise. 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. In addition, BNU has a student complaints policy and set of procedures through which students are able to raise any issues or concerns.

- 9 There have been no formal investigations of staff research misconduct at the University in the 2023/24 academic year.

Changes and developments during the period under review

- 10 For 2023/24, the following new initiatives have been undertaken:
 - Launch and implementation of the [BNU Inclusive Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy](#). The current year has seen some changes and most critically, key staff have now been positioned to implement the core components- for example five new Professors have been hired to develop and launch the research centres, research leads have been identified for each School within BNU, as well as an Impact Lead appointed to lead on the Impact Creation Team.
 - Comprehensive review of research related policies and procedures. This process has also involved establishing supporting tools, processes and systems where appropriate. For example, an Impact Toolkit and Research Toolkit have now been launched.
 - Development of a communications plan and events calendar to disseminate research news, activities, events and training to the BNU community as a whole.
 - Launch of internal funding schemes to facilitate collaborations with both HEI and industry.
 - Expansion of the training and events provision, for example the launch of the BNU Research and Enterprise annual conference, new seminars/ workshops delivered on research funding opportunities, consultancy, social media and managing research budgets.
 - Commissioning of a Research Information Management System. This system is due to go live in 2024/25 and will provide a comprehensive picture of research activity, expertise and facilities across BNU.
 - Launch of Funding Institutional. A research funding database designed to support researchers search for funding opportunities.
- 11 BNU subscribes to external training provider (Epigeum), this ensures that courses are continually updated in line with industry standards.

Reflections on progress and plans for future developments

- 12 The implementation of the [BNU Inclusive Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy](#) is an ongoing process and will drive activity and change through to 2028. Some examples of planned changes underway are the launch of 'The Researcher's Plexus - an inclusive BNU network', launch of five new Research Centres, consolidation and

formalisation of Research Groups and the development of an Impact Creation Team.

- 13 In addition to this, the research management system is due to go live in 2024/25 and this will be transformative for BNU. It will bring together all of the research activity across BNU, providing an internal and external holistic view of BNU activity.

Addressing research misconduct

Statement on processes that the organisation has in place for dealing with allegations of misconduct

- 14 BNU considers misconduct in research a serious matter. Equally, all investigations of misconduct in research should maintain the highest standards of integrity, accuracy and fairness. All proceedings are conducted under the presumption of innocence and carried out with sensitivity and confidentiality. Those who raise legitimate concerns will not be penalised in any way. Staff are also referred to BNU's [Whistleblowing \(Raising Concerns\) Policy and Procedure](#).
- 15 Action may be taken for staff suspected of research misconduct under the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Action may be taken for students under the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).
- 16 Relevant policies are as follows:
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
 - [Whistleblowing \(Raising Concerns\) Policy and Procedure](#)
 - [Student bullying and harassment policy](#)
 - Disciplinary Policy and Procedure (available on the BNU staff intranet)
 - Respect, fairness and inclusion policy (available on the BNU staff intranet)

Information on investigations of research misconduct that have been undertaken

Type of allegation	Number of allegations			
	Number of allegations reported to the organisation	Number of formal investigations	Number upheld in part after formal investigation	Number upheld in full after formal investigation
Fabrication	0	0	0	0
Falsification	0	0	0	0
Plagiarism	0	0	0	0
Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations	0	0	0	0
Misrepresentation (eg data; involvement; interests;	0	0	0	0

qualification; and/or publication history)				
Improper dealing with allegations of misconduct	0	0	0	0
Multiple areas of concern (when received in a single allegation)	0	0	0	0
<i>Other*</i>	0	0	0	0
Total:	0	0	0	0
*If you listed any allegations under the 'Other' category, please give a brief, high-level summary of their type here. Do not give any identifying or confidential information when responding.				
<i>[Please insert response if applicable]</i>				

