Annual Research Integrity Statement - 2016

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity recommends that an institution should provide an 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 (for example postgraduate and researcher training, or process reviews)

- 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 Committee[2] 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. Activities to support and strengthen 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

a. Online training

There are five online training courses[3] available in research integrity (licensed from the company Epigeum Limited, now part of Oxford University Press) which provide an introduction to research integrity (or 'the responsible conduct of research'). These are available in different discipline-specific versions as follows:

- Biomedical Sciences
- Natural and Physical Sciences
- Engineering and Technology

[2] As set out in Council Regulations 15 of 2002 (http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/statutes/regulations/520-122z.shtml), Research 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

- Arts and Humanities
- Social and Behavioural Sciences

All of these courses are freely available to any University researcher or student and have been customised for the University so that they include links to Oxford-specific policies and procedures where these relate to research integrity. The courses are widely promoted (particularly at graduate induction events), including by the University's human research ethics committees, the University's Divisional representatives coordinating the provision of training to research staff and students, by the Doctoral Training Centres and some departments. Whilst the use of these courses is not mandatory, certain departments have introduced a requirement for students enrolled on certain courses to complete the relevant subject-specific module.

Online training in avoiding plagiarism[1] (also licensed from Epigeum Limited) is also available to members of the University and is widely promoted, particularly to new students, as recommended by the Education Committee.

Further online training from `external' providers is available and promoted via the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) website[2], such as the Medical Research Council (MRC) e-Learning module on Good Research Practice and the Research Ethics Online (Global Health Network) course, which covers ethical considerations in international health research.

b. Other training

In addition to the online courses above, there is a wide variety of training and other professional development related to research integrity organised by the University's Academic Divisions, Departments and Faculties, Doctoral Training Centres and Research Services. These include:

- `In-person' research integrity courses for DPhil students and research staff (designed to blend with the online research integrity courses mentioned above).
- Induction training for research students (in particular, that provided by the Doctoral Training Centres).
- Training in Good Clinical Practice (for researchers involved with clinical trials and clinical research) is offered by the Clinical Trials and Research Governance Team. This is available via regular face-to-face sessions, online training or as bespoke provision.[4]
- A wide range of online and face-to-face courses covering research ethics (tailored by research discipline) including how to submit an application to the University's human research ethics committees.[5]
- Discipline-specific research methodology seminars, which also address ethical issues relevant to the norms and field of research.[6]
- Training and events to support research data management.[7]

[1] https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:skills:generic:avoidplag

[2] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/training/

[4] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/ctrg/training/gcpoxford/

[5] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/training/

[6] http://researchtraining.socsci.ox.ac.uk/course-directory?course_type=1

[7] http://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/acit-rs-team/advice/rdmcourses/, http://datalib.edina.ac.uk/mantra/index.html

- Termly networking meetings for Chairs and Administrators of Departmental (Human) Research Ethics Committees (DRECs)[1] designed to discuss new or revised policies/procedures, topical issues and to encourage the sharing of good practice.
- A wide range of academic and research skills training[2] designed, for example, to
    - support research students in planning and managing a DPhil (including working with a supervisor)
    - support researchers in preparing for publication and authorship
    - provide information and guidance around peer review
    - prepare researchers for conducting overseas fieldwork
    - develop researchers' skills in leadership and networking.

ii) Other initiatives

A range of mentoring schemes for researchers is available, together with advice for departments interested in setting up their own local schemes.[3]

At induction events for new research staff and students, some Departments and Divisions make use of the Responsible Conduct of Research Checklist (available via the Research Ethics and Integrity website) [4] either distributing this, or using this as the basis for developing training activity.

iii) Brochures

The University's brochure, entitled *`Research Integrity: an introduction to the responsible conduct of research'* was first published in 2012. This continues to be widely distributed to new researchers and students by departments, faculties and Doctoral Training Centres, including at induction and related training events. It is also on display and available for distribution in many University departments, helping to maintain staff awareness of related issues.

In 2016, a new leaflet was published entitled *`Research ethics and human participants'*, which has been designed to provide information for University researchers about human research ethics, and how to apply for ethical review of research involving human participants and personal data.

Both leaflets are available as downloads from the Research Ethics and Integrity website[5].

2. Policy and process reviews

i) Human research ethics committees

In 2016, the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) CUREC undertook a self-review of its purpose and operations, resulting in certain changes to its procedures and terms of reference[6].

[1] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/about/drecs/

[2] http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/skillstraining/coursecatalogue/allcourses, http://researchtraining.socsci.ox.ac.uk/ , http://www.mpls.ox.ac.uk/training

[3] http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/resources/mentoring/

[4] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/

[5] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/

[6] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/

CUREC also approved:

- a major update of its 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.

- guidance for researchers applying for ethical review, whose research may come within the scope of the `Prevent Duty', which requires Higher Education Institutions to have due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism.[1]

The Medical Sciences Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the processes (and information required of researchers) to review and approve research involving the use of licensed drugs, resulting in a substantial streamlining of the application process for such studies.

The Research Ethics and Integrity Team (part of Research Services, and which supports the human research ethics committees) also developed a closer working relationship with the Academic Research Support IT team[2], as a key part of enhancing the advice offered to researchers on how best to manage their research data, particularly if that data is sensitive or includes personal information.

ii) Research involving animals

The Committee on Animal Care and Ethical Review produced a comprehensive annual report to Council for 2015-16, summarising the work of the Committee and the six Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Bodies, as well as training and public engagement work. This was published in the *University Gazette* on 8 December 2016.

iii) Export controls

During 2016 the University continued its programme of activities designed to support researchers to meet their obligations under Export Control legislation. This included communication with those departments most affected, periodic news items for researchers and research administrators, and updates to the Research Services' Export Controls web site[4]. Advice was provided to researchers to assist them with applications to the UK approvals' agency. The University helped to organise and host in November 2016 the first national workshop on 'Export Controls and Academia' led by the UK Government Export Control Organisation and Professor Ian Stewart from King's College London (the event was held with support from the Association of Research Managers and Administrators).

iv) Handling sensitive research materials

Statutory guidance on the `Prevent Duty' for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in England and Wales, and related advice from HEFCE - the HE-sector Prevent regulator – requires HEIs to ensure

[1] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/resources/bestpractice/

[2] https://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/acit-rs-team/

[4] http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/contracts/export/

appropriate policies and procedures are in place for 'students and staff working on sensitive or extremism-related research.' Research Committee considered in June 2016 whether any additional measures should be undertaken by the Divisions or Services to further support and assist Oxford's researchers with these issues. The advice paper to the Research Committee had particular regard to a Universities UK guidance paper entitled 'Oversight of security-sensitive research material in UK universities.' Following discussions with HEFCE and queries from researchers and research administrators, the University's Prevent Duty Steering Group drafted guidance for researchers (for approval by the University Research Committee in Hilary Term 2017).

v) Conflict of interest

In 2016, the University's internal auditors, PwC, undertook an audit of the processes for controlling and obtaining assurance over the management of conflicts of interest. The audit team inter alia reviewed the Conflict of Interest Policy and related processes to identify, recognise and manage conflicts of interest; talked with members of the Council Secretariat with responsibility for managing the Conflict of Interest Committee; met with central service departments including Procurement and Research Services; and visited several academic departments. The audit letter setting out the findings and recommendation was accepted by the Audit and Scrutiny Committee. The Conflict of Interest Committee is overseeing a range of activities in 2017 drawn from the auditors' Road Map that aim to strengthen awareness of the Policy and compliance

3. 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. The University is closely involved with the activities of the following groups:

i) Russell Group Research Integrity Forum
The Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) is a member of this network and was a presenter and facilitator at its 2016 workshop (held at the University of Nottingham in October 2016), themed around `Building a Culture of Research Integrity'. Other work undertaken by this group in 2016 included input to the consultation around the Parliamentary Office of Science and Integrity (POST) note entitled `Integrity in Research' (published January 2017) which discusses trends and developments in fraud, misconduct and mistakes in research and the publication of research results.

ii) League of European Research Universities (LERU)
The Director of Research Services and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) continued to play a leading role in the LERU Research Integrity Expert Group and convening its (virtual) meetings. In 2016, this included:

- Attending and speaking at the LERU Research Integrity two-day workshop, held at Lund University, Sweden in March 2016 (and developing the programme for this).

- Contributing to the LERU input to the consultation on the revision of the ALLEA (the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities) European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

iii) UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)

The University continues to be a subscribing member of UKRIO. Members of the Research Ethics and Integrity team attended the UKRIO annual conference in 2016 and provided input to UKRIO consultations on new best practice guidance (specifically around internet-based research). UKRIO 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.

4. Investigations of allegations of misconduct in research undertaken in 2016

Under the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure[1], 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 2017.

i) Allegations notified to the Registrar's Office

In 2016, 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 allegations which were received before 2016, where the ensuing investigation was concluded in 2016. 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 made in 2015 of plagiarism against staff at Oxford and another university	Preliminary investigation conducted by the lead (third-party) institution concluded that there was no evidence of plagiarism. No further investigation was required by Oxford

[1] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/researchintegrity/

2.	Allegation made in 2015 of failure to attribute authorship and plagiarism	Not upheld, but the Registrar requested a correction to the journal article in question.
3.	Allegation made in 2015 of selective and misleading presentation of data	Full investigation concluded that there was no evidence of research misconduct. Not upheld.
4.	Allegation of misrepresented data in publications	Allegation made directly to the research funder (by a third-party), then reported by the funder to the researcher. Funder conducted a detailed analysis of the allegation and dismissed the complaint.
5.	Allegation of plagiarism	Preliminary investigation led to the complaint being dismissed. Honest error, not misconduct in research.
6.	Allegation of plagiarism of study methodology	Investigation ongoing.
7.	Anonymous allegations of manipulation of figures in various journal articles	Funder of the research (which received the allegations at the same time as the University) conducted a preliminary review of the allegations. Arising from this, a number of errors in the journal articles were identified, which are being corrected (but do not require the articles to be retracted). This review concluded that no further investigation was warranted.
8.	Allegations concerning data ownership	Dismissed after preliminary review. Subject of complaint was outside the scope of the student's Oxford-based research.
9.	Allegation of plagiarism	Dismissed as being outside the scope of the University's Procedure (allegation related to an article published in 1998).

ii) Allegations considered by the Proctors' Office

In 2016, the Proctors' Office investigated a number of student cases relating to work submitted for examination (i.e. theses and dissertations, as well as extended 'research' project reports and essays). These are summarised below (there were no 'carry forward' cases from 2015).

Those allegations which were not upheld (i.e. numbers 1-3 below) were regarded, after investigation, as being cases of poor academic practice, rather than of dishonesty warranting a

referral to the Student Disciplinary Panel (SDP). These cases were therefore returned to the examiners for marking in the normal way.

No	Nature of allegation	Outcome
1.	Plagiarism	Not upheld
2.	Plagiarism	Not upheld
3.	Plagiarism	Not upheld
4.	Plagiarism	Investigation ongoing

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 Committee on 23 January 2017.

24 January 2017

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 http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/about/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 http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/conflict/policy/
- 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/790-121.shtml#_Toc28143157
- 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
- University Policy 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://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/contracts/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://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/policies/ .