Annual Research Integrity Statement 2023-24

1. General Context

1.1. Oxford Brookes University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research, ensuring that our research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, as set out in the Universities UK Concordat to support research integrity. This concordat provides a comprehensive national framework for good research conduct and its governance, underpinned by best practice and support for the development of researchers. It also sets out expectations that Universities will have transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.

1.2. The University already has policies covering academic integrity and how to deal with reports of misconduct which can be found, along with other support policy documents on the Research Support Policies, Procedures and Codes of Practice webpages.

1.3. Policies related to research involving human participants, including security-sensitive research, are located on the Research Ethics Policies and Procedures webpages.

1.4. Codes of conduct for staff are located on the Employment Policies and Guidance webpages. Student Conduct regulations and Procedure are found on the Regulations for Study webpages. The Annual Research Integrity Statement is reported to the Board of Governors each year, and the University also publishes it on its dedicated Research Integrity webpage.

1.5. This Research Integrity Statement covers the academic year 2023-2024 and summarises the University's status relative to the expectations of the Concordat. It outlines actions and activities undertaken in support of fostering a culture of research integrity, and provides a high-level summary of investigations (if any) of research misconduct that have been undertaken by the University.

1.6. The Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships, is responsible for institutional oversight on matters relating to research integrity. She reports to the University's Board of Governors on an annual basis on any reports of misconduct (last report made in July 2023). She works closely with staff across the University ensuring that appropriate standards of academic integrity are maintained.

1.7. In addition to processes relating to staff, research students are introduced to the University's academic integrity policies and procedures during their mandatory induction - which is run three times a year - and receive instruction about the University's stance on attribution and plagiarism in academic writing. As part of the Research Degrees Committee's Annual Progress Monitoring

process, research students' work is reviewed to ensure they are working within the scope of the University's regulations and policies covering academic integrity. All students are required to submit a chapter of their thesis or piece of academic writing through Turnitin during the annual monitoring process. A training session on data management, storage, archiving and sharing is run annually and is open to all research students. In addition, as part of the formal Registration process, all research students are required to provide details of how their data will be stored and managed during the course of the programme, and how it will be archived on completion of the degree.

1.8. The University has a well-established research ethics process (see also more details below), which adheres to the principles of the UKRI and ESRC ethics in research guidelines. As part of this process, all staff and research students are offered research ethics training and support both at faculty and university level. The University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) acts as the parent committee to two Research Ethics Sub-Committees. It strategically reviews and updates University research ethics guidance, policies and procedures in the light of external best practice and of funders, professional, and statutory body requirements.

The Cross-Faculty Research Ethics Sub-Committee (CRES) and the Health & Social Care Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSCRES) meet twelve times a year. They are responsible for the review of research studies by staff and postgraduate research students involving human participants, or the collection of human data or material, across all Faculties and Directorates. The membership is comprised of a Chair, appointed by the University's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC); the University Research Ethics Officer; Research Ethics Officers with expertise from each of the faculties; a Research Ethics Officer to oversee applications from the Directorates; an internal expert on data protection and information compliance; a PhD student representative and external lay members from the local community with no links to the University.

2. **Named contact for Academic Integrity issues**

2.1. The named contact for any initial issues concerning research integrity is Joanne Begiato, Chair of the Research Integrity and Governance Steering Group, who liaises with the Pro Vice Chancellor, Research and Global Partnerships on the appropriate way to respond to the concern, invoking the agreed procedures where necessary.

3. **Updates this year**

3.1. The University, as part of its ongoing commitment to Research Integrity, continues to review policy and procedure in line with changing statutory requirements.

3.2. A new Research Integrity webpage is now live and continues to be updated regularly. For the next academic year, this will include details of the revised Due Diligence process. It ensures

that those at Oxford Brookes and the public can easily access the University's integrity statements, policies and procedures.

3.3.   The Research Culture and Practice team is now fully staffed, within the Directorate of Research, Innovation and Enterprise, and is working to support researchers and enhance existing culture and practice.

3.4.   A review of the re-structured Research Ethics Committees, process and culture will be undertaken before the next academic year.

3.5.   The University subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office and the Research Culture and Practice Manager will attend the UKRIO Annual Subscriber Day on 24th May 2023.

3.6.   IT Services continue to provide their mandatory online training in data security and data protection for all staff, which includes sections on research data. The University achieved the globally recognised information security certificate ISO/IEC 27001 in June 2019.

3.7.   The Research Integrity and Governance Steering Group (RI&G) met twice a semester. It has approved updated Research Data Management and Security Sensitive Material policies, convened a working group tasked with developing an Open Research Policy and reviewed the new process for the Ethics Review of Research Involving Animals. In addition, it is currently updating the process and policy on Due Diligence to meet new government requirements.

3.8.   The University is a partner in a large UKRN funded project on Open Research. As an element of this project, the Open Research Project Manager, who sits in the Research, Innovation and Enterprise Directorate, has developed a new Open Research webpage and is currently developing a range of bite-sized training sessions to cover various aspects of Open Research.

3.9.   The University continues to licence Studyline, a project and portfolio management software developed specifically for the management of clinical studies. The licence enables the maintenance of studies, as well as overall oversight, for all partners involved in those studies.

3.10.   An AI and research working group has been created, following discussions at Research Integrity & Governance Steering Group, to address a rapidly growing and changing area and to guide staff on use of GenAI in research. The working group, led by Professor Nigel Crook, Associate Dean for Research & Knowledge Exchange in the Faculty of Technology, Design & Environment, will develop university policy and guidance on when it is appropriate to use GenAI. Membership includes the Research Culture and Practice Manager. A survey was circulated in the Spring to all researchers and professional services staff who support research to inform the policy, focused on current use of AI, opinions on the risks and the benefits, and useful resources. Research Student and Supervisor training on use of AI will follow in the next academic year.

4. **Events**

4.1. The University's training programme for research-active academics and research-only staff sits under the umbrella accredited training programme, 'EXPLORE@Brookes' (EXcellence in Promoting Leadership Of Research and Education). The following six mandatory University Research & KE training sessions have a focus on integrity and run annually:

4.1.1. 'University Research Induction' – Covers internal and external integrity policies, concordats, ethic and misconduct.

4.1.2. 'Applying for External Research Grants' – Includes information on costing the project budget, support available and applying a gender dimension to research, from planning the project design through to dissemination of results.

4.1.3. 'Managing an External Research Grant' – Focuses on the responsibilities of the Principal Investigator in managing the project and managing staff. It covers where to find post-award support, including open access and publishing, research ethics, data management, contracts and information on financial management of the project budget, auditing and reporting.

4.1.4. 'Navigating the Research Ethics Approval Process' – This session is mandatory for new starters whose research involves human participants, human material or personal data and is open as a refresher to all research-active staff. Covers procedures for obtaining research ethics approval from the University Research Ethics Sub-Committees and who can help at Faculty and University levels.

4.1.5. 'Research Integrity' – Covers different aspects of research integrity and how they are incorporated into ways of working at Oxford Brookes. Training provides an overview of the University's Code of Practice for Academic Integrity, including principles of good research practice and procedures for investigating allegations of research misconduct, along with the University's commitment to the external Concordat to Support Research Integrity, Concordat on Open Research Data, and DORA.

4.1.6. 'Research Data Management' – Covers data protection, data sharing and open access publishing, IT resources and data management planning.

4.1.7. In addition to the 6 mandatory sessions, the University Research & KE training programme includes an optional training event on "IP for Researchers", which covers the basics of intellectual property, identifies the different types of IP, and provides an overview of copyright, patents, trademarks and university policies and regulations.

4.1.8. A new optional session, "What can Open Research do for you?" has been added to the training programme for 23/24 and is due to take place in June 2024. This event aims to

define Open Research, explain the benefits and the support available, provide an overview of Open Access and outline the University's role in a large UK Reproducibility Network (UKRN) Open Research Project.

4.2.   The Graduate College training delivered in the 23/24 academic year included the following sessions for research students and supervisors:

4.2.1.   Copyright for research students: RADAR and submitting the electronic version of your thesis (students)

4.2.2.   Supporting your research students to manage their research records and make a data management plan (supervisors); Publishing your research data, with particular focus on Oxford Brookes' institutional repository RADAR (students)

4.2.3.   Training to Enable Supervisors and Research Students to Develop Applications for Ethical Approval (students and supervisors)

4.2.4.   Managing your research records and your data management plan (students)

4.2.5.   Research integrity at Brookes - a brief guide to general principles (students)

5.   **Misconduct report**

5.1.   There were no on-going investigations from previous years.

5.2.   At the time of writing, there were no new investigations initiated in 2023-24.

Professor Linda King

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