



## 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

#### 1. Description of current systems and culture

##### Policies and systems

- 1.1 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.
- 1.2 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 check list with key points of good practice throughout all stages of a research project and is applicable to all subject areas.
- 1.3 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 \(currently under review\)](#)
  - [Data Protection Policy \(updated 2019\)](#)
  - [Research Ethics Policy \(revised 2019\)](#)
  - [Open Access Policy \(under review\)](#)
  - [Raising issues of concern \(Whistleblowing\) Policy](#)

- [Health and Safety Policy](#)

## Communications and engagement

- 1.4 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.
- 1.5 Since 2017, Bucks has been a member of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and completed their institutional self-assessment in 2017-18. Ethics panel members can attend UKRIO annual conferences and monthly webinars to support their development.

## Culture, development and leadership

- 1.6 The University strives to foster a supportive, diverse and inclusive research environment which encourages best practice and research integrity, underpinned by good governance. The following activities are examples of ways in which this is fostered:
  - Clear policies, practices and procedures to support researchers. Policies are overseen by the University's Policy Oversight Group and all changes must be ratified by them. This ensures best practice and consistency across all of the University's practices.
  - Externally delivered, self-paced research skills training, including access to a module dedicated to ethical research. Internally delivered training and development programmes on relevant topics such as data collection workshops and data analysis workshops.
  - Clearly defined monitoring and reporting processes to ensure transparency.

## Monitoring and reporting

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

## Research and Enterprise Committee (REC)

- 1.8 REC has oversight of all research activities and ensures alignment to and compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.
- 1.9 REC meets on a quarterly basis and continually review this commitment by taking the following actions:
  - Reviewing on a regular basis the number of applications for ethical approval considered by the University Research Ethics Panel and the Ethics Sub-Committees.
  - Ensuring full coverage in Sub-Committee provision in light of changes in staffing and School structure.
  - Considering actions to embed the principles of the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity* in the research activities conducted at the University.
  - 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

- Ensuring that all new academic staff receive information regarding research integrity, ethical processes and signposting for further resources.
- Audit of ethical review processes against core principles of the new UKRIO/ARMA guidance (“Research Ethics Support and Review in Research Organisations”, 2020).
- Reviewing processes for allegations of research misconduct to ensure they are appropriate to the needs of the University.
- Receiving reports of any formal investigations of research misconduct that have been conducted.

## **University Ethics Panel (UEP)**

- 1.10 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 2023 and recommendations were fed back to Schools.
  - ‘Ethics’ resources are available on the BNU intranet, for all staff and research students. Resources are accessible and continue to be updated in response to panel and researcher needs.
  - 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.
  - The 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, both with regard to transparency and as a development opportunity.

## **Research Misconduct**

- 1.11 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.
- 1.12 In line with the Concordat, the University is committed to using transparent processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they should arise.
- 1.13 The University has a student complaints policy and set of procedures through which students are able to raise any issues or concerns.
- 1.14 There have been no formal investigations of staff research misconduct at the University in the 2022/23 academic year.

## **2. Changes and developments during the period under review**

- As the University subscribes to external training provider (Epigeum), courses are continually updated in line with industry standards.

### **3. Reflections on progress and plans for future developments**

- The University plans to review and refresh the training and development programme, as well as a revised communications strategy.
- The University plans to strengthen its civic engagement, ensuring this is truly and inclusive and diverse culture.

