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*:

- Maintaining 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, 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 of researchers, the University has a Code of Good Research Practice. 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

- Ethics Policy

- Open Access Policy

- Raising issues of concern (Whistleblowing) Policy

- Health and Safety Policy

Embedding a culture of Research Integrity

5   An ethics framework has been in place in the University since 2013.

- A University Ethics Panel utilises a University-wide ethics submission form to review all ethics submissions from employees and research students and to receive any other applications referred by sub-committees.

- All departments/schools are required to establish sub-committees to review ethics submissions for projects undertaken by undergraduate and taught postgraduate students.

- All departmental ethics sub-committees provide standardised reports to the University Ethics Panel

- In 2017 a new ethics sub-committee was established to provide a light touch review process for pedagogic research conducted by staff.

6   A procedure for monitoring and audit of ethics sub-committees is in place.

7   External ethics proposals submitted by employees of Bucks (e.g. to NHS Ethics Committees) are reported to the University Ethics Panel. A flow chart of the internal process is available on Blackboard.

8   All proposals from external researchers seeking access to Bucks employees/students are reviewed and recorded through the University Ethics Panel ensuring that the appropriate approvals have been given.

9   An 'Ethics' organisation is available in Blackboard that is accessible by all staff and students and contains various resources, model templates and meeting dates.

10   All University Ethics Panel members and Sub-Committee Leads are able to upload resources to the Ethics Blackboard organisation.

11   The University Ethics Panel meets monthly to ensure timely consideration of applications.

12   The membership of the University Ethics Panel is large with members expected to attend a minimum of 4 meetings per year. The large membership helps to promulgate good practice and ensure parity across the University.

13   Some of the University Ethics Panel Members have formal qualifications in ethics, and a requirement has been introduced for University Ethics Panel and Ethics Sub-Committee members to receive training in ethics issues. This entails completing online modules in 'Good Research Practice' and 'Working with human subjects' followed up by a meeting to discuss the content with other members.

14   Two further development sessions for academics and research students took place in 2016-17 led by a visiting academic from Coventry University with specialist knowledge: a lunchtime RED Bite about the ethical implications of practice-based research and a workshop presented to an Arts and Creative Industries School meeting.

15   The Chief Executive of the UK Research Integrity Office gave a presentation at the University's Staff Development Conference in March 2017.

16   Observers to Panel meetings are welcome, both with regard to transparency and as a development opportunity.

17   In 2016, UCFB, a partner college of Bucks, set up their own sub-committee for ethical review of undergraduate research and the Lead has joined the University research Ethics Panel.

18   Guidelines for the recruitment of participants are available which stipulate that all applications should be given a reference number to be quoted when recruiting participants along with the name of the committee that gave the approval.

19   The University has made a commitment to supporting researcher development through a subscription to the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework Planner](#) to assist researchers in their professional development and career planning. This also enables the University to signpost development resources to researchers.

20   Ethical considerations have been embedded in course validation and re-validation procedures.

21   Guidance is now available for obtaining informed consent to enable future re-use of data in line with the move towards open access data sharing.

Research Misconduct

22   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.

23   In line with the Concordat, the University is committed to using transparent processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they should arise.

24   The University has a student complaints policy and set of procedures through which students are able to raise any issues or concerns.

25   There have been no formal investigations of staff research misconduct at the University in the 2016/17 academic year.

Commitment to Strengthening Research Integrity

26   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.

27   The Research and Enterprise Committee will continue to review this commitment by taking the following actions:

- Reviewing on a regular basis the number of applications for ethical approval considered by the University Ethics Panel and the Ethics Sub-Committees.

- Ensuring full coverage in Sub-Committee provision in light of changes in departmental 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 Ethics Panel and its Sub-Committees receive training on issues relating to good research practice and working with human participants.

- 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.