

# Guidelines

## Code of Good Research Practice

Effective from November 2018

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**Note:** Hyperlinks have been provided for ease of reference. For other documents please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governanceand-policies/policies>) or visit the Research ethics and integrity webpage <https://bucks.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity>

## Introduction

- 1 In line with the UK funding bodies' definition, research is defined as 'a process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared...It includes work of direct relevance to the needs of commerce, industry, and to the public and voluntary sectors; scholarship; the invention and generation of ideas, images, performances, artefacts including design, where these lead to new or substantially improved insights; and the use of existing knowledge in experimental development to produce new or substantially improved materials, devices, products and processes, including design and construction.'
- 2 Buckinghamshire New University (the University) expects that all its researchers observe the highest standards in the conduct of their research and that the following principles and standards should be observed and understood. The University is committed to the [Universities UK \(2012\) Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#).
- 3 This document draws heavily from the guidance provided by the UK Research Integrity Office, an independent body which provides expert advice and guidance about the conduct of research.
- 4 This is a live document which continues to be developed and as such will be reviewed and monitored regularly.

## Scope

- 5 This code of practice applies to all researchers, defined as all employees engaged in research, students of the University and other individuals who are undertaking research using University premises or facilities, and/or under the auspices of the University.

## Principles

- 6 The University and its researchers are guided by the following principles when implementing and complying with the core standards described below and the Recommended Checklist for Researchers in Appendix 2.
- 7 **Excellence** –striving for excellence when conducting research and aiming to produce and disseminate work of the highest quality.
- 8 **Honesty** – creating and maintaining a culture of research that fosters and supports honesty in research. Researchers should be honest in relation to their own research and that of others. They should do their utmost to ensure the accuracy of data and results, acknowledge the contribution of others, and neither engage in misconduct nor conceal it.
- 9 **Integrity** – compliance with all legal and ethical requirements relevant to a researcher's field of study. Any potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to research should be declared and where necessary, steps taken to resolve them.

- 10 **Co-operation** – promote open exchange of ideas, research methods, data and results and their discussion, scrutiny and debate, subject to any considerations of confidentiality.
- 11 **Accountability** – recognition that the University is ultimately accountable to the general public and should act accordingly. Any research undertaken should comply with any agreements, terms and conditions relating to the project, and allow for proper governance and transparency. Researchers should follow the requirements and guidance of any professional bodies in their field of research. Researchers who are members of a regulated profession should follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession.
- 12 **Training and Skills** – provision of training and opportunities for the development of researchers, and the necessary resources to enable them to conduct research to the required standards.
- 13 **Safety** – ensuring the dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of all involved in research and avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to research participants, researchers and others.

### **General Guidance on Good Practice in Research**

- 14 The University has a responsibility to ensure that research undertaken in its name complies with all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines. This includes submitting research proposals for ethical review where appropriate and abiding by the outcome of that review. Research projects should be approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise. When conducting or collaborating in research in other countries, researchers will comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in UK-hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their own country.
- 15 The University will continue to establish clear policies and procedures that cover the principles of good practice (as above). These will complement and are in accordance with existing University policies, such as those for health and safety, raising concerns at work, management of finances or of intellectual property, and equality and diversity. Awareness of these policies and procedures is raised through provision of training and support with an overall aim of ensuring that researchers consider good practice as integral to their research.
- 16 Researchers should:
  - a recognise their responsibility to conduct research of high ethical standards;
  - b be aware of their organisation's policies and procedures on good practice in research;
  - c make sure that their research complies with these policies and procedures, and seek guidance when necessary;
  - d work with the University to ensure that they have the necessary training, resources and support to carry out their research; and
  - e suggest to the University how guidance on good practice might be developed or revised.

## **Leadership and Supervision**

- 17 The University and its researchers will promote and maintain an environment which fosters and supports research of high ethical standards, mutual co-operation, professionalism and the open and honest exchange of ideas. A culture will be fostered where good conduct in research is promoted and inappropriate conduct identified and addressed.
- 18 The University will provide direction and supervision of research and researchers, setting out clear lines of accountability of the University and management of research. Supervisors and researchers will be supported in meeting the legal and ethical requirements of conducting research.
- 19 Researchers involved in the supervision and development of other researchers should be aware of their responsibilities and ensure that they have the necessary training, time and resources to carry out that role, requesting support where required.

## **Training**

- 20 The University will provide training for researchers to enable them to carry out their duties and develop their knowledge and skills throughout their career. This will include training in the responsible design, conduct and dissemination of research. Researchers will be supported in identifying unmet needs for training and development.
- 21 Researchers will undergo training as necessary in order to carry out their duties and to develop their knowledge and skills throughout their career, repeating training where necessary to ensure that their skills are kept up-to-date. They should identify needs for training when they arise and report them to their manager or other appropriate person.
- 22 Particular support will be provided for research students to ensure that they understand which standards and university policies and procedures they are expected to comply with.

## **Research Design**

- 23 When designing research projects, researchers should ensure that:
  - a the proposed research addresses pertinent question(s) and is designed either to add to existing knowledge about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it;
  - b the design of the study is appropriate for the question(s) being asked and addresses the most important potential sources of bias;
  - c the design and conduct of the study, including how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, are set out in detail in a pre-specified research plan or protocol;
  - d all necessary skills and experience will be available to carry out the proposed research, in the proposed research team or through collaboration with specialists in relevant fields;
  - e sufficient resources will be available to carry out the proposed research and that these resources meet all relevant standards;
  - f any issues relating to the above are resolved as far as possible prior to the start of the research; and

- g an assessment of risk of harm of the planned study is carried out using the Research Ethics Framework at the University to assess if there are any ethical issues and whether ethical review is required.
  - h reflection on research design continues throughout the research process and amendments made when required.
- 24 Researchers should try to anticipate any risks whereby results from the proposed research could be misused for purposes that are illegal or harmful. Researchers should report any risks to, and seek guidance from, the appropriate person(s) in the University and take action to minimise those risks.
- 25 Where the design of a study has been approved by ethical, regulatory or peer review, researchers should ensure that any subsequent alterations to the design are subject to appropriate review to determine that they will not compromise the integrity of the research or any terms of consent previously given.

### **Collaborative Working**

- 26 Researchers should pay particular attention to projects which include participants from different countries or where work will be carried out in another country due to the additional legal, cultural and ethical requirements and other guidelines that may apply.
- 27 In collaborative research, the University should work with partner organisations to ensure the agreement of, and compliance with, common standards and procedures for the conduct of that research, including the resolution of any issues or problems that might arise.
- 28 Researchers should be aware of the standards and procedures for the conduct of research followed by any organisations involved in collaborative research that they are undertaking. They should also be aware of any contractual requirements involving partner organisations, seeking guidance and assistance where necessary and reporting any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.
- 29 Researchers should try to anticipate any issues that might arise as a result of working collaboratively and agree jointly in advance how they might be addressed, communicating any decisions to all members of the research team. In particular, agreement should be sought on the specific roles of the researchers involved in the project and on issues relating to intellectual property, publication, and the attribution of authorship, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

- 30 The University and researchers should recognise that conflicts of interest (i.e. personal or institutional considerations, including but not limited to financial matters) can inappropriately affect research. Conflicts of interest must be identified, declared and addressed in order to avoid poor practice in research or potential misconduct.
- 31 When addressing a conflict of interest, it must be decided whether it is of a type and severity that poses a risk of fatally compromising the validity or integrity of the research, in which case researchers should not proceed with the research, or whether

it can be adequately addressed through declarations and/or special safeguards relating to the conduct and reporting of the research.

- 32 Researchers should comply with the *Conflict of Interest Policy*.

## **Research Involving Human Participants, Human Material or Personal Data**

- 33 The University and researchers should ensure that any research involving human participants, human material or personal data complies with all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines in accordance with the University Research Ethics Policy. Appropriate care should be taken when research projects involve vulnerable groups, such as the very old, children or those lacking mental capacity, and covert studies or other forms of research which do not involve full disclosure to participants. The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.
- 34 When conducting, or collaborating in, research in other countries, researchers based in the UK should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in UK hosted research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in the UK as well as those of their own country.
- 35 The University and researchers should ensure the confidentiality and security of personal data relating to human participants in research and human material involved in research projects.
- 36 For research projects involving human participants, human material or personal data, researcher should submit details for review by all relevant ethics committees and abide by the outcome of those reviews. They should also ensure that such research projects have been approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.
- 37 For research conducted with, for, or under the auspices of, any of the UK Departments of Health and/or the National Health Service, the University and researchers must adhere to all relevant guidelines and comply with all required processes.
- 38 Researchers on projects involving human subjects must satisfy themselves that participants are enabled, by the provision of adequate and appropriate information in an accessible way, to give informed consent, having particular regard to the needs and capacities of vulnerable groups, such as the very old, children and those who lack mental capacity.
- 39 Researchers should inform research participants that data gathered during the course of research may be disseminated in a range of publications and meetings, albeit not in an identifiable form, (unless previously agreed to and subject to limitations imposed by legislation or any applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise).
- 40 Researchers who are members of a regulated profession must ensure that research involving human participants, human material or personal data complies with any standards set by the body regulating their profession.

- 41 Researchers have a duty to publish the design and findings of all research involving human participants. All those pursuing research must open their work to critical review through the accepted scientific and professional channels. Once established, findings must be made available to those participating in the research and to all those who could benefit from them, through publication and/or other appropriate means.
- 42 If researchers consider that human participants in research are subject to unreasonable risk or harm, they must report their concerns to their line manager or other appropriate person, and, where required, to the appropriate regulatory authority. Similarly, concerns relating to the improper and/or unlicensed use of human material, or the improper use or storage of personal data, should be reported to the Chair of the Ethics Panel/Committee that approved the study.

### **Health and Safety**

- 43 All research should be conducted in an environment which is safe with respect to all researchers and participants, the University and the environment and should comply with the *University's Health and Safety policies*.
- 44 Advice on health and safety issues can be obtained from the University's Health and Safety Manager or from the Health and Safety information on Blackboard.

### **Intellectual Property**

- 45 The University and researchers should ensure that any contracts or agreements relating to research include provision for ownership and use of intellectual property. Intellectual property includes, but is not limited to: research data and other findings of research; ideas, processes, software, hardware, apparatus and equipment; substances and materials; and artistic and literary works, including academic and scientific publications.
- 46 Researchers should not give prior disclosure of research or the findings of research when this might invalidate any commercial property rights that could result. Researchers should recognise, however, that the presumption should be that any intellectual property discovered or developed using public or charitable funds should be disseminated in order to have a beneficial effect on society at large. That presumption may be rebutted where there is an express restriction placed on any such dissemination. Any delay in publication and dissemination pending protection of intellectual property will be kept to a minimum.
- 47 Researchers should comply with any additional conditions relating to intellectual property required by funding bodies.
- 48 Researchers should try to anticipate any issues that might arise relating to intellectual property at the earliest opportunity and agree jointly in advance how they might be addressed, communicating any decisions to all members of the research team.
- 49 For further information on intellectual property please refer to the University document *Intellectual Property – policy and procedures*.



## **Finance**

- 50 Researchers should ensure adherence to the terms and conditions of any grant or contract related to the research.
- 51 Researchers should comply with organisational guidelines regarding the use and management of finances relating to research projects. They should co-operate with any financial monitoring and audit and report any concerns or irregularities to the appropriate person(s) as soon as they become aware of them.

## **Collection and Retention of Data**

- 52 The University and researchers should comply with all legal, ethical, funding body and organisational requirements for the collection, use and storage of data, especially personal data, where particular attention should be paid to the requirements of data protection legislation.
- 53 Data should be kept intact for any legally specified period and otherwise for three years at least on completion of the project, subject to any legal, ethical or other requirements. It should be kept in a form that would enable retrieval by a third party, subject to limitations imposed by legislation and general principles of confidentiality.
- 54 Researchers should comply with all subject-specific requirements for the retention of data; for example, certain disciplines, such as health and biomedicine, may require research data to be retained for a considerably longer period.
- 55 If research data is to be deleted or destroyed, either because its agreed period of retention has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, it should be done so in accordance with all legal, ethical, research-funder and organisational requirements and with particular concern for confidentiality and security.
- 56 Researchers should consider how data will be gathered, analysed and managed, and how and in what form relevant data will eventually be made available to others, at an early stage of the design of the project.
- 57 Researchers should collect data accurately, efficiently and according to the agreed design of the research project, and ensure that it is stored in a secure and accessible form.

## **Monitoring and Audit**

- 58 The University and researchers should ensure that research projects comply with any monitoring and audit requirements.
- 59 Researchers should co-operate with the monitoring and audit of their research projects by applicable bodies and undertake such when required. Any identified need for monitoring and audit where it is not already scheduled, should be reported to the appropriate person(s).

## **Peer Review**

- 60 The University and researchers should be aware that peer review is an important part of good practice in: the publication and dissemination of research and research findings; the assessment of applications for research grants; and in the ethical review of research projects.

- 61 Researchers who carry out peer review should do so to the highest standards of thoroughness and objectivity. They should follow the guidelines for peer review of any organisation for which they carry out such work.
- 62 Researchers should maintain confidentiality and not retain or copy any material under review without the express written permission of the organisation which requested the review. They should not make use of research designs or research findings from a paper under review without the express permission of the author(s) and should not allow others to do so. Researchers acting as peer reviewers must declare any relevant conflicts of interest.
- 63 While carrying out peer review, researchers may become aware of possible misconduct, such as plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, or have ethical concerns about the design or conduct of the research. In such cases they should inform, in confidence, an appropriate representative of the organisation which requested the review, such as the editor of the relevant journal or chair of the relevant grants or ethics committee.

### **Publication and Authorship**

- 64 Researchers should accept their duty to publish and disseminate research in a manner that reports the research and all the findings of the research accurately and without selection that could be misleading.
- 65 Researchers should address issues relating to publication and authorship, especially the roles of all collaborators and contributors, at an early stage of the design of a project, recognising that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research. Decisions on publication and authorship should be agreed jointly and communicated to all members of the research team.
- 66 Authorship should be restricted to those contributors and collaborators who have made a significant intellectual or practical contribution to the work. No person who fulfils the criteria for authorship should be excluded from the submitted work. Authorship should not be allocated to honorary or “guest” authors (i.e. those that do not fulfil criteria of authorship). Researchers should be aware that anyone listed as an author of any work should be prepared to take public responsibility for that work and ensure its accuracy, and be able to identify their contribution to it.
- 67 Researchers should list the work of all contributors who do not meet the criteria for authorship in an acknowledgements section. All funders and sponsors of research should be clearly acknowledged and any competing interests listed.
- 68 Researchers must clearly acknowledge all sources used in their research and seek permission from any individuals if a significant amount of their work has been used in the publication.
- 69 Researchers must adhere to any conditions set by funding or other bodies regarding the publication of their research and its findings in open access repositories within a set period.
- 70 Researchers should declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest in relation to their research when reporting their findings at meetings or in publications.

- 71 Researchers should be aware that submitting research reports to more than one potential publisher at any given time (i.e. duplicate submission) or publishing findings in more than one publication without disclosure and appropriate acknowledgement of any previous publications (i.e. duplicate publication) is unacceptable.

### **Misconduct in Research**

- 72 The University considers that misconduct in research is a serious matter. Equally, all investigations of misconduct in research should maintain the highest standards of integrity, accuracy and fairness. All proceedings should be conducted under the presumption of innocence and carried out with sensitivity and confidentiality. The University procedure for dealing with allegations of research misconduct is outlined in Appendix 1.

### **Related University policies**

**Note:** Please see the Policies page on the main University website (<http://bucks.ac.uk/about-us/governanceand-policies/policies>)

- *Academic Misconduct Policy*
- *Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy*
- *Data Protection Policy*
- *Employee Disciplinary Procedures*
- *Intellectual Property- Policy and procedures*
- *Raising Issues of Concern (Whistleblowing)*
- *Research Ethics Policy*
- *Student Disciplinary Procedures*

## Appendix 1: Procedure for handling allegations of research misconduct

### Scope

73 This procedure applies to all members of the institution involved in research, including staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students. It also applies to those who are not members of the institution, but who are conducting research on the institution's premises, using the institution's research facilities or under the auspices of the university.

### Definition of Research Misconduct

74 Research misconduct is defined as including the following, but not limited to:

- a Fabrication;
- b Falsification;
- c Misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement;
- d Plagiarism; and
- e Failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for:
  - i. avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to humans and the environment;
  - ii. the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

75 Fraud and other financial irregularities are dealt with under the University's *Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy*.

76 The University will investigate all allegations of research misconduct fully and expeditiously. It will also protect researchers from malicious, mischievous, or frivolous allegations.

### Preliminary Action

77 All those to whom this code applies should report any incident of misconduct, whether witnessed or suspected. Members of staff and students are encouraged to raise concerns about suspected research misconduct in confidence with the Pro Vice Chancellor. Those who raise concerns in good faith will not be penalised in any way for doing so - see the University's *Raising Issues of Concern (Whistleblowing) Policy*. Allegations should normally be made in writing, accompanied by any available supporting evidence.

78 Action may be taken in respect of staff suspected of research misconduct under the University's *Employee Disciplinary Procedures*.

79 Action may be taken in respect of students suspected of research misconduct under the *Academic Misconduct Policy* for allegations of academic cheating and plagiarism or the *Student Disciplinary Procedures* for other types of misconduct.

## Appendix 2: UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) Research Integrity Checklist

This recommended [Checklist for researchers](#) lists the key points of good practice in research for a research project and is applicable to all subject areas.

**Before conducting your research, and bearing in mind that, subject to legal and ethical requirements, roles and contributions may change during the time span of the research:**

- 1 Does the proposed research address pertinent question(s) and is it designed either to add to existing knowledge about the subject in question or to develop methods for research into it?
- 2 Is your research design appropriate for the question(s) being asked?
- 3 Will you have access to all necessary skills and resources to conduct the research?
- 4 Have you conducted a risk assessment to determine:
  - a whether there are any ethical issues and whether ethics review is required;
  - b the potential for risks to the organisation, the research, or the health, safety and well-being of researchers and research participants; and
  - c what legal requirements govern the research?
- 5 Will your research comply with all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines, including those from other organisations and/or countries if relevant?
- 6 Will your research comply with all requirements of legislation and good practice relating to health and safety?
- 7 Has your research undergone any necessary ethics review (see 4(a) above), especially if it involves animals, human participants, human material or personal data?
- 8 Will your research comply with any monitoring and audit requirements?
- 9 Are you in compliance with any contracts and financial guidelines relating to the project?
- 10 Have you reached an agreement relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship?
- 11 Have you reached an agreement relating to collaborative working, if applicable?
- 12 Have you agreed the roles of researchers and responsibilities for management and supervision?
- 13 Have all conflicts of interest relating to your research been identified, declared and addressed?
- 14 Are you aware of the guidance from all applicable organisations on misconduct in research?

**When conducting your research:**

- 1 Are you following the agreed research design for the project?
- 2 Have any changes to the agreed research design been reviewed and approved if applicable?
- 3 Are you following best practice for the collection, storage and management of data?
- 4 Are agreed roles and responsibilities for management and supervision being fulfilled?
- 5 Is your research complying with any monitoring and audit requirements?

**When finishing your research:**

- 1 Will your research and its findings be reported accurately, honestly and within a reasonable time frame?
- 2 Will all contributions to the research be acknowledged?
- 3 Are agreements relating to intellectual property, publication and authorship being complied with?
- 4 Will research data be retained in a secure and accessible form and for the required duration?
- 5 Will your research comply with all legal, ethical and contractual requirements?