Compliance with the Concordat to Support Research Integrity
2015 Annual Statement to Research Committee and Council

One of the expectations outlined within the Concordat to Support Research Integrity is 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; and

- 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 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.

Training and professional development offered

There are five online training courses[2] available in research integrity (licensed from the company Epigeum Limited) which have been designed to 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
- Arts and Humanities
- Social and Behavioural Sciences

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

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[2]https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/hierarchy/skills/ricourses

representatives coordinating the provision of training to research staff and students, by the Doctoral Training Centres and some departments.

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

- Research integrity courses for DPhil students and research staff (designed to blend with the online research integrity courses mentioned above).
- Training in Good Clinical Practice (for researchers involved with clinical trials and clinical studies) 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]
- A wide range of academic and research skills training[8] 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.

A range of mentoring schemes for researchers is also available, together with advice for departments interested in setting up their own local schemes.[9]

When considering the Annual Research Integrity Statement for 2014, Research Committee requested further information about research integrity-related initiatives and training provided at local department or faculty level. In order to map current provision and identify areas where this could be improved or promoted more effectively, an online survey was distributed in early 2016 to Research Committee members, Divisions, Departments, Faculties, Doctoral Training Centres and Directors of Graduate Studies, and was also open to individual researchers to complete. This sought information about how research integrity (or good practice in research) is promoted to research students and research staff, for example at induction, through training, mentoring schemes, etc. 115 responses were received and it is clear from this that local approaches to promoting research integrity vary considerably. Many departments and faculties promote the training and other opportunities as mentioned above but additionally, some of the key messages from the survey include:

- There is considerable related (and compulsory) training provision for research students (particularly via doctoral training programmes), but less for research staff.

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[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/find-training/training-by-skill-area/research-methods/quantitative-methods
[7] http://blogs.it.ox.ac.uk/acit-rs-team/advice/rdmcourses/
[8] http://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/skillstraining/coursecatalogue/allcourses,
http://researchtraining.socsci.ox.ac.uk/find-training/course-directory.
[9] http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/resources/mentoring/

- Information about University research-related policies and procedures is generally disseminated at induction via departmental and course programme handbooks.

- Induction for research students will generally include guidance about avoiding plagiarism, and a requirement to undertake the University's related online training.

- Some departments engage with these issues by holding regular meetings at which related subjects are discussed (eg. a termly colloquium, a departmental `afternoon tea' session, `Fridays@4' meetings, laboratory or research meetings).

- For some departments, a key source of information and point of discussion for new students is the Research Integrity and the Responsible Conduct of Research Checklist available via the Research Ethics and Integrity website. [10]

2.   Process reviews

i)   <u>Human research ethics committees</u>

In 2015, the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC) undertook a review of the University's policy for research involving human participants and personal data. The reviewed policy was approved by Research Committee (June 2015) and Council (November 2015). CUREC also reviewed and updated the appeal procedure used in cases where ethical approval for a research study is not granted.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee and the Medical Sciences Inter-divisional Research Ethics Committee conducted comprehensive reviews of the approval processes required for research involving human participants and personal data. This has resulted in a substantial update of the related checklists and application forms used by researchers in the social sciences and humanities and in the medical sciences (where ethical review and approval is provided by the University and not the National Health Service)[11].

CUREC began the process of a self-review of its purpose and operations, the outcome of which will be discussed in Hilary Term 2016.

ii)   <u>Research involving animals</u>

The Committee on Animal Care and Ethical Review produced a comprehensive annual report to Council for 2014-15, 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 10 December 2015.

iii)   <u>Safeguarding Code of Practice – policy update</u>

The University's Safeguarding Code of Practice was reviewed and substantially updated by Personnel Services, following initiatives from local and national government to better protect children and `at risk' adults. Researchers working with these groups now need to conduct appropriate risk assessments when planning such research, must undertake relevant training and also provide details

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[10] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/researchsupport/integrity/
[11] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/curec/apply/

to research participants of how to report any concerns about such research. Council approved the revised policy[13] in Trinity Term 2015, to come into effect from October 2015.

3. External engagement

The University recognises the importance of collaborating with partner institutions to facilitate networking and good practice in how to support and encourage research integrity. The University continues to be closely involved with the activities of the following groups:

i) Russell Group Working Group on Research Integrity
Representatives from Research Services and the Registrar's Office attended the workshop held in June 2015 at the University of Warwick, organised by this Working Group, themed around handling of allegations of misconduct in research and, in particular, allegations which involve more than one institution.

ii) League of European Research Universities (LERU)
The Director of Research Services and the Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) have continued to play a leading role in the LERU Research Integrity Expert Group and convening its (virtual) meetings. This has included:
o Contributing to the development of the programme for the next LERU Research Integrity two-day workshop, to be held at Lund University, Sweden in March 2016.
o Meeting in Brussels with the Director General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission and the Secretary General of LERU, to discuss research integrity requirements in the EU Research and Innovation Programme, Horizon 2020 and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

iii) Nuffield Council on Bioethics
The Senior Assistant Registrar (Ethics and Integrity) attended a workshop organised by the Nuffield Council on Bioethics to discuss the implementation of the recommendations of its 2014 report `*The culture of scientific research in the UK'[14]* which received widespread publicity throughout 2015.

iv) UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO)
The University continues to be a subscribing member of UKRIO and Oxford representatives attended a range of events organised by UKRIO in 2015. 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 2015

Under the Academic Integrity in Research: Code of Practice and Procedure[15], 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).

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[13] https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/cops/safeguarding/

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

i)   Allegations notified to the Registrar's Office

In 2015, 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 2015, where the ensuing investigation was concluded in 2015. In line with recommendations from Research Committee and Council when considering the Annual Research Integrity Statement for 2014, the following table also includes brief information about further action taken in the cases of proven misconduct in research.

No	Nature of alleged research misconduct	Outcome
1	Misconduct of former employee leading to concerns about research integrity (allegation received in 2013)	Dismissed; not possible to determine whether there was evidence of misconduct.
2	Allegation of failure to attribute authorship (allegation received in 2014)	Complaint dismissed; no evidence of research misconduct, although recommendation made on how acknowledgement of contribution should be made.
3	Allegation of passing off work of others without permission or acknowledgement (allegation received in 2014)	Three findings of research misconduct; further action under consideration.
4	Allegation (against student) of preparation of article abstract which did not reflect work undertaken.	Complaint dismissed; no evidence of research misconduct, but student's conduct referred to Department.
5	Allegation that data in published paper was taken from other sources without due acknowledgement	Allegation upheld. Two journal articles retracted – see http://pubs.acs.org/doi/abs/10.1021/ol047676%2B and http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S004040200501 6431. Former Oxford employee's current institution informed. HEFCE informed as one paper had been submitted for the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

6	Allegation of failure to attribute authorship	Complaint dismissed; no evidence of research misconduct.
7	Allegation of plagiarism against staff at Oxford and another university	Initial investigation is ongoing at other institution. Outcome will be notified to Oxford, in case further investigation is required.
8	Allegation of failure to attribute authorship and plagiarism	Investigation ongoing.
9	Allegation of selective and misleading presentation of data	Investigation ongoing.

ii)   Allegations considered by the Proctors' Office

In 2015, 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.

Those allegations which were not upheld (i.e. numbers 1, 3, 4 and 5 below) were regarded (after investigation and interview) as being cases of poor academic practice, rather than 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 (received 2014)	Not upheld.
2	Plagiarism	Referred to SDP. Upheld, failure of work, resubmission allowed.
3	Plagiarism	Not upheld.
4	Plagiarism	Not upheld.
5	Plagiarism	Not upheld.
6	Plagiarism	Referred to SDP. Upheld, failure of work, resubmission not allowed.

This statement was prepared by Research Services, with contributions to Section 5 provided by the Registrar's Office and the Proctors' Office.

It was presented and discussed at a meeting of the University's Research Committee on 10 March 2016, and approved at University Council on 25 April 2016.

26 April 2016

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

- Bribery and Fraud policy
  http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/councilsec/compliance/briberyfraud/briberyfraudpolicy/

- 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/

- 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.