

A message from the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise

The University of Bristol is globally recognised for the quality of its research, as evidenced by the Research Excellence Framework 2021 which ranked Bristol among the UK's top 5 research universities. In order to maintain and uphold the high standards of our research, we continue to undertake initiatives to ensure that integrity, ethics and excellence are at the core of our research activities and fully embedded in our research culture.

The University of Bristol is committed to meeting the commitments of [Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity, 2019 \(PDF, 372kB\)](#). The Commitments described in the Concordat are listed here as headings, with information about those activities undertaken at the University in support of each of them:

We are committed to upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.

We are actively engaged in protecting the rights, dignity, health, safety and privacy of research participants, the welfare of animals and the integrity of the environment. The University is a centre for properly conducted, high quality research and is also committed to protecting the health, safety, rights, and academic freedom of researchers as well as the reputation of the University.

We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.

The University's quality assurance framework for research conduct includes:

- a core funded central Research Governance Team
- ethics processes which are embedded within faculties and schools with strategic oversight from the Ethics of Research Committee which is chaired by a Pro Vice-Chancellor and is a key committee of Senate
- risk management processes to ensure that researchers are guided and supported in obtaining the necessary approvals
- regularly reviewed policies and guidance
- training and development opportunities for staff and students
- an annual audit programme
- study monitoring
- senior management support

We are committed to 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.

Research Integrity is a core element of the role of the Research Governance Team and is the specific remit of the Research Ethics and Integrity Manager and the Research Integrity Officer.

We continuously look for opportunities to further improve all areas of research integrity; harnessing current activity and recognising that future developments for students, researchers, supervisors and research managers should be harmonised by joint working. One such area is the expansion of guidance around safeguarding and the preventing of harm in research to participants, to researchers and to the wider community.

The University offers training & development opportunities for staff and students e.g. staff development courses covering ethics and integrity delivered for CREATE and early career researchers. Programme-specific postgraduate workshops are run in close collaboration with course leaders and sessions with a focus on research ethics and integrity are delivered for school away days in addition to annual Faculty Research Ethics Committee member training. This year we have also added guidance about peer reviews to our webpages.

We are committed to ensuring we sustain a positive research culture. We have appointed an Associate Pro Vice Chancellor for Research Culture, Professor Marcus Munafa, who will lead on our efforts that focus on sustaining a positive research culture, including improving research conduct, fostering collaboration, and supporting the careers of researchers. This agenda is also supported by the Research Culture Group.

We are committed to using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct when they arise.

Clear and effective policies in this area have been in place for a number of years; policies are routinely reviewed and updated to ensure that they meet all relevant requirements and are reflected in current practice.

Since our last statement, the University has investigated one allegation of Research Misconduct, in accordance with our policy - initially reported in 2019.

We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

We have developed an integrated internal approach to support and nurture research integrity with input from multi-professional teams and senior management oversight that can be evidenced against UKRI expectations and the UK Research Integrity Office Self-Assessment Tool.

During the past year, the Research Integrity team have developed accessible guidance for stakeholders about the varied reporting requirements for different funders at different stages of the funding and research process - in relation to research misconduct, professional misconduct, preventing harm in research and conflicts of interest. The Research Integrity team are working closely with the departments responsible for investigating such incidents to ensure prompt reporting, as required.

Externally, active membership of the Russell Group Research Integrity Forum enables us to share best practice and benchmark against activity within the HEI sector.

Policies, regulations, and guidance

Policies, regulations, and guidance provide the framework in which we deliver our commitment to research integrity. These include:

- [Research Governance and Integrity Policy \(PDF, 300kB\)](#)
- [Regulations on Research Misconduct \(PDF, 56kB\)](#)
- [Whistleblowing Policy \(PDF, 95kB\)](#)
- [University Human Tissue Act Code of Practice \(Office document, 119kB\)](#)
- [Ethics of Research Policy and Procedure \(PDF, 195kB\)](#)
- [Guidance on working with animals](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Regulations](#)
- [The Data Protection \(GDPR\) Guidance](#)

- [Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy \(PDF, 580kB\)](#)
- [Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Guidance on Preventing Harm in Research](#)
- [Responsible Research Evaluation](#)
- [Guidance on Peer Reviews](#)
- [Research Integrity Funder Requirements](#)

These are integrated into our governance and administrative processes and training programmes to ensure they are an active and recognisable part of our research culture. We will continue to strengthen this culture and would welcome any questions, suggestions or concerns about research integrity at the University of Bristol. Please contact us through our Research Governance Team: research-ethics@bristol.ac.uk.

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