

**September 2021**

### **Introduction**

The Concordat to Support Research Integrity was launched in 2012 and revised in 2019 with support from the Government, Research England and major research funders such as UKRI.

### **Commitments**

BU upholds the commitments detailed in the Concordat to Support Research Integrity (Concordat) and is committed to fulfilling the principles of the Concordat by providing a framework in support for good research conduct and its governance.

1. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
2. We are committed to ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards.
3. 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.
4. We are committed to using transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
5. We are committed to working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to reviewing progress regularly and openly.

In accordance with the Concordat, this annual statement outlines the activities in support of the highest standard of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research undertaken at BU during the 2020/21 academic year.

### **Policy framework:**

- Research Ethics Code of Practice
- BU Code of Good Research Practice
- Research Misconduct: Policy and Procedure
- Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures
- Research Data Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Health & Safety in Research
- BU Risk Assessment Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

- Information Classification Policy
- Code of Practice for Research Degrees
- Code of Practice for the Employment and Development of Research Staff
- RKE Development Framework Policy

**During 2020/21 the following activities continued to support research integrity:**

- Training workshops for research students were delivered online under the Doctoral College's Research Development Framework Programme.
- Training workshops for supervisors were delivered online under Supervisory Training by the Doctoral College.
- Training workshops for Researchers (staff and postgraduate research students) were delivered under the Research and Knowledge Exchange Development Framework by Research Development & Support (RDS).
- Online ethics e-modules continue to be mandatory for all those carrying out research under the auspices of BU.
- The Research Ethics Committee (REC) continued to provide oversight of activities and assurance on behalf of Senate:
  - The Science, Technology & Health and Social Sciences & Humanities Research Ethics Panels (REPs), continued to ensure best ethical practice by reviewing research ethics applications for Staff and PGR (high risk).
  - Faculties and Departments continue to manage the review process of ethics submissions for UG, PGT (low and high risk) and PGR (low risk).
  - Carried out an annual review of the Research Ethics Code of Practice
- Meetings continued between BU and the Heads of Research and NHS R&D representatives of local NHS Trusts to discuss collaboration and effective clinical governance.
- BU now subscribes to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) (Commitments 1 and 3).

***Ongoing activities***

- The Online Ethics Checklist was reviewed with updates to improve usability in relation to research conducted outside the UK. These changes will be implemented Autumn 2021.
- The Clinical Governance Adviser (CGA) continues to oversee the processes by which BU ensures all NHS-related research complies with relevant legislation. All research activity taking place in the NHS requires a Sponsor which is overseen by the CGA supporting Researchers through the Health Regulatory Authority process. This also requires undertaking ongoing monitoring. Ethical review of such research is undertaken by an appropriate NHS Research Ethics Committee, rather than the central Research Ethics Panels at BU.

**Planned activities**

- The research misconduct policy outlines how allegations of research misconduct will be dealt with, however recent investigations identified areas where processes could be

improved. Planned works for 2021/22 are for RDS and HR to work together to produce a pathway and flowchart for use by RDS and HR in future cases (Commitment 4).

- To strengthen our existing framework around research integrity, we will investigate the potential of convening a working group whose remit will be to review current procedures and policies already in place; to ensure a culture of continuous improvement, monitoring and innovation. This will ensure best practice and implementation of the Concordat's Commitments. To make sure current training opportunities that are already available continue to be fit for purpose. This will further strengthen and ensure research activities are conducted according to the highest standards of integrity and rigour.

### ***Addressing research misconduct***

BU has policies and procedures to respond to research misconduct; namely

- Research Misconduct: Policy and Procedure
- Academic Offences: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards
- Code of Practice for Research Degrees
- Research Ethics Code of Practice: Policy and Procedure
- Code of Good Research Practice
- Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Taught Awards
- Academic Appeals: Policy and Procedure for Research Awards
- Student Disciplinary: Procedure
- Third Party Involvement: Procedure
- Dignity and Respect (Harassment) Policy and Procedures
- Staff Disciplinary Procedure
- Staff Grievance Procedure
- Staff Suspension Procedure
- "Whistleblowing" (Disclosure in the Public Interest) Policy and Procedures
- Conflicts of Interest Policy and Procedures
- Data Protection Policy
- Intellectual Property Policy and Procedures
- Investigation Procedure

The Research Misconduct policy applies to staff and postgraduate research students undertaking research under the auspices of the University. It also applies to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students in relation to suspected cases of a serious breach of research ethics.

In 2020/2021 there were no reported cases of allegations relating to research misconduct made against any UG, PGT or PGR student.

In 2020/2021 there was one reported staff case logged under the Research Misconduct policy.

<b>Type of allegation</b>	<b>Stage reached</b>	<b>Investigation result</b>
Fabrication, falsification and/ or academic fraud	preliminary stage	minor infractions which do not constitute research misconduct

### **Recommendation**

That this statement is approved as BU's 2020/21 annual report on research integrity and be made publicly available on the research website.

This statement has been approved by the Research & Professional Performance Committee.

Anyone with comments, concerns or questions regarding research integrity at Bournemouth University should contact Mrs Julie Northam, Head of Research Development & Support by email to [researchintegrity@bournemouth.ac.uk](mailto:researchintegrity@bournemouth.ac.uk)