

# CODE OF GOOD RESEARCH CONDUCT

Version 2.1

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## Version control

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## Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
ADM	(Faculty of) Arts, Design and Media
BLSS	(Faculty of) Business, Law and Social Sciences
CEBE	(Faculty of) Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment
DPIA	Data Protection Impact Assessment
DRC	Doctoral Research College
ERM	Ethical Review Manager
FAEC	Faculty Academic Ethics Committee
FRC	Faculty Research Committee
FRDEC	Faculty Research Degrees and Environment Committee
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HELS	(Faculty of) Health, Education and Life Sciences
PI	Primary Investigator
PID	Personally identifiable data
RC	Research Committee
REGCC	Research Ethics, Governance and Compliance Committee
SEDA	Staff and Education Development Association

## Responsibilities and obligations

*Adapted from UKRIO's Code of Practice for Research*

### **Birmingham City University agrees to:**

- Develop policies and guidance designed to help and support researchers conduct their research with integrity, and to promote best practice in research.
- Ensure that good research conduct and best practice are central parts of the University's research strategy and research environment.
- Promote and disseminate guidance and advice on good research conduct through appropriate channels.
- Provide researchers with suitable training, resources and support relating to research integrity.
- Encourage researchers to consider good research conduct and practice as a normal part of their work.
- Monitor the use and implementation of existing policies, and to review and update where necessary.
- Ensure that any allegations of research misconduct are dealt with in a fair, timely and independent manner.

### **Researchers (including students undertaking research) agree to:**

- Familiarise themselves with relevant policies and guidance at the University relating to good research practice and research integrity.
- Undertake relevant training when requested.
- Ensure that their research complies with University policies, and to seek guidance where necessary.
- Ensure that their research complies with legal and ethical requirements related to the research project.
- Complete the University's ethical review process before conducting any research project, and abide with the outcomes of that process.
- Safeguard the dignity, rights, safety and well-being of all involved in research and avoid unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects, participants, researchers and others.
- Ensure that they, and others working alongside them on research projects, are properly qualified and equipped to conduct their research.
- To take all steps possible to prevent research misconduct from occurring.
- To work with the University to suggest where further guidance good practice could be developed or revised.

# 1 Introduction

Birmingham City University is committed to excellence in research at all levels, and as such expects the highest standards of rigour and integrity to be upheld by all who conduct research under its auspices.

This Code of Good Research Conduct sets out the University's responsibilities and policies surrounding good research conduct, and the obligations of researchers, no matter their discipline, to be aware of University policies governing research and to comply with both institutional and external regulatory requirements. See [Responsibilities and Obligations](#) for a summary.

Responsible conduct is expected in all aspects of research (regardless of discipline and funding status), including in:

- **The practice of research**, throughout the whole lifecycle of a research project. This includes when you are: applying for funding, developing research designs, collecting / generating and analysing data, using suitable equipment and facilities (whether or not they are on / part of BCU property), publishing and disseminating results, and ensuring appropriate acknowledgement of the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others in research.
- **Being a good researcher**. This involves acknowledging and acting in accordance with expected norms as set out by professional bodies in your field, as well as supporting other researchers, particularly those new to research.
- **Promoting a supportive research culture**. The University has primary responsibility here for not only ensuring that appropriate infrastructure is in place to allow research to take place, but also in terms of ensuring there is a positive culture about research, and that researchers feel supported in their endeavours.

This guidance has been written in line with the requirements of the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) (published October 2019), and as such draws on the central tenets of research integrity and the commitments outlined in the Concordat.

The guidance is intended for:

- Students conducting research as part of their taught degree programme and their module leaders;
- Research students and their supervisors;
- Members of research staff and their line managers;
- Academic and professional services staff employed by the University who are involved in research governance, or who are undertaking research projects;
- Consultants and independent contractors who are working on research projects based in, or partnered with, the University;
- Those with visitor or emeritus status at the University, including those holding honorary contracts, who are undertaking research at the University, or under its auspices.

## 1.1 Frascati definition of research

The University adopts the definition of research and development (R&D) as set out in the [Frascati Manual](#):

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“R&D comprise creative and systematic work undertaken in order to increase the stock of knowledge – including knowledge of humankind, culture and society – and to devise new applications of available knowledge.”

In order to qualify as R&D, an activity must be all of the following:

- Novel
- Creative
- Uncertain
- Systematic
- Transferable and / or reproducible.

R&D covers three types of activity:

- **Basic research:** experimental or theoretical work undertaken primarily to acquire new knowledge of the underlying foundation of phenomena and observable facts, without any particular application or use in view.
- **Applied research:** is original investigation undertaken in order to acquire new knowledge. It is, however, directed primarily towards a specific, practical aim or objective.
- **Experimental development:** systematic work, drawing on knowledge gained from research and practical experience and producing additional knowledge, which is directed to producing new products or processes or to improving existing products or processes.

## 2 Research integrity

### 2.1 What is research integrity?

Research integrity is a term that covers not only the practice of research, but also the expected conduct of researchers, and the environment in which research takes place.

A key aspect of research integrity is ensuring that all research is planned and carried out with due attention paid to the ethical, legal and regulatory requirements that are relevant to the research.

All researchers are expected to act according to the norms set out in professional frameworks within their disciplines. Research councils and professional bodies representing different disciplines set out clear guidance on professional conduct and ethical research practices for researchers working within their fields. Such guidance often covers wider aspects of research practice beyond just methodological considerations, including authorship guidelines, strategies for managing conflicts of interest, and dealing with instances of falsification, fabrication and plagiarism.

The University has a commitment to creating and maintaining a research environment that supports its researchers to act with integrity. This not only includes the practical infrastructure to facilitate research (for example, providing access to research equipment; implementing rigorous review processes; providing secure data storage for personal and research data), but also fostering a community of researchers who are able to support each other.

More information on the University's work on research integrity can be found on the external [Research Integrity website pages](#). Members of the University can also access the [Research Integrity page on iCity](#).

## 2.2 The Concordat to Support Research Integrity

BCU is committed to act in accordance with the standards of The Concordat to Support Research Integrity, namely:

- 1) upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
- 2) ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- 3) 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) using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- 5) working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

The Concordat also outlines the central elements of research, namely honesty, rigour, transparency and open communication, care and respect and accountability. These apply to anyone conducting research, regardless of their discipline.

### 2.2.1 *Honesty*

Researchers are expected to be open and honest about their research, including in: presenting research designs, goals and findings; reporting on chosen research methods and procedures; in collecting and managing research data; using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.

### 2.2.2 *Rigour*

Researchers must ensure: that their work is conducted in line with disciplinary norms and standards, and use appropriate methods to undertake their research; they adhere to an agreed protocol where appropriate; conclusions drawn from their work are the result of rigorous analysis; and that their work is communicated effectively.

### 2.2.3 *Transparency and open communication*

Researchers should be clear and transparent about: declaring any potential competing interests when undertaking research; reporting on research data collection and analysis methods; and their intentions for making their research findings widely available, including plans for publishing or disseminating work to other researchers and the public through other means.

### 2.2.4 *Care and respect*

Researchers must show due care and respect to all participants involved in their research, and to subjects, users and beneficiaries of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. Researchers must also show care and respect for the research record.



### 2.2.5 Accountability

Funders of research, BCU and researchers are accountable for collectively creating a research environment in which individuals are enabled to own the research process. Those engaged in research must also ensure that individuals are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by the Concordat to Support Research Integrity.

## 3 Research misconduct

The University takes seriously any allegation of research misconduct, and thoroughly investigates any such allegation in accordance with the University's **Research Misconduct Policy**.

Examples of what constitutes research misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Falsification (i.e. inappropriate manipulation of research materials, equipment, processes, selection of data, imagery and/or participant consent, including omitting data and/or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record)
- Fabrication (i.e. creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent)
- Plagiarism (i.e. general misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work, without acknowledgement or permission)
- Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations related to research or to exercise due care in:
  - avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to:
    - humans;
    - animals used in research; and
    - the environment; and
  - the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.
- Misrepresentation of: data; involvement in work; interests (i.e. failure to declare a conflict of interest); qualifications, credentials or expertise; publication record; etc.

Honest errors and differences in, for example, research methodology or interpretation do not constitute research misconduct.

The University is responsible for monitoring research practice and for investigating any instances of alleged research misconduct. Any investigations that are undertaken will be done so in a fair, timely and independent manner using existing procedures, namely:

- [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)
- Staff [Disciplinary Policy](#)

An annual statement concerning investigations into research misconduct will be published in line with the requirements of the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, including comments on institutional learning from incidents of research misconduct.

## 4 Research environment

### 4.1 Research governance structure

The research governance structure at the University is set out in [Appendix 1](#).

The University's **Research Committee** (RC) is responsible to Academic Board for general issues relating to research, research degrees and scholarship, including the implementation, monitoring and updating of the University's research strategy and policies and for the co-ordination of research activity across the University. It also has oversight of the University's standards for research degree awards and the quality assurance and enhancement of research degree programmes.

The **Research Ethics, Governance and Compliance Committee** (REGCC) is responsible for ensuring institutional compliance with the requirements of all relevant external organisations / bodies pertaining to research and research degrees.

**Faculty Research Committees** (FRCs) are responsible for oversight of: research undertaken by members of their Faculty (students, staff, and others employed or contracted with the University who are located in that Faculty); the implementation and monitoring of progress in delivering the University's research strategy and targets; the implementation of the University's research policies and procedures; and the co-ordination of research in collaboration with other faculties and organisations outside the University.

The **Research Environment and Training Committee** (RETC) is responsible for oversight of the academic environment for research and research integrity across the University, and for oversight of the practices relating to the training and development of research staff and students.

REGCC, FRCs and RETC all report to RC.

**Faculty Academic Ethics Committees** (FAECs) are responsible for oversight of the ethical approvals procedures required for research activities by students (taught and doctoral) and staff of the Faculty. They are also responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, monitoring and review of procedures to ensure that the academic practice of the Faculty is conducted with due consideration for ethical issues. All FAECs report to REGCC.

**Faculty Research Degrees and Environment Committees** (FRDECs) are a sub-committee of, and are responsible to, the corresponding FRC for oversight of doctoral studies, the academic environment for research and research integrity across the Faculty. They are also responsible for the oversight of the practices relating to the education and development of research staff and students.

### 4.2 Embedding a culture of research integrity

While the above section outlines the formal structures of research governance at the University, it is everyone's responsibility to ensure that research is consistently conducted to the highest standards and with integrity. The University aims to foster a culture where good conduct in research is promoted and research misconduct is identified and addressed (see [Section 3](#) for information on research misconduct).

The **Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise** has overall institutional responsibility for research integrity at the University.

**Associate Deans of Research** in each Faculty must ensure that research centre / research cluster leads and research student supervisors are made aware of appropriate guidance and advice relating to research integrity, and to promote open discussions within Faculties on issues of research integrity.

**Research centre / research cluster leads** are expected to create a research environment that encourages cooperation and dialogue, in which all members of a research team or group are encouraged to develop their skills and in which the open discussion of scientific ideas is fostered.

The University's **Research Integrity Officers** are responsible for providing advice to researchers when requested, and ensuring that appropriate guidance and information is easily available to all researchers on a range of topics relating to research integrity. They can be contacted at [research\\_integrity@bcu.ac.uk](mailto:research_integrity@bcu.ac.uk).

**Researchers** themselves are responsible for ensuring they are familiar with appropriate policies and guidance provided by the University relating to good research practice and conduct. In addition, the University expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in relevant guidelines published by scientific societies and other professional bodies related to their area of work.

## 5 Training and support

### 5.1 Researcher development

Birmingham City University is committed to supporting researchers in their training and development throughout their careers. Taught students receive teaching and training in research design and conduct appropriate for their discipline throughout their degree programme.

Training related to good research conduct is provided through a number of teams at the University, including the [Centre for Academic Success](#), the [Library Learning and Teaching Team](#), as well more locally at Faculty and departmental levels, including ADM's "[Researcher Development Studio](#)" and BLSS's "[Developing Early Career Researchers Programme](#)".

Research centre / research cluster leads are responsible for the creation of a constructive working atmosphere and for ensuring that research staff have the appropriate training and experience to carry out their duties as effectively as possible. This is especially important for those who are new to research.

Existing staff who conduct research should regularly reflect on their training needs as their work progresses, and speak with their supervisor / line manager as appropriate in order to arrange or attend suitable training when required.

Researchers are expected to make themselves familiar with University processes for undertaking research, including applying for funding, completing the ethics approval process, and managing research data throughout the life of a project. Support for these processes can be gained from interaction with appropriate personnel within the Research, Innovation, Enterprise and Employability (RIEE) team. Members of the University can find further information on the [RIEE directory on iCity](#).

Where a University-wide approach to particular research training is necessary, it is the responsibility of the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovation and Enterprise to ensure that such training can be effectively delivered.

## **5.2 New researchers**

Those who are new to research may face particular challenges in understanding what is expected of them in relation to good research practice. Responsibility for ensuring that new researchers and students understand good research practice and are provided with a constructive and supportive environment lies with all members of academic staff, but particularly with:

- Module leaders and supervisors of taught students undertaking research;
- The Doctoral Research College and supervisors of doctoral students undertaking doctoral research;
- Principal Investigators who work with early career researchers on research projects.

Through the induction process, new staff involved in research will be made aware of this guidance and the process for reporting allegations of research misconduct, as detailed in the University's **Research Misconduct Policy**.

## **5.3 Research integrity training**

The Research Integrity Officers conduct and support training as needed across the University.

## **5.4 Postgraduate Certificate in Research Practice**

Doctoral students spend the first six months of their studies undertaking the Postgraduate Certificate in Research Practice, which is a taught and compulsory part of their doctoral programme. Teaching takes place within the student's Faculty, supported by academics from within each Faculty and from the Doctoral Research College (DRC). The course provides doctoral students with:

- Preparation for carrying out academic work for a research degree;
- An introduction to the research skills, practices and procedures that are essential with postgraduate research study;
- An opportunity to explore a range of theoretical and practical research issues and their application to particular phenomena;
- A supportive environment in which to develop a specific area of research interest into a viable research proposal;
- A structured programme that assists in the development of an individual research project.

The course serves to develop the wider research student community at Birmingham City University, enables participants to share any concerns that they may have and mutually support one another.

Further information can be obtained by contacting the central [Doctoral Research College](#) team.

## 5.5 Supervisor training

Those who wish to supervise undergraduate and postgraduate research projects (including doctoral students) must undertake supervisor training. The University requires that prospective supervisors complete initial training within their Faculty and attend further training as appropriate.

The Education Development Service has developed several courses on research supervision that have been accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA). More information on these courses can be found [here](#).

The University also operates a “Community of Practice around Research Supervision” for those currently undertaking doctoral research supervision. This provides supervisors with the opportunity to collectively discuss their experiences of research supervision, and thereby benefit from shared knowledge and development.

## 6 Research Ethics

As stated in the University’s [Research Ethical Framework](#), the University expects that all researchers will behave professionally and ethically in all research activities they undertake. All research activities are required to go through the appropriate ethical review process.

No research data collection can be undertaken until appropriate ethics approval is obtained from the relevant committee, body or person. Any research conducted without suitable ethical approval constitutes research misconduct, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken (see [Section 3](#)).

### 6.1 Awareness of ethical considerations

The University expects all researchers to be aware of key ethical considerations when designing and undertaking research projects. These considerations include, but are not limited to:

- Moral considerations about the research project. For example, the permissibility of the development of a new technology.
- The rights of individuals who take part in research. For example, the right to autonomy in deciding whether or not to take part in a study, or to withdraw.
- Awareness of the risks involved with the research and how to mitigate them, both for researchers and for research participants. For example, the risks of travelling to interview participants in their own home; the risks of working with vulnerable groups of the population; the risks of using particular kinds of equipment to collect research data.
- The potential impact the research might have on: researchers themselves; research participants; those who will benefit from the research findings; the wider physical environment; or society at large.
- Ensuring that due care is given to objects or artefacts that are used or developed in the course of the research, particularly those of historical or cultural relevance. For example, the use of appropriate methods for viewing artefacts that allows for their continued preservation.

These kinds of considerations apply to the entirety of the research process, including:

- Research design, including the plans for collection, storage, and analysis of research data.
- Interactions with participants, including the need to provide enough information to allow participants to make an informed decision as to whether they will take part.
- Publication and dissemination of research findings and / or research data sets.
- Plans for making research data available to other researchers for them to use.

## 6.2 Ethical review processes at BCU

### 6.2.1 Taught students

For taught students, ethical review of research projects will be conducted by module leaders for those projects that are within the remit of the module ethical approval.

Those projects that fall outside of the module ethical approval will proceed to review via the [Ethical Review Manager](#) (ERM) by the appropriate Faculty Academic Ethics Committee.

### 6.2.2 Research undertaken in BLSS, CEBE and HELS

For research students and staff conducting research projects (whether externally or internally funded) in the Faculties of *Business, Law and Social Sciences* (BLSS), *Computing, Engineering and the Built Environment* (CEBE), and *Health, Education and Life Sciences* (HELS), ethics applications must be submitted using the [Ethical Review Manager](#) (ERM) form. Further guidance on using the ERM can be found on the Faculty ethics pages, and in the [References](#) section of this guidance.

All submissions are reviewed by the appropriate Faculty Academic Ethics Committee (FAEC).

Any amendments that are subsequently made to approved research projects must be submitted using the Amendment sub-form in ERM.

### 6.2.3 Research undertaken in ADM

For research students and staff conducting research projects (whether externally or internally funded) in the Faculty of *Arts, Design and Media* (ADM), ethics applications undergo an internal three-stage process. Further guidance on the ethics review process in ADM can be found on the ADM [Research Ethical Review](#) iCity page.

## 6.3 Training on using the Ethical Review Manager (ERM)

The Research Ethics Officers will, periodically, hold training sessions on how to use the ERM when submitting an application for ethical review. These are held on both City Centre and City South campuses.

## 7 Research project management

The University expects researchers to effectively manage their research to ensure timely delivery of their findings and any other promised outputs of their work. In most cases, this



responsibility will fall to the Primary Investigator (PI) of a project, though tasks can be delegated to other members of the research team as appropriate.

In the case of taught and doctoral students conducting research, it is the responsibility of both the student and their primary supervisor to ensure that work is completed on time.

## 7.1 Non-academic considerations for research projects

Researchers should be aware of a number of practical considerations when designing their study, along with ensuring academic rigour of their proposed research design. Support is offered from a number of professional services teams in the University in the following areas:

Consideration	Personnel to contact
Requirements from funding bodies (where appropriate)	Research Development Support Officers (RIEE)* or Research and Innovation Development Support Officers (RIEE)* in Faculties
Legal requirements, including GDPR	Information Management Team (Legal Services and Compliance) or Data Protection Officer (Legal Services and Compliance)
Insurance cover	Insurance Manager (Legal Services and Compliance)
Sponsorship (where appropriate)	Research Development Support Officers (RIEE)* or Research and Innovation Development Support Officers (RIEE) in Faculties
Risk assessment	Research Development Support Officers (RIEE)* or Research and Innovation Development Support Officers (RIEE) in Faculties
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Data Protection Officer (Legal Services and Compliance) or Research Integrity Officers (RIEE)*
Finances / costings	Finance Officers / Senior Project Finance Officers (RIEE)* – present in all Faculties
Contracts	Contracts Manager (RIEE)*
Intellectual property	Head of IP and Contracts (RIEE)*
Ethical review	Research Ethics Officers (RIEE)*

\*Research, Innovation, Enterprise and Employability

### 7.1.1 Students undertaking research

Both taught students and doctoral students should speak with their supervisory team in order to receive feedback on their study design, and for help with any of the considerations listed above, where appropriate.

## 7.2 Project documentation

The University requires researchers to keep clear and accurate records of the research they undertake including, among other things: documents relating to the set-up of the project, a copy of the ethics application and ethical approval letter (from FAEC or other external committee), information about the study team (where appropriate), financial records about the project, risk assessments, a study plan detailing the methods used for data collection and analysis, copies of information sent to participants, and plans for reporting the findings of the study.

Using a folder structure and naming conventions to keep your project documentation organised is not only good practice, but is also useful in case questions are subsequently

asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. Keeping documentation organised using these techniques makes finding requested records much easier.

For externally funded projects, certain project documentation must be kept on the Externally Funded Project SharePoint site. Guidance on how this should be organised can be found in the [File Structure Guidance](#) from the Compliance Team.

### 7.3 Members of staff undertaking externally funded research

Members of staff who are planning on submitting a bid to a funder must complete a Project Notification Form (PNF) **before submitting their proposal to the funder**. PNFs can be obtained from Faculty Research Development Support Officers (RIEE) or Research and Innovation Development Support Officers (RIEE) in Faculties. The PNF provides the research support team with important information about the project that will need to be monitored throughout the life of the project if the bid is successful. The PNF must be signed off by your Faculty's Associate Dean for Research before you can submit the funding bid. The responsibility for completing the PNF lies with the Principal Investigator (PI) on the project.

Further guidance on the processes around externally funded research can be found in the [Funded Projects Policy](#).

### 7.4 Project review process for externally funded research

For staff undertaking externally funded research, the University operates a comprehensive project review process throughout a project's lifecycle, from initiation to closure. The aim of these reviews is to reduce the University's exposure to risk and ensure adequate levels of supervision by senior management, appropriate to the size, value and complexity of the project and risk levels involved.

Further information about the project review process can be found in the guidance on [Internal Review Process for Externally Funded Projects](#).

## 8 Research Data Management

Research Data Management (RDM) refers to the systematic handling of information collected and used as part of a research project. Research data can take many forms including, among other things, quantitative datasets, qualitative transcripts, audio-visual information, and artefacts or objects.

Effective management of research data is an essential part of good research practice as it encourages transparency, protects the rights of subjects of research, and enables the findings of research to be shared with confidence.

Research data remains the property of the University when a researcher leaves, unless agreed otherwise. If the research data is made openly available at the end of a project via the University's [Open Access Repository](#), the researcher may access the data using this platform. Where research data is not made openly available, the researcher must request access from the University.



### 8.1 Research data protection: the GDPR and Data Protection Act

The European General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) was approved by the European Parliament in 2016 and entered into UK law on 25<sup>th</sup> May 2018. The GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018) are concerned with the processing (i.e. collection, storage, retrieval, manipulation, organisation, deletion) of personally identifiable data (PID).

The University is responsible for providing researchers with the appropriate infrastructure to allow them to be able to collect, store and access research data, including PID, securely. The University provides all students and members of staff with OneDrive for Business accounts, which are encrypted as standard, and it is strongly recommended that all research data is stored here. Digital PID should be stored separately from other research data, and should have restricted access. Physical research data containing PID, such as consent forms, should be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet or locker.

Researchers are responsible for protecting all research data that they collect during the course of a research project, particularly personally identifiable data. Information on how to do this can be found in the University's **Research Data Protection Policy**.

### 8.2 Data Protection Impact Assessment

A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is a document that helps to identify, analyse and minimise the potential data protection risks for a project before the processing of personal data commences. Researchers are expected to fill in a [DPIA Screening Questionnaire](#) before their research commences, and complete a [full DPIA](#) where necessary.

Researchers can refer to the [Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy](#) and contact the [Information Management Team](#) for further information. Guidance on completing a DPIA can be found on the Legal Services and Compliance Team pages on [iCity](#).

### 8.3 Research data retention

Following the end of research projects, elements of research data need to be kept for specified periods of time. Researchers should be aware that such retention periods may vary according funding bodies, or partner organisations that they are working with (for example, universities or businesses). It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to familiarise themselves with relevant research data retention policies, and to abide by changes to data protection regulations.

Researchers should refer to the University's **Research Data Retention Schedule** for more information.

## 9 Disseminating and communicating research

The University encourages its researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with other researchers and with the public, while recognising the need for researchers to protect their own interests and the interests of the University. The University supports the

widest dissemination of results possible, unless confidentiality agreements have been put in place or there are other restrictions on what can be shared.

### 9.1 Disseminating research data

There are many different avenues for disseminating research findings including, but not limited to, articles, books, chapters, conference presentations (oral or poster), public engagement events, compositions, products of creative arts, exhibitions, concerts, compositions, software, websites or blog posts, press-releases or other media events.

Researchers must ensure that when disseminating their research, no matter the method, that they report their findings accurately and do not mislead anyone by only reporting selective elements of their research.

Researchers must make sure that they are aware of, and comply with, any requirements from the funder of their research in relation to dissemination of findings – for example, having to publish findings within a specified time limit, or agreeing to host a public engagement event following the conclusion of the research.

If there is interest from the public or media in your research, you must contact the [Media Relations and Public Affairs](#) team for advice and guidance.

### 9.2 Authorship

The issue of authorship is an important aspect of good research practice and the University expects anyone listed as an author of a research output to accept personal responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the output. The contributions of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged. This applies to any circumstances in which statements about the research are made, including provision of information about the nature and process of the research and in publishing the outcome. Failure to acknowledge the contributions of others is regarded as unprofessional conduct.

Conversely, collaborators and other contributors carry their share of the responsibility for the research and its outcome. Authors are also responsible for ensuring that they agree with the way in which their contribution to any research output is presented. Where appropriate, the support of funding bodies should be acknowledged in publications.

The COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) report on [How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers](#) is a useful reference point for all those publishing research.

### 9.3 Open Access Policy

BCU recognises the value and importance of providing unrestricted access to research. Open Access ensures that the findings and outcomes of publicly-funded research are made widely available via the internet, without the need for paid subscriptions.

The University expects that researchers who have had a journal article accepted, or hosted an exhibition, conference or other public event involving the dissemination of research data, to deposit relevant information and supporting documentation into the University's [Open Access Repository](#) **within three months** of acceptance or the date on which the event was

held. More information on what exactly needs to be deposited can be found in the University's [Open Access Policy](#).

## 10 Conflicts of interest

As stated in the University's [Conflict of Interest Policy – Externally Funded Projects](#): “A conflict of interest means a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgement or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest. Primary interests refer to the principal goals of the profession or activity, such as the health of patients and integrity of research. Secondary interests include not only financial gain but also such motives as the desire for professional advancement and undergoing activities which would benefit family and friends. A conflict of interest exists if the circumstances are reasonably believed (on the basis of past experience and objective evidence) to create a risk that decisions may be unduly influenced by secondary interests.”

A conflict of interest also includes a conflict of commitment or a financial conflict of interest. See the University's **Conflict of Interest Policy – Externally Funded Projects** for further information.

Researchers should recognise and declare any potential or actual conflicts of interest in relation to their research, regardless of funding status. Declarations of potential or actual conflicts of interest should be made where appropriate, within, but not limited to, the University's [Conflict of Interest Form](#) (required for externally funded projects only), project proposal, application for ethical approval, grant or funding application, contracts, reporting findings and in publications.

Researchers involved with externally funded projects are expected to comply with the University's **Conflict of Interest Policy – Externally Funded Projects**. In compliance with this policy, employees of the University are required to complete the **Conflict of Interest Form** prior to the submission of funding/research grant applications and this form must remain current, and be updated as necessary throughout the duration of the project delivery/research project.

Failure to declare known conflicts of interest may be deemed as misconduct.

## 11 Intellectual property

Researchers are expected to familiarise themselves with the University's [Intellectual Property Policy](#).

"Intellectual property" (IP) means rights such as patents for inventions and trademarks, domain names and registered designs as well as design rights, copyright and moral rights, database rights, unregistered trademarks, know-how and confidential information.

BCU recognises the production and sharing of knowledge is central to the mission of a university such as BCU and the importance of its contribution to the development of individuals and society. IP generated by teaching, research, and other work done at BCU

where BCU facilities or resources have been used is an important asset of BCU, and has the ability to enhance its reputation as a creative, enterprising and professional organisation.

The potential to exploit IP should be considered at the application and contract stages and certainly before data are submitted for publication or presented in any other public forum including the internet. Assistance and advice with these matters can be found on the BCU [Intellectual Property iCity page](#).

## 12 Peer review

In research, peer review is conducted in order to evaluate academic work to ensure that it is of a suitable standard. Peer review is an important part of good practice in the publication and dissemination of research and findings, the assessment of applications for research grants, and in the ethical review of research projects. It is also a useful tool in the preparation and draft stages of grant applications, journal articles, book chapters, conference abstracts, and other forms of academic and scholarly output.

The University strongly encourages its researchers, at all levels, to act as peer reviewers for journals and other academic outlets, grant awarding bodies, ethics committees, and requests for in-house peer review of draft funding applications or publications (articles, book chapters, etc.) or other outputs.

Researchers should carry out peer review to the highest standards of integrity and objectivity. When asked to conduct peer review, researchers must:

- Respond to requests for peer review in a timely manner, either accepting or declining the request. If an extension is required, researchers should contact the organisation or individual who requested the review as soon as possible in order to see if an extension can be arranged.
- Consider whether they have the appropriate expertise to comment on work that they have been invited to review. If the researcher feels they are not able to review the work, they should return it.
- Declare any conflicts of interest that might impact their ability to review the work objectively and, where necessary, decline invitations or withdraw from ongoing review. See [Section 10](#) on conflicts of interest for more information.
- Undertake the peer review in line with instructions and guidance provided to them.
- Treat all information provided to them in strictest confidence. Materials should not be shared with others unless permitted in the instructions.
- Ensure that they do not take advantage of any information they obtain as part of their role as a peer reviewer. Specifically, researchers should not make use of research designs or findings without express permission from the author(s) of the work.

These responsibilities apply for requests for peer review from both external organisations and from within the University.

While carrying out peer review, if a researcher suspects that a form of misconduct has occurred (such as falsification, fabrication, plagiarism) or have ethical concerns relating to the design or conduct of the research, they should inform (in confidence) an appropriate representative of the organisation for which they are carrying out the peer review. See [Section 3](#) for more information on research misconduct.

## **13 Review of Guidance**

The University's Research Ethics, Governance and Compliance Committee (REGCC) is responsible for developing, implementing and reviewing policies for the proper conduct of research. As such, these Guidelines will be reviewed annually to allow for minor revision. Where major revisions are required, such as those resulting from a regulation change, REGCC will oversee these amendments and final approval will be obtained from the University's Research Committee.

## References

### Relevant University policies

- Research Misconduct Policy
- [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
- [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)
- Research Data Protection Policy
- [University Data Protection Policy](#)
- [Safeguarding Policy](#)
- [Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policies](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Lone-working guidance](#)
- [Open Access Policy](#)
- [Data Protection Impact Assessment Policy](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy – Externally Funded Projects](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy](#)

### Ethical Review Manager guidance

- [Getting started on the ERM \(Ethical Review Manager\)](#)
- [Guidance - Amendment Form](#)
- [Guidance - Funding Form](#)
- [Guidance - Non-Research Form](#)
- [Guidance - Research Form \(updated 2019.07.15\)](#)
- [Guidance - Transfer Form](#)

### External references

- [The Concordat to Support Research Integrity \(revised 2019\)](#)
- [UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research](#)
- [UK Research Integrity Office Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research \(2008\)](#)
- COPE (Committee on Publication Ethics) report on [How to handle authorship disputes: a guide for new researchers](#)

## Appendix 1 – Research governance structure at Birmingham City University

