

Brunel University London Responsible Research Policy			
Policy✓	Code of Practice...	Guidance...	Procedure...
Organisation-wide✓		Local...	
Approved by the University Health & Safety Committee			
Chairman Eliot Glover	Date 26 th November 2020	Review date 2023	

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1 Introduction

Sensible management systems, together with suitable practical training for those involved, are essential to providing a framework in which people can work safely. This policy is based on the higher education sector guidance; Responsible Research, which was launched in October 2012 as a model of best practice.

It describes how research is about investigating new avenues of knowledge, and this carries an unavoidable element of the unknown. The outcome of research work can be uncertain or can differ from what was

originally predicted. Despite the inherent elements of uncertainty, it is possible for research workers to innovate without exposing themselves or others to unnecessary health and safety related risks.

2 Scope

This Policy shall set the framework to enable responsible research to be undertaken and shall apply to all research activities undertaken by Brunel University London (BUL).

3 Responsibilities

3.1 Executive Board /Leadership Team *(This group typically consists of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Secretary, Chief Governance Officer, Deans and Directors).*

Supporting the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Executive Board (EB) is responsible for implementing the following Responsible Research Policy within their area of responsibility (this responsibility extends to those reporting to a member of EB).

3.2 Senior Managers *(This group may include Deputy Deans/Directors, Subject/Divisional Leads and Directors of Research)*

Senior Managers are responsible to the Executive Board/Leadership Team and, in order to enable responsible research, should ensure that:

- Health and safety policies, guidance and arrangements relevant to the expected risks in their research or work area are in place;
- Comprehensive risk management, identification and control programmes are in place, indicating how higher risk activities such as research involving hazardous equipment or substances, lone working or fieldwork will be managed;
- Appropriate permits and licences are obtained before the research begins, and records of authorisation, training, incidents and maintenance are kept locally (as a minimum);
- Reports on health and safety performance are fed back to the University Health and Safety Committee at least annually;
- Corporate systems are in place for identifying training needs and providing appropriate training and supervision for research staff and others in the workplace;
- The general and specific health and safety arrangements for contractors, visiting workers and visitors are explicit and communicated effectively; and
- The sanctions for not following Organisational, College and/or Institute policy or codes of practice are made clear to all.

3.3 Members of Academic Staff

Members of Academic staff are ultimately responsible to Senior Managers for the safe and legal conduct of research under their remit, a responsibility which cannot be delegated.

In terms of research, Academic Staff are generally experts in their field and are expected to have up-to-date knowledge about the risks associated with their research area. They should ensure that:

- They employ appropriately qualified researchers, training needs are assessed and training is available, both in general health and safety issues (such as risk assessment) and specific techniques or situations where there is significant risk (such as the use of lasers etc. or conducting research in the community);
- Special permission or licensing arrangements required for the work are in place and that appropriate supervision is available for researchers and technical support workers, dependant on the risk of the activity, age and experience of the individual;
- Programmes of work have been risk-assessed, and that the health and safety of researchers and others will not adversely be affected by known or emerging risks;
- Only Academic staff who comply with Senate regulations regarding supervision are allowed to supervise PhD students;
- Consideration is given to health and safety management, as well as the training and communication arrangements for researchers with disabilities or for those whose first language is not English;
- Robust emergency plans are in place for the workplace and for research activities which pose high safety risks and that they are made aware of reported incidents and near misses and will ensure that appropriate actions are taken to prevent a recurrence;
- They are informed about the outcome of safety performance measures such as inspections, safety tours, health surveillance, compliance with risk control systems and safe systems of work, training events attended work-related injury and ill-health figures;
- The monitoring workplace safety compliance and draw their manager's attention to deficiencies in health and safety management, such as unsafe acts or conditions, failure to follow safe systems of work, a lack of planned maintenance or inadequate facilities.

3.4 Post-doctoral researchers

Post-doctoral researchers should be appropriately qualified in their research area(s) and aware of the risks inherent in the techniques, equipment and methods they use. They should be trained to:

- Carry out risk assessments and communicate information on risks and control measures to researchers they supervise and others affected by the research. They should understand the University's policies, procedures and committee structures;
- Be effective supervisors, supportive, good at coaching and mentoring and take appropriate actions when made aware of health and safety management failures; and
- Contribute to the investigation of accidents and near misses that have affected their research team and use safe laboratory working practices and safe systems of work and reinforce the importance of good housekeeping and hygiene.

Although post-doctoral researchers may be given day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that research is carried out without causing unacceptable risks to health and safety, the overall health and safety responsibility flows through the line management chain and ultimately rests with the Vice Chancellor and Principal.

3.5 Project students (undergraduate and postgraduate) and trainee researchers

Trainee researchers and project students can't be assumed to be aware of the health and safety risks of the research or workplace and must be trained and supervised until they are competent to work without direct supervision.

3.6 Support Workers (Technical)

The risks the research activity could present to cleaners, maintenance staff, engineers, technicians and so on must be assessed and adequate risk control measures put in place before the research project starts.

Research support workers must be informed about relevant risks, associated risk control measures and their personal responsibility for health and safety. They should also be competent to discharge their duties without causing harm to themselves or others.

4 Shared Premises (Collaborations)

The Executive Board/ Leadership Team shall ensure that, when conducting collaborative work involving the use of shared premises or external contractors, a clear memorandum of understanding about the responsibility and arrangement for health, safety and security is in place.