

What it means in practice...

Pre-Registration & Registered Reports Sub-Policy

The University of Bristol's Pre-Registration & Registered Reports Sub-Policy supports the institution's commitment to open research by encouraging researchers to document and share study plans and protocols before starting their work. The full Sub-Policy is [available online](#) and further guidance about the University's Open Research Policies is available [on the website](#).

Researchers are responsible, where appropriate, for pre-registering study plans or protocols before starting the research and considering publication via Registered Reports to enhance transparency and reproducibility.

Researchers are encouraged to read the full policy to understand the scope and purpose of the policy, their responsibilities, the benefits for their research practice, and the circumstances in which pre-registration outputs may need to be embargoed for a period. Highlights from the researcher responsibilities section under the University's Pre-Registration & Registered Reports Sub-Policy [Section 9] are presented below for ease of reference.

Before beginning a study, consider:

- **Pre-registering your study plan or protocol on an appropriate third-party platform.**
Your research funder may require pre-registration and might recommend a specific platform – always check your funding conditions.
- **Sharing your pre-registration via social media or other networks to get early feedback and/or peer review.**
You may get comments which help improve the rigour of your research.
- **Publishing a Registered Report.**
This publication happens in two stages (pre- and post-project) and can help enhance the robustness of your study through peer review of your study plan. The journal also offers an in-principle acceptance to publish the results of your study regardless of the outcome – this can be especially beneficial to disseminating null or negative results, which contribute to refining future research activity.

What should your study plan or protocol normally contain?

While this may vary from discipline to discipline, you will normally include:

- **Your research question and motivation or background to the study**
- **Your methodology**
Choices or assumptions you've made; data collection methods; planned approach to data analysis and/or interpretation of source materials
- **Research integrity checks**
The ethics and governance arrangements; potential risks and how you will mitigate these, etc.
- **Your dissemination plans: how will data, code, and other research outputs be shared?**
Thinking about dissemination at an early stage means your research data management approach can account for future sharing and reduce the amount of work you may have to put in at a later stage to prepare materials.

