

What it means in practice...

Open Code Sub-Policy

The University of Bristol's Open Code Sub-Policy sets out requirements and recommendations for releasing code, supporting reuse under open licences and global access to enhance the transparency, rigour, and reproducibility of research activity and encourage collaboration and innovation. 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 writing code in the open from the start and publishing it under an open licence in a suitable repository, excluding any sensitive information like secret keys, credentials, personally identifiable data or sensitive data.

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 it may not be appropriate to openly release code. Highlights from the researcher responsibilities section under the University's Open Code Sub-Policy [Section 9] are presented below for ease of reference.

Before beginning your project and writing code, consider:

- **Whether you can write your code openly**
Writing code in the open from the start improves transparency and can invite early feedback that helps improve your project outcomes. Planning to publish your code in an open repository - minus any sensitive information, like secret keys, credentials, personally identifiable data, or sensitive data.
- **How you will disseminate your research outputs openly**
Your project plan should include a dissemination section – how will you share data, code and other research outputs from your project openly? If you are planning to publish code in an open repository, you'll need to remove any sensitive information, like secret keys, credentials, personally identifiable data, or sensitive data. Account for this in your approach to writing code and you'll reduce the amount of work you may have to put it in at a later stage to prepare materials.

If you will publish your code openly, consider:

- **Using a repository that uses PIDs**
 - Check if the repository will assign a [Persistent Identifier \(PID\)](#), such as a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), to your code. This makes it easier to cite the code and can be used to link a manuscript with a specific version of the code.
 - Some platforms won't assign DOIs directly but integrate with existing repositories so that individual releases from a public repository can be assigned a DOI. This is still a reliable approach. GitHub, for example, [integrates with Zenodo](#).
- **What legal ownership and licence conditions apply to your new source code**
 - Software libraries or dependencies that your code uses may have specific licence conditions which impact on the licence you can apply to your new source code or how you can share it.
 - Ownership rights in your source code will depend on the intellectual property terms of your employment (staff) or study (students), as well as any applicable funding terms or contractual agreements related to your project. Carefully consider which open licence is suitable for your new source code. Review [detailed software licensing guidance](#) from the University's Advanced Computing Research Centre.