
THE OXFORD CENTRE FOR RELIGION AND PUBLIC LIFE

E1 MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

1. Legal, Charitable and Institutional Status

The Oxford Centre for Religion and Public Life (OCRPL) is a charitable company limited by guarantee. It is incorporated in England and Wales as company number 05662830 and registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales as charity number 1139185.

OCRPL is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, together with any valid amendments, resolutions and byelaws adopted under those governing documents. Its charitable purposes include the advancement of education in religion and its contribution to public life, the promotion and conduct of research, and the promotion of religious harmony for the public benefit.

OCRPL operates independently of national government and is accountable under the legal and regulatory framework applicable to a charitable company and education organisation.

2. Educational and Academic Status

OCRPL operates as an Independent Alternate Provider of Higher Education (IAPHE), delivering and supporting education through online and virtual modes. Its educational activity ranges from certificate-level provision to doctoral-level study.

- a. OCRPL is not registered with the Office for Students (OfS).
- b. OCRPL is not a member of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).
- c. OCRPL does not itself hold degree-awarding powers and does not present itself as a university or degree-awarding body.
- d. Where a programme leads to a degree or other university award, the qualification is awarded by the relevant partner or awarding university in accordance with the applicable academic and partnership arrangements.
- e. OCRPL does not issue a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS) and does not act as a UK Student sponsor.
- f. OCRPL works with relevant accreditation and quality-assurance agencies and with partner institutions to support appropriate academic standards, quality assurance and continuous improvement.

3. The Trustees

The Trustees are the ultimate governing body of OCRPL. In their capacity as company directors and charity trustees, they are collectively responsible for the governance, stewardship and strategic direction of OCRPL.

Subject to the governing documents and applicable law, the Trustees are responsible for:

- a. protecting OCRPL's charitable purposes, mission and public benefit;
- b. setting and reviewing institutional strategy and priorities;
- c. ensuring responsible financial stewardship, sustainability and the proper use of restricted and unrestricted funds;
- d. overseeing risk management, internal control, safeguarding, data protection and legal compliance;
- e. approving material policies, major commitments and significant partnerships;
- f. receiving assurance on the quality, integrity and effectiveness of OCRPL's educational and research activity;
- g. ensuring conflicts of interest and related-party matters are properly declared and managed;

- h. appointing and overseeing senior leadership within the authority of the governing documents; and
- i. reviewing the effectiveness, skills, composition and succession of the governing body.

4. Delegation and Governance Structure

The Trustees may delegate defined responsibilities to The Executive Team, Academic Council, committees, Programme Heads or senior officers where permitted by OCRPL's governing documents. Delegation does not transfer the Trustees' ultimate legal accountability.

Delegated bodies and officers operate within approved terms of reference, policies, delegated authority and reporting arrangements. Material decisions, significant risks and matters reserved to the Trustees are reported or escalated to the Trustees as appropriate.

5. The Executive Team

The Executive Team supports the Trustees in the strategic and organisational oversight of OCRPL within the authority delegated to it. Its responsibilities may include strategic planning, organisational performance, finance, risk, administration, human resources and other institutional matters assigned to it by the Trustees.

The Executive Team operates under the relevant governing documents and approved terms of reference. Where specialist committees or working groups are used, their authority, membership and reporting responsibilities are defined clearly.

6. The Academic Council

The Academic Council provides academic governance and assurance for the educational and research activities that fall within OCRPL's own responsibility and delegated authority.

Its responsibilities may include oversight of:

- a. curriculum and programme development;
- b. learning and teaching;
- c. research governance and academic integrity;
- d. academic quality assurance and enhancement;
- e. student academic experience and support;
- f. academic policies and procedures within OCRPL's remit;
- g. the academic performance of OCRPL-managed provision; and
- h. academic matters arising from collaborative and partnership arrangements.

Where a partner or awarding university retains authority for academic standards, assessment, progression, examination, conferment of awards or academic appeals, those responsibilities remain with that institution under the relevant agreement and regulations. OCRPL does not assume or represent that it holds powers which legally or contractually belong to an awarding institution.

7. Programme Heads and Academic Management

Programme Heads are responsible for the day-to-day academic coordination of the programmes assigned to them within OCRPL's delegated framework. They support curriculum delivery, faculty coordination, student academic support, quality monitoring, programme review and liaison with partner institutions as applicable.

Programme Heads report material academic, student, quality or partnership concerns through the appropriate academic and governance channels.

8. University Partnerships and Collaborative Provision

Partnerships are central to OCRPL's model where programmes lead to awards granted by universities or other authorised awarding institutions.

OCRPL seeks to ensure that each material partnership is governed by a written agreement that clearly identifies the respective responsibilities of OCRPL and the partner institution, including where applicable:

- a. student recruitment and admissions;
- b. student registration;
- c. programme delivery and supervision;
- d. assessment, progression and academic decisions;
- e. award and certification;
- f. quality assurance and external review;
- g. student complaints and academic appeals;
- h. fees, refunds and student protection;
- i. data sharing and information management; and
- j. continuity arrangements if a programme or partnership changes or ends.

OCRPL carries out appropriate due diligence and periodic review of significant partners and seeks assurance that partnership arrangements remain academically, operationally and financially appropriate.

9. Accreditation and Quality Assurance

OCRPL is committed to maintaining appropriate academic and organisational quality across its online and virtual provision. Quality assurance is supported through internal academic governance, programme monitoring, student feedback, partner-university requirements and engagement with relevant accreditation and quality-assurance agencies.

OCRPL periodically reviews programmes, learning resources, teaching and supervision arrangements, student outcomes and partnership performance, and uses the findings to support continuous improvement.

10. Risk Management and Internal Control

The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that OCRPL maintains proportionate systems of risk management and internal control.

- a. material strategic, financial, operational, academic, safeguarding, partnership, data and reputational risks are identified and reviewed;
- b. appropriate financial controls and delegated authority are maintained;
- c. significant risks and incidents are escalated to the Trustees;
- d. business continuity and virtual-delivery resilience are considered as part of institutional risk management; and
- e. actions arising from risk reviews, audits, complaints or other assurance activity are monitored to completion.

11. Financial Stewardship

OCRPL manages its resources in furtherance of its charitable purposes. The Trustees oversee budgets, financial reporting, reserves, restricted funds, significant expenditure, grants and material contractual commitments.

Financial decisions are expected to be properly authorised, documented and proportionate to OCRPL's size, charitable responsibilities and risk profile.

12. Student Protection, Complaints and Fair Treatment

OCRPL seeks to treat applicants and students fairly, provide clear information about programme responsibilities and protect students where material changes could affect continuation of study.

OCRPL maintains institutional arrangements for student complaints, student protection, refunds and compensation. Where a partner university is responsible for an academic appeal, award decision or other matter, students are directed to the appropriate partner process. Any independent external review or alternative dispute resolution route is stated only where it genuinely applies.

13. Safeguarding, Data Protection and Ethical Conduct

OCRPL expects Trustees, staff, faculty, volunteers and partners acting on its behalf to uphold appropriate standards of safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection, ethical conduct and conflicts management.

Relevant concerns are handled through the applicable policies and reporting arrangements, with significant matters escalated to the Trustees where required.

14. Governance Effectiveness and Review

OCRPL keeps its governance arrangements under regular review to ensure that they remain proportionate to the organisation's scale, virtual delivery model, programme portfolio, partnerships and risks.

- a. The Trustees review governance effectiveness periodically and consider whether The Executive Team, Academic Council, committees and delegated arrangements remain appropriate.
- b. Governance reviews consider decision-making, accountability, skills, conflicts, risk oversight, quality of information, committee effectiveness and implementation of previous actions.
- c. Where useful, OCRPL may benchmark its arrangements against relevant charity, company, education, academic-governance, accreditation and quality-assurance good practice.
- d. Material governance changes are approved in accordance with OCRPL's governing documents.

15. Transparency and Accountability

OCRPL seeks to maintain clear and accurate public information about its legal status, educational role, governance structure, partnerships and responsibilities.

Public descriptions of OCRPL's programmes and institutional status are expected to distinguish clearly between OCRPL's own responsibilities and those of partner or awarding universities.

16. Approval and Review of this Statement

This Management and Governance Statement is approved by the Trustees and reviewed periodically, and sooner where there is a material change to OCRPL's governing documents, organisational structure, educational model, partnerships or legal responsibilities.