Oxford Academic Health Partners
WORLD-CLASS PARTNERSHIPS BRINGING RESEARCH TO LIFE

October 2026

Memorandum of Understanding for Oxford Academic Health Partners

1. Oxford Academic Health Partners (OAHP), a partnership between University of Oxford (UOXF), Oxford Brookes University (OBU), Oxford University Hospital (OUH) NHS Foundation Trust, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust (OHFT), and Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley (HIOTV), coordinates activity across the health and life sciences ecosystem throughout Oxford and the Thames Valley. OAHP supports strategic alignment and addresses shared challenges, to amplify the combined impact of our world-leading partners, and to leverage further support.

2. OAHP works across the discovery pipeline, to ensure research findings lead to patient benefit, supporting seamless interaction between infrastructures and sectors, and enabling system intelligence to underpin effective collaboration.

Background

3. Since 2014, UOXF, OBU, OUH, and OHFT ('the partners') have been working together as the Oxford Academic Health Science Centre. This built on established joint working between UOXF, and OUH, following its renaming as Oxford University Hospitals, and underpinned by the Joint Working Agreement, which was set up in 2011.

4. In 2020 the Partners were successfully redesignated as a NIHR-NHSE/I Academic Health Science Centre (AHSC) and rebranded as the Oxford Academic Health Partners. The Oxford Academic Health Science Network (AHSN), which became Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley (HIOTV), has been actively engaged since 2014 and formally joined the partnership in 2022.

Purpose

5. This Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) details how the partners work together to deliver OAHP for the benefit of each partner, and the life sciences and health ecosystems across the region.

6. This MoU sets out areas for collaboration and of shared interest and shared working between the partners. It outlines the principles of collaboration, and the value each partner derives from their involvement in OAHP.

7. The MoU is valid for a period of five years, and the Annex, which sets out current priority areas, will be reviewed and updated annually, during the Autumn board meeting.

8. Over this 5-year period the partnership will:

    a. support clinical research performance to ensure the region continues to attract world leading research and enable our patients to access trials as part of their care;

    b. promote Oxford translational research infrastructure and shared capabilities, accelerating innovation, adoption and driving economic growth;

    c. oversee coherent governance mechanisms to streamline shared decision-making, ensure clear lines of reporting, and accountable oversight across the partnership;

d. promote clinical academic career pathways, signposting opportunities, and celebrating excellence, to ensure that Oxford is a leading destination for early- and mid- career researchers, who can see how staff are supported in their development with a clear mechanism for progression;

e. collaborate on management of estates to amplify resources and maximise our use of space.

Partners

University of Oxford

9. In 2026 the University of Oxford was ranked first in the world by The Times Higher Education (THE) Subject Rankings for Medicine and Health, for the 15th consecutive year. The University's Medical Sciences Division hosts 6,365 academics, researchers, and professional services staff, with over £500m research income per annum.

10. University of Oxford, represented by the Medical Sciences Division, recognises OAHP's role in bringing together the key HEI and NHS partners across Oxfordshire. The coordinating and convening power of OAHP ensures these key partners align, integrate and work together where appropriate and useful, to ensure effective use of resources for the delivery of translational research for patient benefit, including major joint research infrastructure such as the NIHR BRCs. UOXF is a Board member of OAHP, and this provides a forum for discussion about prioritisation, focus and effective collaborative working that ensures we maximise the opportunity for translation and implementation of multi-disciplinary biomedical research.

Oxford Brookes University

11. Oxford Brookes is one of the UK's leading modern universities, having been established as a university in 1992. It enjoys an international reputation for teaching excellence and innovation as well as strong links with business and industry. The Oxford Institute of Applied Health Research (OxInAHR) is a multidisciplinary community of applied health researchers dedicated to producing world-class research which improves service delivery, patient care and population health and wellbeing.

12. Oxford Brookes University recognises the opportunity the OAHP provides for partners to work together and commit to building a cohesive and sustainable environment that ensures that existing NMAHPP research capacity, capability and leadership are further developed and fully integrated into the Oxford Health Research landscape (including NHS Trusts, HEIs, BRCs and the ARC).

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

13. Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a world-renowned centre of clinical excellence and one of the largest NHS teaching trusts in the UK. It became a foundation trust in 2015, and is made up of four hospitals across Oxfordshire, with 16,130 staff. The NIHR Oxford BRC, hosted by OUH, is a significant collaboration between OUH and UOXF, receiving £95m for 2022-28.

14. OUH NHS FT views OAHP as a critical and key collaboration to ensure alignment and focus on prioritising research and associated innovation. Working together in this way also promotes a research culture, longer term strategic planning for all partners and aids OUH to perform its role in adding value to the wider community and population we all serve.

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

15. Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust provides physical, mental health and social care for people of all ages across Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Swindon, Wiltshire, Bath and North East Somerset. The Trust delivers care to a population of roughly 2 million, with 7600 staff from 150 hospital and community sites. The Trust hosts over £60m of NIHR research infrastructure funding (Clinical Research Facility, Biomedical Research Centre, Applied Research Collaborative and HealthTech Research Centre). OHFT has specifically developed NMAHPP capacity and increased clinical (medical) academic posts – as there is an acute shortage of clinical academics and particularly medics needed for trials with industry.

16. Working in partnership with the University of Oxford and wider national collaborators, the Trust sees OAHP as a vital mechanism for integrating mental health, community and physical healthcare research across the region. Through OAHP, OHFT aims to advance strategic priorities that include accelerating mental health and community-based research, enhancing digital innovation and data-driven care. The partnership supports OHFT's commitment for a research-enabled workforce, ensuring mental health and community expertise are embedded within Oxford's broader academic health ecosystem. OHFT helps ensure OAHP delivers improved population health outcomes, with equitable access to research, and real-world impact at scale.

Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley (HIOTV)

17. HIOTV is one of 15 Health Innovation Networks commissioned by NHS England and the Office for Life Sciences (OLS) and is hosted by OUH. HIOTV has a proven record for accelerating uptake of innovation in the NHS and supporting healthcare innovators. It improves patients' safety, experience, and outcomes, and fosters economic growth.

18. From the HIOTV perspective the value of involvement in OAHP is primarily around early innovation connectivity within the Oxford ecosystem.

19. Involvement in OAHP gives HIOTV earlier sight of emerging research from the research infrastructure in Oxford. This allows HIOTV to engage innovations closer to source, shaping them with NHS pathway need in mind, improving readiness for evaluation, and shortening the route from discovery to real-world adoption. It strengthens HIOTV's role as a translational bridge between academia, venture-backed innovation, and system delivery, ensuring that local science aligns with NHS priorities and that promising innovations are supported towards scalable impact.

Principles of collaboration

20. The objective of OAHP is to accelerate the breakthrough research and innovation that transforms health outcomes locally and globally, by fostering alignment and collaboration in key areas of shared priority.

21. The partnership connects the region's people, expertise and systems across its universities, NHS Trusts, and local research partners so health research and innovation can thrive.

22. It strengthens shared capabilities by streamlining governance, building research culture, coordinating infrastructure, and creating better ways of working together in collaboration.

23. It transforms health and care through research excellence and a research-enabled workforce that delivers improved outcomes and experiences for everyone.

24. The underlying principles of collaboration include:

    a. Timely information sharing, supporting system intelligence and collective learning.

    b. Seeking out and capitalising on opportunities for collaboration.

    c. Recognising each partner's strategic priorities and identifying ways to support activity.

    d. Helping align activity to enable staff, including clinical academics, to navigate and work across the ecosystem more easily.

    e. Providing constructive challenge and advice, when sought, to helping shape strategic planning.

    f. Identifying shared threats or risks and developing strategies to work together to address them.

    g. Developing a shared strategy for priority areas [current priorities outlined in the annex].

Governance and decision-making

25. The OAHP board includes senior representation from each of the five partners, the Chair and OAHP Director, and also attendees from key collaborative programmes and infrastructure including the Oxford Institute of Applied Health Research (OxInAHR), Oxford BRC, OH BRC, Thames Valley Applied Research Collaboration (ARC), and the Thames Valley Integrated Care Board (ICB) and others.

26. Board members determine areas of interest and help set the agenda for board meetings, which are led by the OAHP board chair and supported by the Director, the COO, and the Senior Programme Manager.

27. Each board member is responsible for reporting back to their organisation the activity of the partnership, particularly in issues requiring decision-making within the partner organisation's own governance structures. This will be determined by board members, who are responsible for flagging when a decision needs to be escalated, and how escalation should be supported.

28. The senior members and chair of the OAHP Board act as Corporate Trustees for the OAHP Charity # 1174725 established in 2017 and receive and approve the Annual Return and Accounts in January each year.

29. This MOU recognises existing agreements between partners, for example the Joint Working Agreement between UOXF and OUH, and documents supporting joint activity such as Follett Principles MOUs to support joint appointments between HEIs and Trusts, and agreements to set out the approach to IP for shared initiatives.

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Agreement

30. The partners agree to work together to deliver the vision of OAHP, recognising the value of the collaboration, and the collective impact this work will have.

31. This MoU will take effect from the date of signature and will be reviewed by participants annually at the Autumn Board meeting. This MoU can be amended at any time by mutual consent of all partners and can be terminated by any party giving written notice.

Signatories

University of Oxford

Professor Gavin Screaton

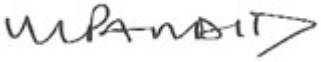
Head of Medical Sciences Division

Oxford Brookes University

Professor Astrid Schloerscheidt

Pro Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Health, Science and Technology

Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



Professor Meghana Pandit

Chief Executive Officer

Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Dr Michael Holland

Chief Executive Officer

Health Innovation Oxford and Thames Valley

Professor Gary Ford

Chief Executive Officer

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Annex:

OAHP Strategic Goals overview

To build an NHS that is fit for the future of healthcare, the 10 Year Health Plan for England focuses around three shifts:

a. From hospital care to care in the community: More care will be available to people in their communities and in their homes.

b. From analogue to digital health: Technology will reduce the administrative burden of delivering healthcare as well as allowing people to manage their own care through digitals tools and apps.

c. From treating sickness to preventing sickness: Addressing the major risk factors of ill-health and empowering people to make healthier choices.

OAHP has five strategic goals to create the conditions for Oxford's academic health partners to deliver these three NHS shifts. These goals help to build the shared foundation that allows partners to work more effectively, equitably and at greater scale.

1. Governance:

Facilitate joined up and streamlined governance structures, particularly for health research studies. This includes:

- Develop the Joint Research Office
- Improve understanding of research governance across the partners and enabling oversight and coordination of activity.
- Support and drive efforts to reduce trial set-up times to under 150 days.

2. Estates:

Convene shared approaches to tackling the strategic and operational challenges of developing Oxford's estate. This includes supporting the development of travel and transport strategies.

3. Workforce:

Align support for the development of clinical academic careers across all healthcare groups. This includes working in collaboration to:

- Build senior NMAHPP researcher integration into relevant themes and objectives in the new BRC applications.
- Build a strategic platform for sustainable NMAHPP research across the key partners.
- Build a strategic platform for sustainable NMAHPP career development across the key partners including post-doctoral clinical NMAHPP academics.
- Create a dynamic research culture through promotion of multi-disciplinary working, which includes NMAHPPs and that addresses key issues in the NHS 10 Year Health Plan.
- Integrate senior NMAHPP researchers at OBU in key working parties and initiatives within OAHP.

- Develop a shared strategy to increase clinical (including medical) academic capacity; to address the acute and growing shortage of clinical academics and particularly medics needed for trials and industry.

4. Infrastructure:

Build collaborative infrastructures for health research across academia, NHS, life sciences industry, charities, and communities. This includes:

- Learn from existing partnerships and advocating new ways of working.
- Support interaction between different infrastructure to amplify their impact and ensure ideas are moving seamlessly through the pathway to enable adoption and update.
- Consider the impact and opportunity for digital and AI solutions, including developing frameworks for the identification, testing and implementation of tools, ensuring they fit with cyber and data requirements.

5. Collaboration:

Widen engagement across the region to diversify the OAHP partnership. This includes:

- Work across and with the UK's Academic Health Science Partnerships to identify opportunities for shared learning and national activity.
- Development of relationships, collaboration and partnerships, for example across the developing Oxford-Cambridge corridor and the Equinox collaboration.
- Review of membership of OAHP and identifying other stakeholders and organisations that should be involved.