European Code of Conduct on Research Integrity (ALLEA)

Implementation @ KU Leuven

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ERION workshop - 10 Feb 2021
National/ regional context

https://www.brusselsjournal.com/node/58
National/ regional context

• 5 universities in Flanders

⇒ university system of self-regulation

⇒ Collaboration amongst universities within VLIR-platform (Flemish interuniversity Council)

⇒ Flemish Commission for Research Integrity (VCWI): second advice + general advice
National/ regional context

- Belgian national Code of Ethics (2009) – no update foreseen

- Advice of the VCWI (14 December 2020):
  - more valuable to endorse the ALLEA code as the leading document with regard to research integrity
  - undesirable to develop a novel national or regional CoC

  ⇒ could introduce additional differences in national norms
  ⇒ would require a substantial amount of time and effort (that could be invested in other important projects)
  ⇒ ALLEA code will be embedded in the “Horizon Europe regulation”
  ⇒ it is also a guide for research institutions
National/ regional context

• **Advice of the VCWI** (14 December 2020) about the ALLEA-code:

1. **to endorse it and publicly highlight this endorsement**;

2. **to actively pursue that every scientist and research policy officer has read this document**;

3. **to use it institution wide as a leading document**;

4. **to communicate structurally and transparently and to provide in training about the behaviour that is expected from researchers by referring to the ALLEA-code**;

5. **to wield it as the primordial framework in assessing potential research integrity breaches**.
National/ regional context

• New VLIR online learning tool (under development by the 5 Flemish universities):
  will provide an interactive training on research integrity based on the ALLEA-Code
  ⇒ same structure: good research practices – violations of research integrity
  ⇒ content: with many references to the ALLEA code

Specific fragments of the ALLEA Code are found in this kind of highlight.
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1. Document for policy development:

RI is also responsibility of institution:

• KU Leuven endorses the ALLEA-code

• RI = priority in research policy plan 2018 – 2022

• Opening speech rector L. Sels 2018: Integrity and trust absolutely vital for a university
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- Providing clear policies and procedures on good research practice:
  - Endorsement of a clear statement on good authorship practices
  - Guidelines on what is and is not permitted in the domain of image manipulation
  - Policy on research data management

- Transparent reporting of RM investigations: public website with anonymized summary of cases

- Open science task force and Open Science ambassador appointed to coordinate, guide and stimulate the process of transforming the University and all its disciplines towards more openness while respecting the limitations of that openness.
Reference to ALLEA-code in **GUIDELINES INTERNAL FUNDS KU LEUVEN**: 

*Research is also expected to be conducted in a proper manner, taking into account the principles of the European Charter for Researchers and in particular of research integrity (the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity).*

**GENERAL REGULATIONS INTERNAL FUNDS KU LEUVEN**: 

On the occasion of serious infringements of the research integrity by the CWI, the Academic Authorities can decide to limit or forbid the opportunities of a researcher to apply for internal funding or to make use of it.
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2. Document to guide/train/support about “Good Research Practices”

- ALLEA-code on website RI
- ALLEA-code is mentioned in RI lecture for all starting PhD + iSupervise masterclass
- ALLEA-code is actively used in RI workshops
- ALLEA-code is mentioned in checklist RI for PhD researchers and promotor
- ALLEA-code is likely to be part of a RI commitment/ RI oath at the PhD defence
3. Investigative document:

ALLEA-code is primordial framework in assessing potential research integrity breaches by the KU Leuven Commission on Research Integrity (CRI)

- **Content-wise**: scope of the investigation – justification of the decision
- **Process-wise**: ALLEA principles implemented in investigation process:
  - **fairness to all parties**: Persons accused of research misconduct are given full details of the allegation(s) and allowed a fair process for responding to allegations and presenting evidence.
  - anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed **innocent until proven otherwise**.