Research Integrity Promotion Plans
as a way to meet requirements in
Horizon Europe

7th ERION Meeting
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Context

• Misconduct and QRPs cannot be ignored. Reduced quality, research waste, and declining trust must be countered

• Research Performing Organisations (RPOs) and Research Funding Organisations (RFOs) play a crucial role in promoting a strong research integrity culture and research practices that align with fundamental principles

• A need to develop, implement, and maintain policies and procedures tailored to the organisation

“To move the scientific enterprise towards better measures of quality, perhaps we need a collective effort by a group of leading international universities and research funders”

Zwart & ter Meulen 2019; Begley, Buchan & Dirnagl 2015; Munafò 2019; Benedictus, Miedema & Ferguson 2016
Funders’ expectation

Funding warning in new UK research integrity concordat

Tough sanctions on institutions that ignore research integrity rules in new concordat backed by Universities UK and research funders

October 25, 2019
By Jack Grove
Twitter: @jgro_the

UK universities risk being barred from accessing public research funding if they do not have structures in place to guard against research misconduct.

Under a revised concordat to support research integrity, published on 25 October and signed by UK Research and Innovation and the seven other research councils, the rules will now be enforced more than through its annual self-assessment. Research councils will be expected to conduct peer reviews of universities to demonstrate that appropriate arrangements are in place to ensure research integrity in their research activities.

Source: iStock

Grove 2019;
Bouter 2020
Horbach et al (in preparation)
6) We declare that the proposal complies with ethical principles in research integrity as set out in the ALLEA European Code of Conduct, as applicable international and national law, including the Charter of the European Union and the European Convention on Human Rights. Appropriate procedures, policies and structures are in place to prevent questionable research practices and research misconduct or breaches of the principles and standards in the Code of Conduct.
‘Standard Operating Procedures for Research Integrity’ aims to develop a Toolbox of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) & guidelines that RPOs and RFOs can apply selectively when tailoring their individual Research Integrity Promotion Plans (RIPPs)
Approach

- Extensive, mixed-methods empirical research programme
- Co-creation with end-users
- Sensitivity towards disciplinary and organisational differences
- Iterative design process
- Outreach and development of user-friendly web-based version of Toolbox 5.0

Figure 1: The four development cycles
From principles to practice

Research Integrity Promotion Plan (RIPP)

• All RPOs and RFOs should have a RIPP
• The RIPP outlines the steps that the organisation takes to promote research integrity in the context of its mission and disciplinary focus
• A RIPP should address core topics and outline policies and procedures for how these topics will be handled.
• Tools in the SOPsRI Toolbox can be adopted or used for inspiration
Topics to be addressed in a RIPP for RPOs

- RI training
- Supervision / mentoring
- Research environment
- Data practices and management
- Dealing with RI breaches
- Research ethics structures
- Declaration of interests
- Research collaboration
- Publication & communication
University efforts: exemplary cases

Promoting responsible conduct of research through local policies

Targeted policies and procedures:
- Delft (data champions)
- Oxford (open scholarship, reproducibility)
- Luxembourg (RI coaches)
- Ghent (research assessment; research careers)
- Glasgow (collegiality)
- Copenhagen (counselors, courses and training)

Extensive, cross-cutting policies and procedures:
- Amsterdam (discipline-tailored RI policies)
‘Tools’ for inspiration

Research Integrity Training Framework

The Research Integrity Training Framework (the ‘Framework’) was created to support a culture of research integrity at UCL. It is based around what would be required for a research project to be said to have integrity, and therefore the knowledge and skills researchers would need to have to ensure the research has integrity (e.g. appropriate research methods, thorough research data management, consideration of ethical issues, etc.). It is applicable to all researchers (staff and students) across all disciplines and can be used in two ways:

1. As a reference to assist researchers throughout the research lifecycle, in ensuring their research has integrity; and
2. As a training tool for researchers to assess their training needs, according to the research they are undertaking.

There are some suggestions for training in this guidance, which will be expanded over time to provide a wide set of training options available across UCL.

Pathways through the Framework
A Living Framework

The Framework is not a single-use resource, but one that remains applicable throughout the research lifecycle as well as throughout a researcher’s career, and so it important for researchers to always reflect back on the Framework and earlier levels: a continuous process of self-appraisal and monitoring.

For example, experienced researchers will likely already have addressed each level throughout their career and within the research projects they have undertaken. However, research methods do advance, policies change, additional regulation comes into force, new ethical issues arise, roles and responsibilities expand and each institution has their own policies and procedures that we need to adhere to. All of these create new expectations on research as well as new learning needs for researchers. It is therefore important for researchers to regularly reflect back on the levels to ensure they continue to adhere to the Framework.
Topics to be addressed in a RIPP for RFOs

External expectations
• Compliance by applicants
• Expectations towards RPOs

Internal procedures
• Assessment procedures
• Declaration of interests
• Monitoring grants
• Dealing with RI breaches
Developing, implementing, monitoring and maintaining a RIPP

- Ensuring organisational commitment and legitimacy through inclusion and deliberation
- Tailoring the RIPP to the mission and disciplinary orientation of the organisation; linking to real needs and building on existing policies and procedures
- Avoiding excess bureaucracy; avoiding undermining intrinsic motivation; avoiding middle-management ‘shielding’
- Assessing and balancing costs and benefits
References


Hatch, A. & Curry, S. Changing how we evaluate research is difficult, but not impossible. *eLife*, **9**, e58654 (2020).

Horbach, S.P.J.M. et al. Six ways for funders to support responsible research. IN PREPARATION


Thanks for your attention!