

RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Nele Bracke, 23 February 2021

MENU

- ❑ What are we talking about?
- ❑ Why is research integrity important?
- ❑ Who is responsible?
- ❑ How can you take responsibility?
(What not?)
- ❑ Know what research integrity is
- ❑ Understand its importance
- ❑ Know who should take care of it
- ❑ Know what you can do, and
experience how you can do it

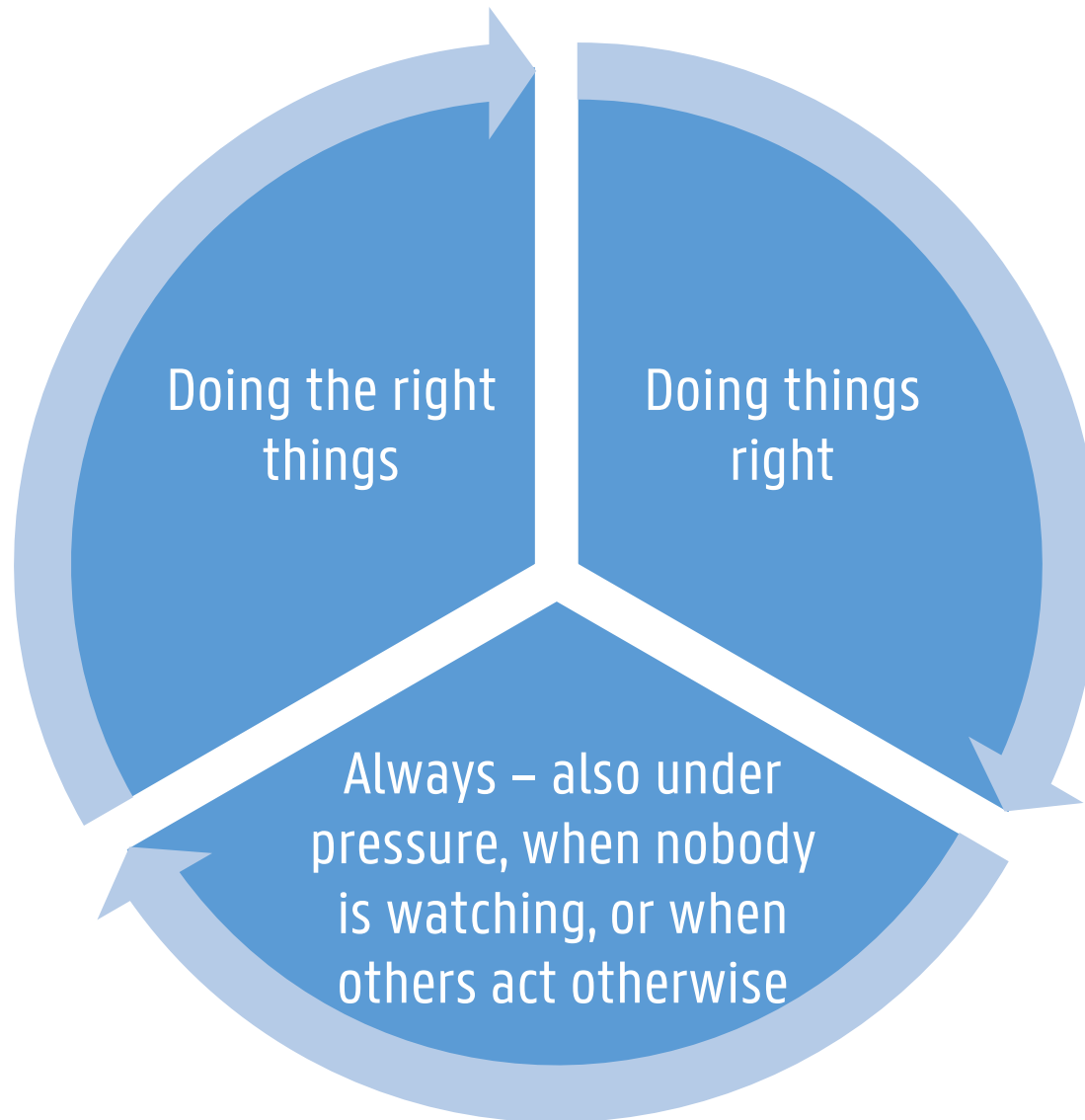
WHAT



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What does 'integrity' mean?

WHAT



WHAT

Behaviour

Guided by values, norms,
regulations, codes...

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.



<http://www.allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/ALLEA-European-Code-of-Conduct-for-Research-Integrity-2017.pdf>, p.4

WHY



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What is 'good' research?

WHY



Trustworthy

Trust

WHY

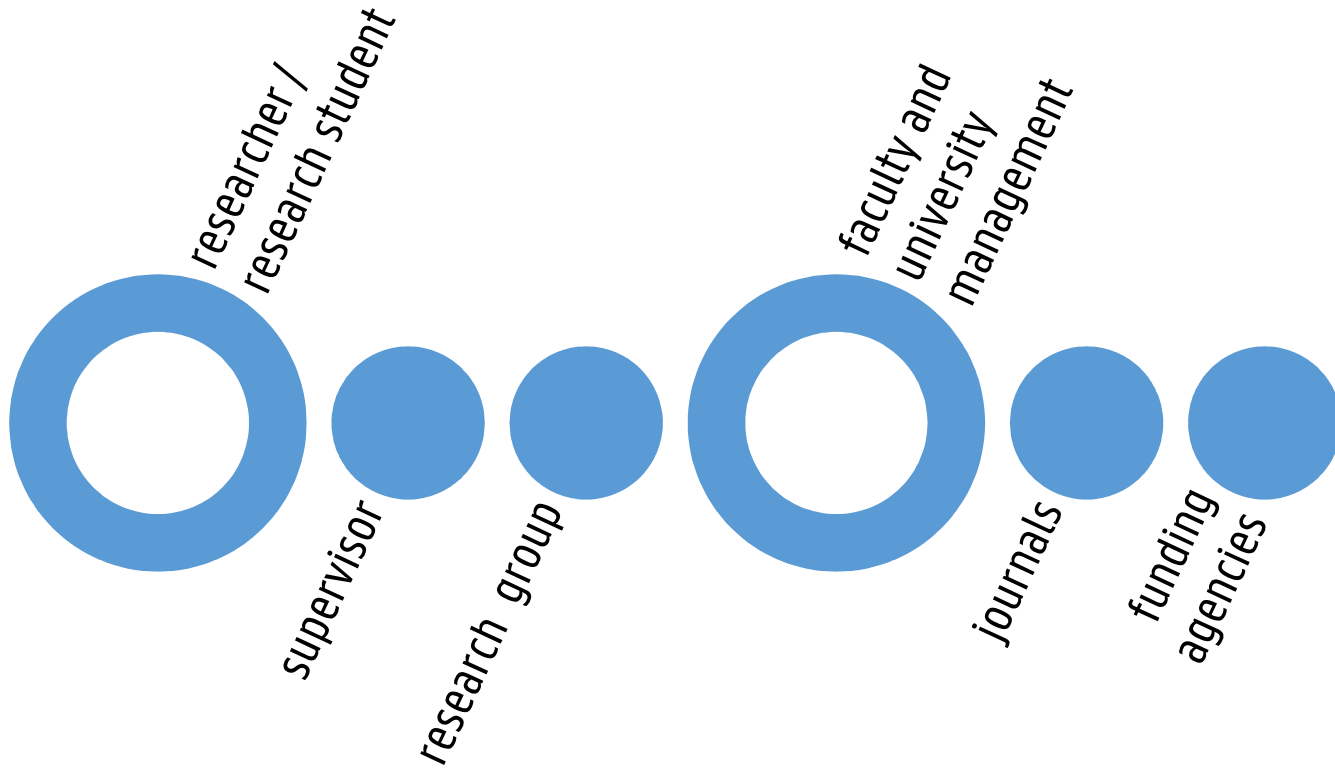


“There can be
no first-class research without
integrity.”

Marja Makarow, in *A new code of conduct for researchers*
(European Science Foundation, 2010)
archives.esf.org/media-centre/ext-single-news/article/a-new-code-of-conduct-for-researchers-624.html (consultation on 7 May 2019)



<http://ori.hhs.gov/THELAB>



HOW



Responsible conduct of research

Apply good research practices during the entire research cycle (from research design to reporting and storing data)



“Behaviours that follow the standards established by professionals and society for the proper conduct of research”

Epigeum, Research Skills online, Research Integrity – Arts and Humanities

Honest mistakes

HOW



- Act according to rules and codes of conduct
- Follow the rules regarding citations
- Apply state-of-the art research design, methodology, statistics etc.
- Keep good research records (e.g., ELN, data management)
- Respect research protocols
- Behave responsible and with care in collaboration with colleagues
- Handle research subjects and materials with care
- Reduce potential harm and risks related to your research
- Report all your research results (incl. negative results, results that don't support your hypothesis or are difficult to explain) ...

HOW ... HOW NOT



Responsible
Conduct of
Research

Unacceptable
behaviour

Good Research
Practices

Questionable
Research
Practices

Falsification
Fabrication
Plagiarism

Violation of
laws &
regulations

HOW NOT



Fabrication
Falsification
Plagiarism

“Behaviours that significantly compromise the accuracy of the research record or the proper professional conduct of research.”

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Zero tolerance

HOW NOT

Questionable Research Practices

Sloppy science

“Behaviours that do not live up to the standards for responsible conduct but that are not seen as serious misconduct.”

Epigeum, Research Skills online, Research Integrity – Arts and Humanities

- ‘Cutting corners’
- Sloppy, negligent, uncarefull
- Exagerating research results
- E.g., selective reporting, HARKING, P-hacking, bias

Grey zone



HOW – HOW NOT



ETHICS – INTEGRITY



Not an easy relationship

- Different? Or the same?
 - Ethics focussed on relationship with research subjects & society
- Ethics part of integrity? Or integrity part of ethics?

ETHICS – INTEGRITY



1. (Disclaimer – My perspective) Ethical questions often fit into the scheme of integrity
 - Good research practices include several practices related to ethics, e.g., apply for ethical approval when necessary
 - Unethical behaviour is (at least) (highly) questionable, e.g., ethics dumping

Good Research
Practices

Questionable
Research
Practices

Unacceptable
behaviour

Challenge? Include other ('non-Western') perspectives in thinking about ethics and integrity, e.g.,
Canada indigenous standards for data management

ETHICS – INTEGRITY



2. Ethics is not limited to research behaviour

- Research questions – what kind of research questions are asked, funded, published...
- Researchers – be hired, promoted; get funded; be published; become reviewer, PI... / framed as 'non-EU researcher'
- Research infrastructure – access to (subscription journals), lab equipment...
- ...

ETHICS – INTEGRITY



Seems obvious, but is not ... it requires

- Research (projects) on ethics; conferences, handbooks & articles
- Specific attention from ethics committee, and sometimes specific ethics committee
- Specific codes of conduct (bottom-up, top down, co-created)
 - E.g., *Global Code of Conduct for research in resource-poor settings*, *SAN Code of Research Ethics* (South Africa), *AIATSIS Code of Ethics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Research* (Australia)
www.globalcodeofconduct.org/
- Specific funding schemes
 - E.g., Indigenous research and research training in Canada 2019-2022; Te Pūnaha Hihiko: Vision Mātauranga Capability Fund (New Zealand / Maori)
- Many issues remain unsolved

LET'S PRACTICE

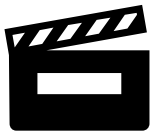


“Research integrity does not happen by default.”

Jukka Savolainen & Matthew VanEseltine, "Replication and Research Integrity in Criminology: Introduction to the Special Issue", in *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* (2018), vol 34, issue 3, p.242
journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1043986218777288

PRACTICE

Inspiration



PRACTICE



- ✓ Read the dilemma
- ✓ Make sure that you understand the situation
(turn on you microphone and ask, or turn on your camera and raise your real hand)
- ✓ Think about the decisive parameters
- ✓ Choose an option – www.menti.com + enter code
- ✓ Debrief

PRACTICE



Keep in mind ...

... dilemmas,

sometimes there is one correct answer, often there is not;

'choosing is losing', sometimes none of the options feels like (is)

the perfect one...

#1. STAY OR GO?



Adapted from Dilemma game – do not reuse

I'm carrying out research in a politically unstable environment. Although everything is currently calm, there are elections in several days' time and the results are likely to trigger rioting and violence. I have one final day of interviews and unexpectedly my translator and I have got permission to interview some community leaders who usually never speak with foreigners. My translator suddenly announces that he is worried about the election and wants to leave for his village immediately. He'll come back after the election. What do I do?

#1. WHAT DO I DO?



- A. I try to persuade my translator to stay an extra day by offering to pay more money.
- B. I decide to stay until after the elections and hope I can still get the interviews.
- C. I try to find a new translator so that I can do the interviews today or tomorrow, realizing that s/he will not have been approved by the community leaders in advance.
- D. I leave the country immediately.

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#1. DEBRIEF



ALLEA

- Respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- Researchers have due regards for the health, safety and welfare of the community, of collaborators and others connected with their research.
- Researchers recognize and manage potential harms and risks relating to their research.

#1. DEBRIEF



Always & everywhere:

- Value of human life – yourself, respondents, people who help you (e.g., data collectors, translators)
- Safety first: constraints on the risks researchers are allowed to take
- Suspend research until safety can be guaranteed

#1. DEBRIEF



Keep different perspectives in mind:

- Risks might be different for foreign vs. local researchers, translators etc.
- Power relationships: researcher / employer – ‘helper’ / employee
- Financial issues: research budget – income

#2. YOUR WORK – MY WORK



Adapted from Dilemma game – do not reuse

I am asked to rewrite an article written by a former PhD colleague who has returned to his home country. The reviewers were very mild and friendly. The article needs very few revisions. There is a good chance that it gets accepted for publication in the next round. My supervisor suggests putting me as second author, to support my academic career, despite my limited contribution to the actual research process. He will be the first author. The former colleague will not be mentioned at all. This colleague has agreed that others can use his work, but no specific agreements were made. What do I do?

#2. WHAT DO I DO?



- A. I agree and get listed as second author.
- B. I suggest that my supervisor and the former colleague should be the authors. They can mention me in the footnotes or acknowledgments.
- C. I contact the former colleague and ask him whether he wants the publication in his name.
- D. I decline the revising job; I do not want to be involved.

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#2. DEBRIEF



ALLEA

- All authors agree on the sequence of authorship, acknowledging that authorship itself is based on a significant contribution to the design of the research, relevant data collection, or the analysis or interpretation of the results.
- Authors acknowledge important work and intellectual contributions of others, including collaborators, assistants, and funders, who have influenced the reported research in appropriate form, and cite related work correctly
- All authors are fully responsible for the content of a publication, unless otherwise specified.

#2. DEBRIEF



- Your authorship rights depend on your actual contribution
- Guidelines from faculty, journal etc.
- Think about authorship roles, e.g., CREDIT
- Acknowledgement

- You can't just 'forget' about the former PhD colleague
- No gift authorship for supervisors, however difficult that might be

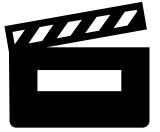
- Make arrangements ... on time! = preferably before you start (re-)writing / revising

#2. DEBRIEF



- Also make arrangements with people who leave the research group / when you leave the research group
- Don't assume that 'your' research material is yours (ownership)
- Using research data, results etc. that you didn't collect without consent might be considered stealing (plagiarism?, see further)

#3. POWERS THAT BE



Stefanie Van der Burght – do not reuse

I was given a research grant at Ghent University to study armed groups in a certain area of an Asian country. By mapping the groups and activities, I was able to study one group fighting for better human rights quite intensively and could give a full view of their organisational structure, the members, sympathisers and their activities. In some cases these activities contain or relate to non-legal (criminal) activities. I have also discovered the group has good connections to several civil servants. I am writing the PhD and preparing my communication strategy. What do I do?

#3. WHAT DO I DO?



- A. I register my PhD Open Access in *Biblio (Ghent University's Academic Bibliography)*, but otherwise keep a low profile. I decide not to broadcast my results to any Asian organization or government service.
- B. I write an extensive summary of all my findings and send it to anyone I think of that might have an interest.
- C. I write two documents: my actual PhD dissertation, and a shortened, more anonymized report to send out to Asian stakeholders. My recommendations still stand but the groups identity is protected.
- D. I demand my PhD to be kept confidential and refuse to write any articles about it.

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#3. DEBRIEF



ALLEA

- Authors ensure that their work is made available to colleagues in a timely, open, transparent, and accurate manner, unless otherwise agreed, and are honest in their communication to the general public and in traditional and social media.
- Researchers handle research subjects, be they human, animal, cultural, biological, environmental or physical, with respect and care, and in accordance with legal and ethical provisions.
- Researchers have due regards for the health, safety and welfare of the community, of collaborators and others connected with their research.
- Researchers recognize and manage potential harms and risks relating to their research.

#3. DEBRIEF



...

Unacceptable practices include

... allowing funders/sponsors to jeopardise independence in the research process or reporting of results

... misrepresenting research achievements

... exaggerating the importance and practical applicability of findings

#3. DEBRIEF



- How can you make your results known to the research community (and general public?), without putting your respondents/civil servants at risk? Is it possible to anonymize/pseudonymize?
- Discuss this with the respondents as part of the informed consent – what does risk/protection mean for you & for the respondents?
- Take into consideration legal frameworks (e.g., what to do when you discover illegal activities)
- Funder, organization you study, respondents can not steer your results in one direction or another
- Conflict of interests? Disclose it! (in publications, on slides)

#4. IT'S MY IDEA



Adapted from Dilemma game – do not reuse

Together with a colleague I'm working on somewhat different but overlapping aspects of the same project. We share ideas and also partly use the same data. After a while my colleague is finished with his paper, while I'm still working on mine. In a seminar, he presents his paper without any reference to or acknowledgement of my work. Upon reading the paper, I'm enraged. My colleague has used one of my ideas without acknowledgement. What do I do?

#4. WHAT DO I DO?



- A. I can't prove anything, so I let go and continue to work on my part of the project.
- B. I ask my colleague to co-author both papers (his and mine), since they are based on shared ideas and there is a strong collaboration between us.
- C. I accuse my colleague of plagiarism. I file a complaint.
- D. I ask my supervisor to be assigned a different project, one of my own.

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#4. DEBRIEF



- ❑ Plagiarism ... pretend something is yours while it is not
 - Exact words, some changes, paraphrasing, summarizing
 - Translations
 - Word, sentence, text
 - Self-plagiarism
 - Image, graph, picture (copy right)
 - Idea
- ❑ Zero tolerance

#4. DEBRIEF



- You can file a complaint (Commission for Research Integrity, journal,...), but there needs to be proof.
- Can you demonstrate that the idea is yours?
- In general: similar ideas do appear at the same moment in different labs, groups etc.

- Co-authorship or acknowledgement – check the criteria

- Make arrangements at the start of the research, esp. in collaborative projects

WHAT WILL YOU APPLY IN YOUR OWN RESEARCH?



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