

Horizon 2020 Policy Support Facility



MLE Research Integrity

Overview of Topic Reports on
Incentives, Training & Education

Stakeholders mtg.
Vilnius, 26.6.2019

Topic n. 2

Incentives in Research Integrity



Beyond the bibliometrics issue: What kinds of incentives?

- **Informal acknowledgement**
 - private and public praise, citations
 - e.g. for researchers who self-retract
- **Formal acknowledgements**
 - Badges, awards and other symbolic but official signs of recognition
 - e.g. journal badges for Open Science
- **Formal honours and other marks of prestige**
 - Exclusive access to prestigious roles and positions
- **Material access to resources**
 - Research grants and monetary awards
 - e.g. Nobel and other prizes, COS registration challenge



What aspects of research integrity can be incentivized?

- Conducting research with integrity, responsibility, transparency and accountability
- Encouraging good research practice in other actors
- Fostering an environment supportive of research integrity
- Seek training for oneself and actively training colleagues in research integrity
- Actively promoting RI and preventing, reporting and amending behaviours that constitute research misconduct
 - Special efforts in aiding self-correction, e.g. helping uncover flaws of a commonly used methodology or ensuring the correction or retraction of flawed publications.
 - Correcting or retracting one's own flawed work.



Policy recommendation n.1

- **Compulsory regulations and “softer” policy requirements ought to be complemented with positive incentives.**
 - The latter may take the form of informal or formal incentives, for example of the kinds outlined above, and could aim to reward actions and activities including:
 - *training, coaching, creating research environments that support dialogue and transparency, innovative methods of assessment of research performance and impact, open science activities.*



Policy recommendation n.2

- **The effects of any incentive or regulation should be closely monitored, to ensure the achievement of desired effects and detect the possible occurrence of unintended consequences.**
 - Monitoring activities ought ideally to include the collection of data, but it is essential that an open dialogue is maintained with the research community and all other relevant stakeholder, whose feedback and experiences should be collected and addressed with a spirit of constructive collaboration.



Policy recommendation n.3

- **RI systems should be able to flexibly respond to the emergence of unintended consequences.**
 - Whether in the form of positive incentives, or compulsory regulations, being open to revision is an ethical imperative for research ethics and research integrity structures.
 - This follows not solely because new initiatives may have unintended consequences, but also because old ones may no longer adequately respond to the needs of the research community, whose practices, methodologies and cultures are in constant evolution.



Policy recommendation n.4

- **Research on the impact of RI incentives and policies should be fostered and sustained.**
 - Such support would come, first and foremost, by the collection, in each country, of relevant documentation on new RI interventions that are introduced and on data, qualitative or quantitative, on their results and effects.
 - This information should be shared to any extent possible, when not published in the form of scientific reports and peer-reviewed studies.



Best practices in RI incentives?

- Largely under-exploited idea
 - Although informal incentives may be invisibly active
 - Formal incentives relatively easy
 - *e.g. public praise of a part. active institution*
- Experiences to highlight
- Greece:
 - Formal awards that recognize ethical and integrity practices demonstrated in research. For example, Bodossakis Foundation's Scientific awards for "contribution to the international promotion of Greece through their work and ethics".
- Ireland:
 - University College Cork is testing a Digital Badge in Responsible Conduct of Research, designed and targeted towards research teams working together to discuss and explore key RI issues of relevance to their disciplines.



Topic n. 4

Training and Education in RI



Policy recommendation n.1

- **RI training programs in the EU need to strike an optimal balance between coordination and diversity, both across EU countries and within.**
 - There appears to be a distinctly European approach to RI, which training material developed in the United States does not reflect.
 - A plurality of approaches to RI training is also, and more importantly, expressed across EU countries, and within each of them, across institutions.
 - Not all sources and levels of pluralism are beneficial, however. Many participants reported how different and conflicting purposes of different institutions within a country were a source of considerable difficulties and obstacles in advancing a RI training agenda



Policy recommendation n.2

- **Coordination across the EU and within countries is to be improved by sharing course materials, experiences and data on RI training.**
 - Materials need to be collected in a curated and easily accessible form.
 - An online platform should be identified for the scope, and its continuing existence should be ensured.



An exemplary, and non-exhaustive, list of material to share includes:

- **Description of cases of RM:** these may be real cases in which RM was proven by an investigation or may be fictional but realistic cases.
- **Exemplary cases of RI:** these could include cases of authors who faced difficult decisions and made the ethically correct decision.
- **Controversial and disputed issues:** disputes concerning authorship, for example, are extremely common and highly relevant to all researchers.
- **Description of “grey-area” cases:** for example, cases in which RM was investigated but ultimately not proven.
- **RI training course syllabi,** to document what is taught and where, and inspire the design of new courses.
- **Tools to collect course feedback.** This could provide valuable information on how to best design and teach RI.
- **A “question bank” for research integrity,** containing lists of questions and tests designed to stimulate and to assess the acquisition of RI knowledge, skills and awareness.
- **Links to published research on EU courses, or unpublished data** about courses. Ideally, this data would include data on participants, their characteristics, and results of tests or other behavioural outcomes and it should be in a format that permits the conduction of statistical analyses.



Policy recommendation n.3

- **Diversity across the EU and within countries must be preserved by encouraging institutional autonomy in the design and delivery of RI training and by discouraging an uncritical re-use of material from other institutions or countries.**
 - Materials for a course, even when obtained from the sharing platform discussed above, should be adapted as necessary to the objectives of the course and the culture and requirements of the institution or discipline for which the course is being designed.



Policy recommendation n.4

- **National-level RI Officers (or other equivalent figures) are crucial mediators between the need to coordinate and that to maintain diversity within their own countries and across the EU. In particular:**
 - They should ensure the collection and sharing of material and information on RI training in their country.
 - They should indicate the overall objectives and themes of RI training within the country. Institutions should then be allowed to develop their own training programs in autonomy.
 - They should facilitate dialogue and communication among stakeholders within the country, to ensure some level of coordination.
 - They should facilitate the conduction of research on RI training.



Policy recommendation n.5

- **Research on RI training should be supported.**
 - Research funds should be devoted by the EU and by individual member states, to sustain the collection, sharing or publishing of qualitative and quantitative data on RI training, in order to allow all RI programs to make continuing improvements.



Best practices in RI training

- Three different models
- France:
 - RI training courses following a ministerial decree that made it a requirement for all doctoral programs.
 - Diversity of syllabi, styles, modes of delivery
 - By French researchers, for French trainees
- Austria:
 - Training offered is mostly voluntary, although some institutions have made it a requirement for particular PhD programmes or for full professorships.
 - A “train-the-trainers” program aimed at University teachers, PhD supervisors and Ombudspersons
 - Two-day workshop that includes multiple activities and is as interactive as possible.
- Moldova:
 - Universities run courses on research methodology and professional ethics that share some of the same objectives as RI training in other countries.
 - also remarkable: Government decree in 2018 to promote Open Science and Open Access, objective that is currently met via lectures and seminars offered on an occasional basis

