Research Ethics & Integrity

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The @LegoAcademics overlooked one somewhat improbable 'risk' on their ethics approval form.
What we’ll do today

Ethics and integrity
Researchers responsibilities
Ethics approval and permissions
Q&A
Questions:

i. Research practice is self-evident, Researchers self-regulate: True or False

ii. How do research staff and students learn to do research well?
Research practice is self-evident, Researchers self-regulate: True or False

Neither true nor false, but believing it to be true is negligent. Most researchers are trying to do the right thing, most of the time.

Fanelli showed that misconduct and questionable practices are more common than we think:
On average, 1.97% of respondents admitted to having fabricated, falsified or modified data or results at least once.
Up to 33.7% admitted to questionable research practices.
In surveys asking about the behaviour of colleagues, 14.12% knew of falsification and up to 72% knew of other questionable research practices.
Respondents were anonymous but considering the sensitivity of the survey questions these figures are a conservative estimate.

How do research staff and students learn to do research well?

From those around them! Fostering research integrity is necessary to cultivate a good research culture.

**Why is this important?**
A culture is developed by customary assumptions; standards; practice; habits; support from policy; leadership;

Awareness and prevention

Handling research misconduct well

- *This Code of Conduct is not a body of law. It is not intended to have a legal character, but rather to be a canon for self-regulation.* (European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity)
- Customary practices, standards and assumptions. (Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations)
- Primary mechanisms are leadership and culture. Secondary mechanisms are codes, regulations, reinforcement by training or process.
More common  Misconduct spectrum  rare

Accidental
Ignorance or
Incompetence

Well-meaning

Deliberate
Dishonesty

RCR  QRP  FFP

(Acknowledgement Dr Steven Hill, HEFCE)
“Stapel did not deny that his deceit was driven by ambition. But it was more complicated than that, he told me. He insisted that he loved social psychology but had been frustrated by the messiness of experimental data, which rarely led to clear conclusions. His lifelong obsession with elegance and order, he said, led him to concoct sexy results that journals found attractive. “It was a quest for aesthetics, for beauty — instead of the truth,” he said.”


58 papers of Stapel’s papers have been retracted (as of Dec 2015).
Fabricated data – leading to two papers in Science to be retracted on Somatic Cell Nuclear Transfer

Used illegally obtained embryo’s from his own clinic

Coerced two female junior research associates to donate embryo’s

Highest number of retracted papers ever

(http://retractionwatch.com/the-retraction-watch-leaderboard/)
Misconduct & QRPs: What do you do & where to go

UoS procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/spg/research-policy.

UoS whistle-blower policy
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/goodconduct/raisingconcerns

UK Research Integrity Office Code of practice for research:

Who to contact:

Registrar registrar@sussex.ac.uk,

Research Governance Officer: rgoffice@sussex.ac.uk.

For independent advice go to UKRIO (UoS is a member):
http://www.ukrio.org/get-advice-from-ukrio/
What is Research Integrity or Responsible Research Conduct?

Being responsible for your research
Undertaking your research to a high ethical standard
Follow the University Research Governance Code of Practice
Follow your professional body’s ethical code
Contribute professionalism to your research culture

Research Integrity statement:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/standards
Research Integrity information:
http://tinyurl.com/RI-Sussex
UoS Code of Practice for Research:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/rqi/policy/research-policy

Singapore Statement of Research Integrity, 2010

Honesty in all aspects of research
Accountability in the conduct of research
Professional courtesy and fairness in working with others
Good stewardship of research on behalf of others
Why is Research Integrity important?

The University is committed to facilitating research with the highest ethical standards.

Shared responsibility to reassure the public and funders that the methods, conduct, results and outcomes of research are trustworthy and valuable.

Meeting the Concordat. If a University fails to meet the expectations their RCUK funding may be withdrawn.
University of Sussex
Research and Enterprise

Research Governance Framework

URGC
University Research Governance Committee

Ethical Review Committee
Reviews: ASPA and non-ASPA projects involving non-human animal subjects

HTA Coordination Group
Operational Group for work falling under the HTA License

BSMS RGEC
Brighton & Sussex Medical School Research Governance & Ethics Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS:
BSMS Faculty, UG, PGT and PGR Student projects;
IPGM Student projects;
Other health and medical related projects as appropriate.

SCITEC C-REC
Sciences & Technology Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Low risk Faculty and PGR projects and ALL Higher Risk projects
Covers the following Schools:
Life Sciences; Psychology; Engineering & Informatics;
Mathematical & Physical Sciences.

SSARTS C-REC
Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee

RECOMMENDATIONS:
Low risk Faculty and PGR projects and ALL Higher Risk projects
Covers the following Schools:
Global Studies; Business, Management & Economics;
Education & Social Work; Law, Politics & Sociology;
English; History, Art History & Philosophy; Media, Film & Music.
Do I need ethical approval, sponsorship or any other permissions?

Ethical review
University: Use the self-assessment checklist on webpages
i. human participation (not social care service users or NHS patients or their data)
ii. research that raises other ethical issues (e.g. research with potential social or environmental impact)
iii. Research involving animals

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/checklist
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance
Sponsorship

The sponsor is the organisation responsible for the research (particularly conduct and management) where ethical review is undertaken by a national body (e.g. NHS, social care or local authority services)

i. BSMS through RGEC then NHS

ii. Non-BSMS through HoS & CREC Chair then NHS or SCREC

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/sponsorship
Other Permissions

DBS clearance: children, Mental Capacity Act, NHS, individuals in local authority care

NHS research passport: to undertake research in an NHS setting

Gatekeeper permission (schools, institutions, organisations for elite interviews)
What makes a strong ethical application

• Explain your objective - what you want to explore and why
• Write all content in lay language (avoid acronyms and subject specific terms unless explicitly unexplained)
• Put yourself in the reviewers shoes—demonstrate that you’ve considered ethical concerns, risk/benefit analysis of the research for the participant(s), the researcher(s), wider society, the environment and the institution
• Ensure all supporting documents are attached (where applicable);
  i. Information sheet and consent form
  ii. Recruitment materials e.g. poster or advert
  iii. Questionnaire / topic guide / interview questions
  iv. Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment form [http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/healthandsafety/riskassessment/fieldwork/overseastravelsafetyandsecurity](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/healthandsafety/riskassessment/fieldwork/overseastravelsafetyandsecurity)
  v. Letter to the gatekeeper organisation
Take time to consider how to:

i. protect the care and welfare of participants and researchers

ii. minimise any risk of physical and mental discomfort, harm or danger to yourself, others and the environment

iii. maximise the value and benefits

iv. ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants

v. get informed consent (unless you have strong justification for not gaining consent)

vi. provide participants with information about the research, how it will be used and their right to withdraw in everyday language.
Supervision

Check your school handbook

Coaching in the ethical, legal and other conventions used in the conduct of research, and supporting the student in the consideration of these as appropriate.

Ensuring awareness of codes of ethics of relevant professional bodies

If funded, students awareness of funders expectations and terms and conditions

Supervisors of students engaged in research will seek to ensure compliance with the University Code of Practice in research on the part of students.

Supporting them with their ethics application(s) and seeking permissions or approvals for their research

Q&A
Good record keeping

Openness correlates with scientific rigour
Encourages better recording
Can be checked, reproduced and shared
Sharing data is a more efficient use of public money

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/researchdatamanagement/

“Of 53 clinical oncology papers, only 6 (11%) were reproducible” Begley & Elllis Nature 483,531–533 (29 March 2012) http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v483/n7391/full/483531a.html

‘Challenges in Irreproducible Research’ Special edition of Nature http://www.nature.com/nature/focus/reproducibility/#editorial

References and links


Research Integrity statement: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/research/standards

Research Integrity information: http://tinyurl.com/RI-Sussex

UoS Code of Practice for Research: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/rqi/policy/research-policy
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/checklist
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance/sponsorship
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/healthandsafety/riskassessment/fieldwork/overseastravelsafetyandsecurity
http://tinyurl.com/Doc-Sup-Sussex

http://www.ukrio.org/get-advice-from-ukrio/

‘Challenges in Irreproducible Research’ Special edition of Nature
http://www.nature.com/nature/focus/reproducibility/#editorial


http://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/spg/research-policy.

UoS whistle-blower policy http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/goodconduct/raisingconcerns


The Retraction Watch Leaderboard http://retractionwatch.com/the-retraction-watch-leaderboard/