

Research Integrity and PhD Viva

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For Trainees

Why case studies?

A core function of the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) is to provide independent, expert, and confidential advice on the conduct of research, from promoting good practice to addressing allegations of misconduct. We have been doing this since 2006.

Each request for assistance received by UKRIO increases our body of knowledge. These 'lessons learned' not only inform our response to subsequent enquiries but also underpin our other activities, especially UKRIO's education and training work.

We have found that illustrative case studies are an excellent way to raise awareness of research integrity and research culture and to illustrate the complexities and 'grey areas' that can occur.

Case studies are not literal accounts of any enquiry to UKRIO. Instead, they are scenarios, based on real-life situations, which illustrate recurring or notable issues and problems that have been brought to our attention. While some case studies may mention a particular discipline or setting, they contain themes that are relevant across subjects.

Please note that this case study is fictitious. Any similarity to actual persons, organisations or events is coincidental.

Case study 10

You are a *PhD student*. In your viva, your **external examiner** asks you the following three questions:

“How did you approach the design and conduct of your PhD study to take account of ethical issues?”

“When analysing your data, how did you ensure the integrity of your data?”

“If you plan on publishing your research, how would you go about demonstrating to a journal editor that your work was conducted to the standards of integrity that are expected?”



Please discuss and decide:

1. How would you respond to the external examiner?



Promoting integrity and high ethical standards in research
Providing confidential, independent, and expert support

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