

## Institutional impact of research integrity trainings – lessons learned at HHU Düsseldorf

UKRIO research integrity webinar:  
research culture

9<sup>th</sup> December 2020

**Dr. Christian Dumpitak**  
iGRAD, HHU Düsseldorf

[dumpitak@hhu.de](mailto:dumpitak@hhu.de)  
+49-211-81-15314

[www.igrad.hhu.de](http://www.igrad.hhu.de)



iGRAD is part of: **Heine**  
Research  
Academies

Photo: HHU/Ivo Mayr

[hhu.de](http://hhu.de)

### This session

- I. Background: HHU and German Code of Conduct**
- II. Development @ HHU Düsseldorf: Important milestones, current state, foreseeable developments**
- III. iGRAD's training course on good research practice**
- IV. Lessons learned**

## Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf Short profile



### Facts and figures:

- Founded 1965 (from Medical Academy Düsseldorf, est. 1907)
- One campus:
  - 5 Faculties (Mathematics & Natural Sciences, Medicine Arts & Humanities, Law, Economy)
  - Düsseldorf University Hospital
  - University and State Library
- Students<sup>1</sup>: 37.526
- Doctoral researchers<sup>2</sup>: 4.185
- Heine Research Academies:



02

<sup>1</sup>Fiber „University Facts and Figures 2019/2020“ (as of 01.11.2020); <sup>2</sup> Calculation of Heine Research Academies (Data from Faculties and Dept. Controlling as of 20.11.2020); photos: © Düsseldorf Marketing & Tourismus GmbH (top); © HHU/Lisa Schäfer (middle); © HHU/Ivo Mavr (bottom)

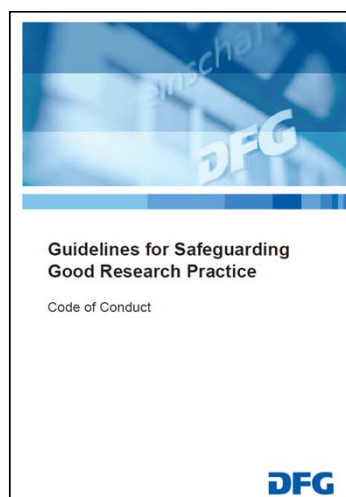
hhu.de

## Research integrity in Germany: DFG Code of Conduct (1998/2013/2019)



### 19 Guidelines + Explanations

- Defining professional ethos
- **3rd level of Code**: DFG online portal incl. FAQs, discipline specific information and case studies
- Code **supplements** existing **norms** and regulations
- To be **implemented** by research institutions, funding bodies or publishers **in form of binding regulations** (2019 revision: until 31 July 2021).



03

\*Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice – Code of Conduct\*; 2019, DFG, Bonn. [https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/rechtliche\\_rahmenbedingungen/gute\\_wissenschaftliche\\_praxis/kodex\\_gwp\\_en.pdf](https://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/rechtliche_rahmenbedingungen/gute_wissenschaftliche_praxis/kodex_gwp_en.pdf)

## Establishing a vivid research integrity culture @HHU Düsseldorf: Important milestones

- **2002** **HHU Senate:** Enacts “Rules on the principles for safeguarding good research practice at HHU Düsseldorf”.
- ...
- **2007/08** **FMNS:** First doctoral research programs implement self commitment to HHU’s GRP rules as part of agreements on supervision or stipend approvals.
- **2009** **FMNS:** Foundation of **iGRAD** → Self commitment to HHU rules for members + decision to establish GRP course in curriculum.
- **2010** **MedF:** Foundation of **medRSD**.  
**FMNS/iGRAD:** Start of GRP-courses (mandatory for members) and confidential conflict counselling for early stage researchers and doctoral supervisors (for whole Faculty).
- **02/2011** **German prominent case (Bayreuth) → Follow-up discourse + recommendations:** Serious considerations @ HHU.

04

FMNS = Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, GRP = Good research practice, iGRAD = Interdisciplinary Graduate and Research Academy Düsseldorf (Graduate Academy of FMNS), MedF = Faculty of Medicine, medRSD = Medical Research School Düsseldorf (Graduate Academy of MedF)

hhu.de

## Establishing a vivid research integrity culture @HHU Düsseldorf: Important milestones

- **12/2011** **FMNS:** Revision of doctoral regulation → GRP-course (iGRAD) now mandatory for DR at FMNS.  
**MedF:** Revision of doctoral regulation → Membership in medRSD (incl. curriculum) now mandatory for medical DR.
- **01/2012** **FAH:** **philGRAD** founded, GRP course for doctoral members
- **05/2012** **FAH:** First GRP courses in doctoral programs at FAH. **Prominent German case (FAH/HHU):** Serious considerations across HHU.
- **09/2012** **FLaw:** GRP rules for Law (German Law Faculties Association.) + Revision of doctoral regulation → Mandatory GRP instruction.
- **10/2012** **FMNS/iGRAD:** Pilot in BSc-studies Biology → GRP transparently implemented in obligatory module “Key qualifications”.
- **11/2012** **MedF/medRSD:** First GRP courses for supervisors (voluntary) and medical doctoral researchers (obligatory) .
- **12/2012** **HHU Senate:** Start of HHU GRP rules’ revision.

05

DR = Doctoral researchers, FAH = Faculty of Arts and Humanities, philGRAD = Graduate academy of the FAH, FLaw = Faculty of Law

hhu.de

## Establishing a vivid research integrity culture @HHU Düsseldorf: Important milestones

- **01/2013 FAH/philGRAD:** Start of regular GRP courses for DR of FAH.
- **04/2013 iGRAD/medRSD/philGRAD:** Association of **Heine Research Academies** established → e.g. collaboration and joint quality standards for GRP courses.
- **07/2013 FMNS:** Start of faculty wide discussion on revision of doctoral regulation.
- **11/2013 FBAE:** Revision of doctoral regulation: Instruction on HHU's GRP rules now mandatory for DR of FBAE.
- **12/2013 MNF:** Revision of doctoral regulation → Supervision agreement, yearly progress reports, independent mentor, etc. now obligatory.
- **02/2014 HHU Senate:** Enacts revised GWP rules (considering all relevant GRP/RI recommendations and guidelines until 2013).
- **11/2014 HHU President's office:** Initiation of university-wide discussion and consolidation process on GRP standards and quality measures in doctoral education

## Current state of development @HHU Düsseldorf 2020

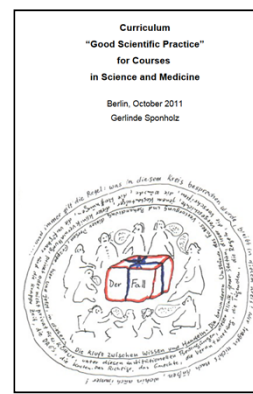
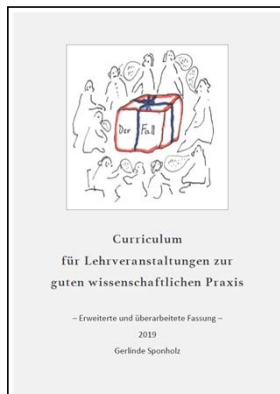
- **Implemented in doctoral regulations of HHU's five faculties:**
  - 5/5: Mandatory GRP course and/or Mandatory instruction on GRP rules
  - 5/5: Written agreement on supervision
  - 4/5: Regular written progress reports [FMNS + FMed + FAH + FBAE]
  - 4/5: Independent second supervisor/mentor [FMNS + FMed + FAH + FLaw]
- **Heine Research Academies: GRP courses offered on regular basis.** For **Doctoral researchers** (@4.5/5 Faculties) + central courses for **Postdocs**
  - Yearly average @HHU: ~45 GRP courses for up to ~800-900 participants.
  - Joint agreements with collaborating research institutions on GRP courses.
  - HHU's GRP courses meanwhile demanded across Germany
- **GRP courses linked to conflict counselling offers** [FMNS + FMed + FAH]
- **MedF:** GRP course compulsory for "Habilitation" and appointment of extraordinary professors
- **Study programmes:** Increasing transparent implementation of GRP as topic of Bachelor-/ Master modules

## Foreseeable future developments @HHU Düsseldorf

- **10/2020: HHU Senate enacts revised version of HHU's GRP rules:**
  - Revisions of DFG code of conduct (2019) implemented
  - Considering 17 additional relevant GRP recommendations/guidelines
- More stronger focus on prevention of misconduct and immediate (possible) correction of mistakes, not mainly on "punishing" misconduct.
- Strengthening and increasing professionalisation of GRP ombudspersons (new: at least one ombudspersons from non-professorial academic staff)
- Transparent implementation of GRP as topic of all study programmes @ HHU
- GRP relevant consolidations and revisions of rules and regulations for study, examination, doctoral education and "habilitation"
- Establishment of HHU-wide GRP event series addressing RI related topics for all career levels
- Implementation of GRP as integral part of HHU's welcoming culture (addressing all incomings)

## iGRAD's training course on Good Research Practice

- **Time point:** Beginning of doctoral research/„brush up“ Postdocs (e.g. incomings)
- **Type:** Seminar with discussion, reflexion and exercise phases
- **General Concept:**
  - Learning objectives of the curriculum recommended by the German Research Ombudsman, (hereby essential condensation of all modules).



## iGRAD's training course on Good Research Practice

- **Time point:** Beginning of doctoral research/„brush up“ Postdocs (e.g. incomings)
- **Type:** Seminar with discussion, reflexion and exercise phases
- **General Concept:**
  - Learning objectives of the curriculum recommended by the German Research Ombudsman, (hereby essential condensation of all modules).
  - Focus on all (for early stage researchers) relevant guidelines of DFG code of conduct. Specific complementation by additional content.
  - Discipline related work on all modules. Condensation by specific methods and minimization of redundancies.
  - Complementary topics: Basics research theory/ethics, dealing with conflict.
  - Participant specific: Introductions to rules, procedures, contact points of all institutions (university and collaborating institutions).
- **Duration/participants:** ~8 h (or 2x4 h online) /~12-24 participants
- **Methods:** Dialogical inputs, participant-specific cases, focussed single and group work, discussions, reflexions
- **Possible Variations:** Discipline specific or interdisciplinary course adjustments, Supplementary topics: Theory of Science, ethics, case studies, etc.

## Content & structure iGRAD's training course

### I. Basics of responsible conduct and professional ethos of a researcher

- Ia. Introduction: Research, ethical principles and ethos
- Ib. Basic (inter-)national recommendations and regulations
- Ic. Research misconduct: Definition, elements of offense, examples, possible reasons and consequences

### II. General Responsibilities

- IIa. Quality management, research design, documentation and data management
- IIb. Providing public access, authorship and publication process
- IIc. Supervision: Expectations, roles and responsibilities
- IId. Organizational culture: Collaboration, communication, dealing with conflict
- IIe. Procedures in case of suspicion and relevant contact persons

### III. Important specific responsibilities

- IIIa. Important issues prior to data collection: Authorization or permission relevant research
- [[IIIb. Research on animals]\*
- [[IIIc. Research on humans]\*
- [[IIId. Surveys, Interviews, Data privacy and security]\*

Seminar complemented by:  
Confidential conflict counselling  
Advice and counselling on RI-  
topics

## Lessons learned: Individual experiences from 10 years of iGRAD's GRP training courses

- **Lesson 1: Initially people will not be happy the moment courses become compulsory...**
  - Average score of iGRAD's GRP course evaluation dropped after course became mandatory + increase of general complaints, in particular that courses became mandatory (→ "shooting the messenger")
  - After 2-3 years: Re-improvement of average evaluation score (now frequently higher than before) + general complaints and questioning of compulsiveness virtually vanished.
  - Currently frequent feedback like e.g.: "important topic", "GRP topics now more clear", "will change aspects of my conduct", etc.
- **...but will get used to it.**

## Lessons learned: Individual experiences from 10 years of iGRAD's GRP courses

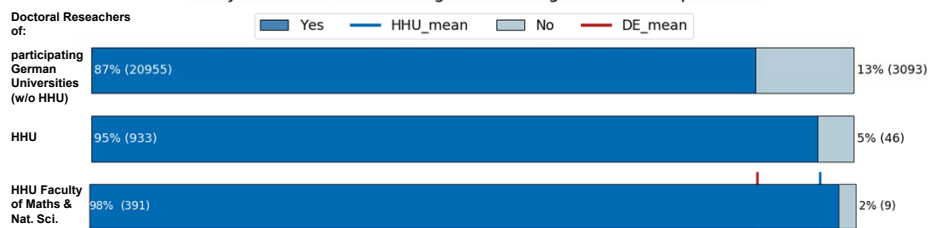
- **Gommel, Nolte & Sponholz (2015)<sup>1</sup>: Experiences from 200 GRP trainings.**  
→ Variation(s) of one/more of the following questions heard every course:
  - "Why didn't our supervisors tell us about GRP regulations?"
  - "Do our supervisors also know about the GRP regulations?"
  - "Are there GRP workshops for supervisors?"
- **Lesson 2: Do not underestimate doctoral researchers as possible multipliers...**
  - Initially similar observation during GRP courses of iGRAD, but decreased within following years.
  - Meanwhile rare observation, mainly connected to previous experiences (other institutions).
  - Doctoral researcher report now more frequently: GRP relevant topics discussed during project discussions, journal clubs in groups/by supervisor, GRP relevant expectations expressed by supervisors, etc.
- **...they might contribute to distribution of GRP knowledge over time.**

## Lessons learned: Individual experiences from 10 years of iGRAD's GRP courses

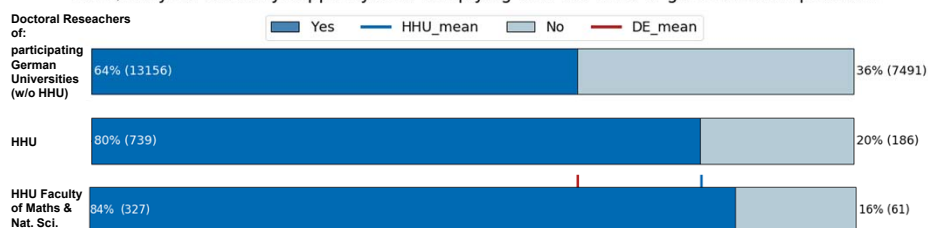
- **Lesson 3: With time, an impact on institutional GRP culture is possible...**
  - Doctoral and postdoctoral researchers and even supervisors are increasingly aware of confidential conflict counselling opportunities.
  - Important development: Seeking advice at earlier conflict stages than in previous years.
  - Doctoral researchers and supervisors appear less challenged, when uncertain about aspects of GRP topics → Seek advice more frequently.
  - Observation in GRP courses: Meanwhile participants generally show a more profound understanding of GRP topics than in previous years.
  
- **Lesson 4: ...even evident from data...**

## Lessons learned: Results from 2019 DR survey of National Academics Panel Study (DZHW)

Are you familiar with the regulations on good research practice?



Does/Did your university support you in complying with the rules of good research practice?





iGRAD   
Interdisciplinary Graduate and  
Research Academy Düsseldorf

medRSD   
Medical Research  
School Düsseldorf

philGRAD   
Faculty of Philosophy  
Graduate Academy Düsseldorf

 JUNO  
Junior Scientist  
and International  
Researcher Center

hhu  Heinrich Heine  
Universität  
Düsseldorf



Questions?

Photo: HHU/Ivo Mayr

Heine   
Research  
Academies