

Research ethics

Write down your thinking on sticky notes and place below



WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

Research ethics training that covers all academic disciplines. Feedback to date that our is too STEM-based.

culture change - new systems and practices

engagement in the training

Workload for ethics reviewers

Untangling compliance and ethics

Ensuring panel members stick to the ethical issues and not steering the conversation to methodology.

Academic Engagement

Finding suitable training for our ethics panel members

Lack of resource to support a robust process.

Time frame and constraints.

Lack of central research management system and the university wanting the ethics system to be adapted to capture additional data for which it is not designed/appropriate.

Lack of engagement from Supervisors and their understanding of their role in supporting and guiding student applicants.

Avoiding moralising when it's obvious unrestrained ambition is driving the problems...

research design - can it be unethical and if so how can it be reviewed?

Engagement with disciplines that are not familiar with research ethics

Excessive de-centralisation of ethics review and the emergence of unhelpful excessively local research ethics cultures

Unifying practice across institutional ethics committees

Dealing with ethical approval of overseas research/research outside of England

Central oversight of undergrad/postgrad research

WHAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

student support

face to face training in small groups

Central online ethics system

Cross-Faculty Ethics Panels

new systems = new opportunities

Cross-school RI events

Inviting applicants to speak to the Panel where applications are particularly complex - this is a new measure for us.

Introduction of a University level overseeing Ethics Advisory Board

Introduction of Academic Ethics Lead

ASK ONE QUESTION?

How to make training and guidance more meaningful and useful

How best to deal with scientific review for projects that will be submitted for external ethical review

How can institutions be convinced that robust ethics review requires time and resource? How can time/space for ethics review be created?

social media research - dos and don'ts. With the change in terms of use of tik tok, twitter etc. Is it reasonable to break the terms of use for research purposes as it is a public task?

Do any institutions have instances of fake research participants and what are you doing about them?

Is there training/guidance for universities as to how to be an NHS sponsor? What steps should be taken, what reviews and QA?

Research misconduct

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WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

Increase in people getting legal support - makes process focus on individual, not integrity of research. Time and comms implications too.

When issues move beyond institutional processes/policies and into the legal sphere.

Encouraging reporting of misconduct issues and ensuring widespread dissemination of support available.

Expectations of researchers that organisations can influence/ compel journals to take action

Academic misconduct, when allegations arise when a student submits their thesis

Responsibility (or obligation) to notify third parties of potential, or confirmed misconduct

Asymmetrical relationship between organisations & journals/publishers - latter expect investigations but often don't provide info to support process

The problem of vicarious liability - where regardless of what the institution has done to discipline an individual, the University still gets sued for the consequences.

Engagement from academics

Feedback from journals after requesting retractions or making journals inform us centrally of investigations or problems as opposed to just notifying the author.

When student/supervisor relationships break down

Cases when it turns out that required ethics approval was never sought

IP disputes between supervisors and students, arising from different understandings of how IP 'works'.

WHAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Teaching how to avoid plagiarism, through a variety of training.

Implementation of discussion/ dispute resolution stage for authorship disputes

Ongoing bullying and harassment project and aligning with research misconduct - streamlining process for investigations and ensuring issues raised are caught and dealt with appropriately.

ASK ONE QUESTION?

How to address allegations of misconduct in the spin-out/ knowledge transfer space? Especially re. IP.

How to investigate, or hold to account, researchers that are in a small/medium sized company, or self employed

How proactive are organisations in following up 'noise' [external to the institution] that might lead to an allegation being made but one has not yet been made?

How to get senior, 'set in their ways' people to genuinely engage with research integrity & do things differently?

Is there a policy for supporting academics who experience Bullying and harassment online or recourse for externals who make malicious allegations?

does your institution try to keep a handle on /log potential research misconduct issues that have been resolved informally in the faculty, and if so how would you do that?

Research culture

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WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

Effecting change to the research ethics process has been a slow process

Workload and burden

Need senior sign-off

getting people to understand how wide-ranging the research culture agenda is and that it needs to be approached from all sorts of angles

Knowing the extent of the challenge. At a central level, we only tend to learn about research misconduct/breaches when they are investigated through the formal process.

Engaging colleagues with the breadth of RC

Ethics viewed as hurdle rather than helpful

The pressure to produce positive results is deeply entrenched in academia, even though it is now being discussed by policy-makers.

Agreement on leadership and reporting as research culture has so many elements, spanning many organisational processes and frameworks

Takes a crisis to effect change

Need leadership and coordination so that RC projects are useful and come to fruition

WHAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Setting up 3 ethics committees rather than have one central ethics committee

Research Culture funding from Research England has provided focus/impetus for some projects and areas

New process is seen as helpful by researchers

Asking academic colleagues to lead or play major roles in task and finish groups

Varied approaches of online, hybrid, and face-to-face are needed to engage audiences

Providing face to face ethics training (where time/resource allows) has been helpful, to give people space to discuss how ethics relates to their project, breaking down assumptions.

ASK ONE QUESTION?

What is the incentive?

How to raise awareness of RI policies across campus?

Will we have too many things to champion?

Should we add "champion" roles to job descriptions and promotion opportunities?

Research integrity training

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WHAT HAS BEEN CHALLENGING?

engaging the more senior staff who need to learn but think they know it all and are "TOO BUSY"

Academic engagement in research integrity training. "We know this already!"

Having training that's both engaging but also accessible

A short-term approach to developing a research practice training programme, where project is only funded centrally for limited amount

Determining who should provide RI training to staff and engagement from staff.

Funding - trying to get £ to pay for developing courses. Good courses can cost even when created yourself.

Mapping existing training at a large, decentralised institution and creating a training strategy covering all career stages and disciplines.

Senior staff only do it at promotion deadline (it was made mandatory at that point) - the spike is unbelievable! Also mandatory for supervisors and this is not enforced.

Getting supervisors to engage with this training and pass on best practice

Time - on top of your other tasks. Good training takes a lot of time to create, review, test and publish.

WHAT HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL?

Access to introductory level e-learning programme - helps to start the conversation.

Pulling in colleagues to join in sessions - share the load and use sessions to teach more than 1 topic.

Workshops for PhD students / PhD Supervisors

Still working on developing a programme... including benchmarking and evaluation. So we don't yet know what has been successful!

Diverse approaches to discuss topic regularly with different groups. Visibility of leaders in this area and appreciation for their work expressed by upper echelons

We are looking at how we can bring our policies to life through short videos with key messages

We are in the process of developing a Research Skills Academy platform for accessing different types of training. (Glasgow) We run themed webinars for PGRs on authorship, open research, plagiarism, ethical partnerships = really fun, really useful. 3 x 5min talks, Q&A

The Scottish research integrity network that has been really useful. It creates a larger community that helps host pan Scotland online PhD workshop with diverse case studies

Bite sized training - does it need to be a training session, or can it be a guide, a video, etc. Something small you can use to chip away are awareness raising and build upon.

Our reflective training programme "outs" new researchers to draw on for talks and new resources recommended to us from the disciplines: this is very handy!

Not in the room (other Zoom!) but we (Glasgow) do reflective RI training and it's very well received. It is more work for us, but well worth it all round.

ASK ONE QUESTION?

Does anyone make RI training mandatory?

I'm much in favour of reflective practice. Does anyone take that sort of approach and what are the experiences?

Integrity training isn't mandatory, if we make it mandatory, does it become a tick box exercise? Then we need to track completion and chase people up!

Where is the research on "mandatory training" at universities? Not RI, in general. It is a complex thing, used in weird and wonderful ways...

Who should be responsible for research integrity training - Professional Service colleagues or academics? Or a combination of both?