National guidelines and a European Code of Conduct on Research Integrity.
What are they for?

Krista Varantola

Chancellor emerita, University of Tampere, Finland

Chair, Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity

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What is the purpose of a European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity?

- It is a code of conduct for the research community

- It describes the principles behind good and responsible research practices for all disciplines

- It describes why responsible behaviour is a sine qua non for the advancement of science and scholarship

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Who is it for?

- For individual researchers
- For research groups
- For research performing institutions and organisations
- For research funders

- *For political decision makers and research performace assessments?*

How normative is the Code and how long is it valid for?

- It allows for local and national differences
- It is intended to be a living document updated regularly

Where does it come from?

- It is a revised edition of the original Code from 2011, produced together by ALLEA and ESF.

- EU commission asked ALLEA (as the sole remaining owner) to take care of the revision

- The revision was finished by ALLEA's permanent working group on science and ethics at the end of January

- The draft went trough a thorough stakeholder consultation process (written and oral)

- The code is firmly based on the idea of self-regulation of science and scholarship

What is its current status?

- EU commission wants to use it as a reference document for EU funded research in the H2020 framework programme
- The code will be public any day now after solving some technical issues
- It will be widely distributed – to ALLEA member academies and a wide variety stakeholder groups for further measures

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Principles behind good and responsible research practices (Direct quote from the Code)

Reliability in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.

Honesty in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.

Respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.

Accountability for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

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Who does the code apply to?

All researchers
- – Peers
- – Seniors
- – Juniors
- – The research community in general

Institutional decision makers

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Good research practices in context
(direct quote from the Code)

- Research Environment
- Training, Supervision and Mentoring
- Research Procedures
- Safeguards
- Data Practices and Management
- Collaborative Working
- Publication and Dissemination
- Reviewing, Evaluating and Editing

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Where is the focus?

- On good research practices
  - On research environments
  - On training and mentoring
  - On data practices
  - On collaborative working
  - On publication practices and reviewing

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What does the code say about violations of research integrity?

- Misconduct and unacceptable practices
  - FFP
  - Unacceptable practices with examples
- Dealing with violations and allegations of misconduct
  - Consistency and confidentiality of investigations
  - Transparency of procedures
  - Procedures and sanctions described in national and institutional codes
- Fairness
  - to all parties in the investigation

Comment on unacceptable practices -

No longer "minor misdemeanours" or "questionable research practices"

From the Code:

"In their most serious forms, unacceptable practices are sanctionable, but at the very least every effort must be made to prevent them through training, supervision and mentoring and through the development of a positive and supportive research environment."

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What could the impact of the code be?

- The code is a checklist for national and institutional guidelines

- The code can lead to "soft" harmonization of guidelines for research integrity at European level

- The code expects research integrity to be firmly in the hands of the research community – in the spirit of self-regulation

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How does self-regulation work?

- Self-regulation needs to be monitored and promoted
- Research integrity is an integral part of any research performing institutions's quality assurance
- National-level guidelines and monitoring are the best tool
- Institutional-level monitoring only may lead to cover-ups and shady practices, misunderstood collegiality

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The Finnish guidelines by the National Board on research integrity TENK

- **Scope** :
  - research integrity in all research institutions and research in all disciplines
  - Including doctoral dissertations and occasionally even MA theses

- **Not in the scope of TENK's activities:**
  - Field-specific ethical norms are governed by other national-level boards, such as The National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health Care Ethics, ETENE, The National Committee on Medical Research Ethics, etc.
  - Alleged violations of the law, such as copyright law or patent law or slander

The leading principles behind TENK guidelines

- Self-regulation of science and research
- A non-legalistic approach
- A decentralized model
- Commitment of research-performing organizations to adhere to the guidelines for handling alleged violations of RCR
- Training in RCR
- TENK is an appeals court without being a court
- TENK's primary mission can be compared to that of dentists – prevent cavities from appearing

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A unique characteristic

- **All public research institutions in Finland are signatories of the guidelines and have thus committed themselves to following the guidelines (institutional level commitment)**

- Universities conduct the investigations themselves following the procedures described in the guidelines

- They are obliged to report to TENK about all the investigations undertaken by them

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Violation against responsible conduct of research - categories

- The Finnish guidelines:
  - Research misconduct
  - Disregard for the responsible conduct of research
  - Other irresponsible practices

- The European Code of conduct:
  - Misconduct
  - Unacceptable practices

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Definitions of misconduct

- Misconduct
  - Fabrication
  - Falsification
  - Plagiarism
  - Misappropriation
    - In international guidelines, misconduct is usually divided into three categories: fabrication, falsification and plagiarism, which is also referred to as the **FFP categorisation**.

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Disregard for the RCR

- Disregard for the responsible conduct of research manifests itself as gross negligence and carelessness during the research process.
  - denigrating the role of other researchers in publications,
  - reporting research results and methods in a careless manner
  - publishing the same research results multiple times ostensibly as new and novel results without a reference to the original publication (also referred to as **self-plagiarism**);
  - misleading the research community in other ways

Other irresponsible practices

- Other irresponsible practices may also occur in research. For example, researchers may engage in:
  - manipulating authorship
  - exaggerating one's own scientific and scholarly achievements
  - expanding the bibliography of a study to artificially increase the number of citations
- delaying the work of another researcher maliciously accusing a researcher of RCR violations
- hampering inappropriately the work of another researcher
- misleading the general public by publicly presenting deceptive or distorted information
- **In their most serious forms, these practices may meet the criteria of an RCR violation mentioned above.**

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The most common types of allegations of violations against the RCR handled by TENK

- Misconduct
  - Plagiarism
    - Usually at PhD level

- Disregard for the RCR
  - Authorship issues
    - The most common type and on the increase

Principles related to the procedure

- The fairness and the impartiality of the process
- The hearing of all involved parties
- The competence and expediency of the process
- Careful documentation and the parties' right to information.
- The person responsible for the making the decision is the rector of the university or the director of the research organization. The decision-making cannot be delegated to another person.

Additional documents

- Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposals for ethical review

- Recommendations:
  - Template for researchers' curriculum vitae
  - Description of the duties, rights, responsibilities of the different actors involved in the doctoral dissertation process

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Does self-regulation work?

- Yes
  - self-regulation works if there is a national-level system and if it is monitored

- No
  - severe doubts expressed in different contexts for good reasons. Plenty of examples to support the argument that self-regulation does not work if monitoring takes place at institutional level

Does self-regulation work in the Finnish context?

- YES

- YES BUT

- NO

YES

- at institutional level
  - if brought to the attention of the rector/head of institution
  - no need for cover-ups
  - **research integrity part of quality assurance**
- the main funding agencies are signatories and represented on the Board
- the academic community fairly homogeneous in a small country with a long tradition of handling alleged misconduct cases

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YES BUT

- mistakes happen
  - people who should know the procedure don´t (both senior and junior)
    - dean wanted to deal with allegations internally, rector did not know about the case. process amended afterwards. Outcome the same
- supervisors spread bad practices
  - inherited bad practices
  - competition induced new practices (grey area)
- writing in a foreign language (English)
- impact factor and citation index orientation particularly in life sciences

NO

- intentional oversight of unacceptable practices
    - local conventions
    - in project proposals
    - in the attribution of authorship
- hearsay evidence exists
    - of "plagiaristic" practices in the literature reviews of dissertations
    - of adding authors to articles in funding applications (to improve the standing of project members)
    - of ghost writing
- whistle-blower protection
    - not all cases are reported, rumours of suppressed cases
- collegial practices and cover ups
- no anonymous allegations allowed – a problem?

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What about trust?

- Trust in research is essential
  - It is the basis for self-regulation in research
  - The vast majority of researchers wish to be honest

- On the other hand:
  - offenders can get away with it if suspicions not voiced in the community
  - If credentials are trusted without checking (false medical diplomas)

- Trust is essential but so is healthy mistrust
  - E.g. frequency of publications

What is the current TENK working on?

- Low threshold advice in research integrity – indipendent ethical advisers in institutions. Why?
  - To protect
    - whistle blowers
    - project members with temporary contracts totally dependent on project leader
  - To fight against
    - authoritarian and overambitious leaders who tend shut up mouths
    - Misunderstood collegiality that shuts up mouths
  - To give researchers a chance
    - For confidential discussions on RI issues
    - To empower particularly junior researchers to fight misconduct and unacceptable practices

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What about sanctions?

- Philosophy based on self-regulation

- Sanctions depend on the **status** of the offender

  – Sanctions issued by the university or research organization not by TENK

  – Often misunderstood by the instigator of the allegation

  – Universities autonomous

  – Public pressure?

Political responsibility ?

- Political decision makers, in particular bodies making science-political decisions about the criteria used for research funding or for funding formulas

- At the national level, it is often the ministries of education and research or the national funding organizations that assume this role.

- In Europe, EU is the driver of European research policies

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Questions to be directed at science-political decision-makers

- How can predominantly quantitative criteria be used to measure quality?

- Do the metrics used currently really encourage researchers to adopt novel, experimental and interdisciplinary approaches?

- Do the quantitative criteria encourage researchers to curiosity-driven research and risk-taking?

- Do the funding criteria allow researchers to define their own research questions?

- Do the funding criteria take into account that research takes time?

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