

Research integrity guidelines and safeguards in Hungary

Péter Kakuk (a) & Anna Catharina Vieira Armond (b) & Enikő Demény (a)

a. Center for Ethics and Law in Biomedicine, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

b. Centre for Journalology, Ottawa Methods Centre, Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ontario, Canada

INTRODUCTION

The absence of well-defined institutional guidelines regarding research integrity and ethics serves as a significant factor potentially fostering research misbehaviours. Numerous countries have acknowledged the significance of promoting awareness about research integrity and establishing suitable protocols for addressing scientific misconduct. Nonetheless, the formal integration of research integrity measures remains largely unrealized in many countries, Hungary included. Hence, as an exploratory approach, this study seeks to gather and examine guidance materials concerning research integrity from Hungarian universities.

METHODS

Research integrity and ethics guidance documents, regulations, and policies were gathered from all 37 Hungarian Universities. This search was carried out through the universities' websites and validated via email correspondence. We selected documents that outlined best research practices, provided definitions and examples of misconduct, presented codes of conduct, and outlined procedures for investigating misconduct cases. The analysis of these documents was conducted using inductive content analysis.

RESULTS

Only 19 institutions have developed their own guidelines or adopted guidance documents on research integrity and ethics. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS) has created a guideline that has been embraced by 7 institutions. Out of the 22 selected guidance documents, 8 were integrated into the university's ethics code, 7 were regulations specifically targeting plagiarism, and 7 were developed as research integrity guidelines. Through content analysis, our findings reveal variations between universities in terms of best practices, misconduct definitions, principles, and institutional sanction policies. Notably, publication and dissemination emerged as the most elaborately addressed themes in the guidelines, while plagiarism was predominantly highlighted in discussions of misconduct. Recommendations concerning data practices were less prevalent and detailed. However, topics such as conflicts of interests, intellectual property, mentor-trainee relationships, and proper recordkeeping were frequently discussed. While only one institution established a dedicated research integrity committee, others relied on research ethics committees or ad hoc committees to address research misconduct cases.

CONCLUSIONS

The diverse distribution and limited number of developed guidelines underscore the urgency to enhance awareness and establish regulatory frameworks concerning research integrity within Hungarian universities. It is imperative to initiate comprehensive policy measures aimed at promoting research integrity in Hungary and aligning it with evolving international standards.

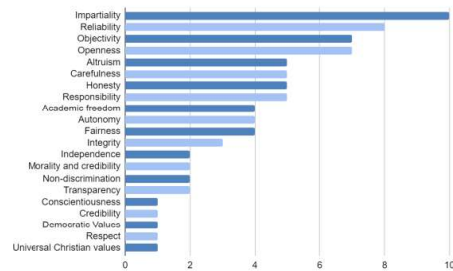


Figure 1. The number of documents addressing principles of research integrity.

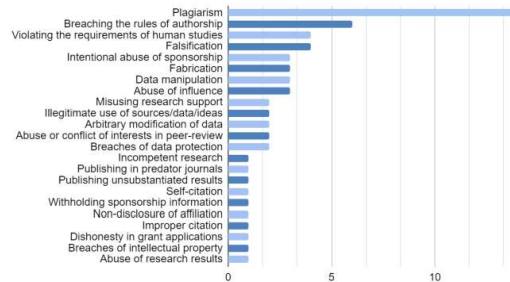


Figure 2. Misconduct and other misbehaviours retrieved in the included guidance documents and the number of documents covering the topics.

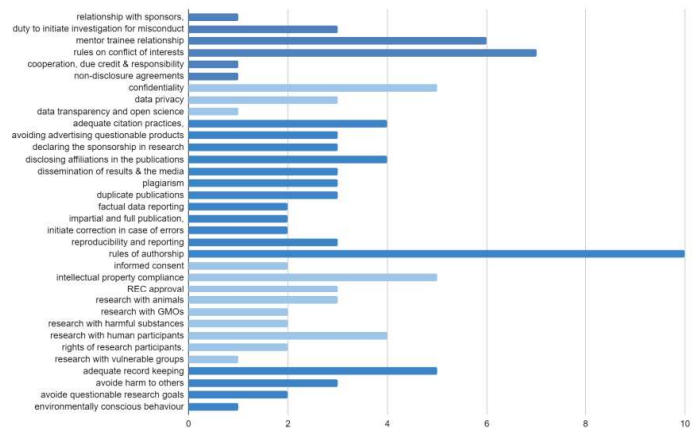


Figure 3. Best practices retrieved from the included guidance documents and the number of documents covering the practices.