

Challenges in Setting up a Research Integrity Office in a Lower Middle-Income Country (LMIC) Academic Institution: Lessons from Moi University, Eldoret, Kenya

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Outline

- Background
- Approach
- Challenges and solutions
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions
- Acknowledgements



Background

- Research integrity offices (RIO) to promote research integrity (RI) and manage allegations of research misconduct (RM) are uncommon in low-middle-income countries (LMICs).
- We describe our experience setting up a RIO in Moi University, Kenya.

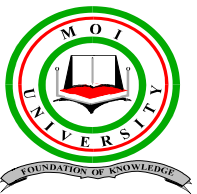


Approach

- Moi University has a robust collaborative health research program.
- We implemented our project between 2017 and 2023.
- The approach included
 - Baseline studies,
 - Benchmarking visits
 - Co-creation of an institutional research integrity framework
 - Setting up of the RIO.
- We describe key challenges encountered, approaches to addressing them, and lessons learned.



Challenges and Solutions



1.1 Lack of local evidence

Surveyed 100 researchers and administrators in health research institutions on awareness, occurrence, and guidelines for RM



Accountability in Research
Policies and Quality Assurance

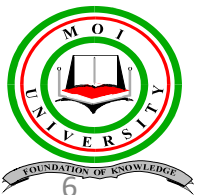
ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: <https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/gacr20>

Perceptions of occurrence of research misconduct and related factors among Kenyan investigators engaged in HIV research

Edwin Were , Eunice Kaguiru & Jepchirchir Kiplagat

Key findings :

1. 53.7% knew of a case of RM in the preceding 5 yrs
2. Two-thirds (68.3%) reported ever-involvement in any misconduct.
3. Nearly 36% reported ever-involvement in fabrication, falsification and/or plagiarism (FFP).
4. **Clear institutional policies associated with self report of ever-involvement in RM**



1.2 Lack of Local Evidence

IDI with 27 research regulators

- Chairs and secretaries of ethics committees
- Research directors of academic & research institutions
- Members of national regulatory bodies

Key Findings

- RM perceived as common
- No national guidelines on RI/ RM
- Institutional research guidelines primarily focused on student plagiarism

Were et al. *Research Integrity and Peer Review* (2023) 8:8
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-023-00132-6>

Research Integrity and
Peer Review

RESEARCH

Open Access



Institutional capacity to prevent and manage research misconduct: perspectives from Kenyan research regulators

Edwin Were^{1*}, Jepchirchir Kiplagat², Eunice Kaguir², Rose Ayikukwei² and Violet Naanyu³

2. Lack of local case studies:

- Benchmarked with two institutions with functional structures for RI.
 - University of South Africa and
 - Indiana University, USA)

UNISA

- Strong institutional guidelines on research and academic integrity
- Guidelines linked to a MoE policies on publications and rewards system
- Focus on RI and prevention of RM

IU

- Focus on FFP for federally funded research
- Well established systems for managing RM – quasi-legal
- Sanctions far reaching – individual and institutional



3. Lack of national guidelines on RI

3-day national workshop

- Attended by 70
 - ✓ Researchers,
 - ✓ Ethics committee members,
 - ✓ Research directors,
 - ✓ National research regulators, and
 - ✓ 3 international experts

Co-created a model institutional framework for RI.



Institutional Framework for Preventing and Managing Research Misconduct



Research Misconduct Workshop
KCB Leadership Center, Karen, Nairobi.
28 February – 1 March 2019

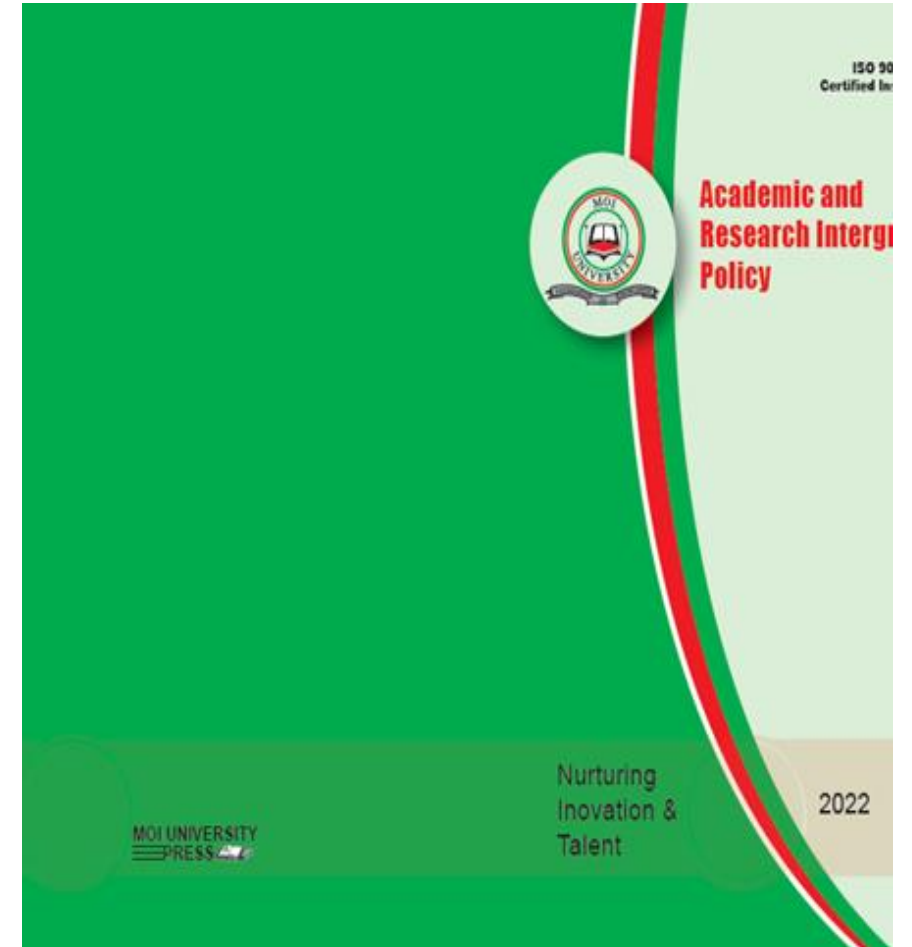


NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation

4. Lack of institutional guidelines on RI at Moi University

- Developed a contextualized curriculum on responsible conduct of research
 - ✓ Promotion of RI
- Embedded policies on RI& how to process RM into the institutional research policy.
 - ✓ Manage allegations of RM



Lessons Learned



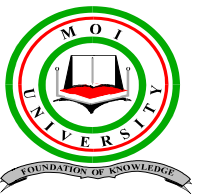
Lessons Learned

- Focus on promotion of RI was considered more productive than on managing RM.
- Early inclusion of top institutional leadership was critical in achieving institutional buy-in
- The proposed institutional framework must complement existing institutional policies
- A RI champion is needed to push the RIO agenda
- Institutional guidelines should include policies and standard operating procedures
- The RIO needed to be separate from the research ethics committee



Conclusions

- RIOs are a relatively new research infrastructure in the LMICs.
- RIOs are a core requirement for the full integration into the global research community
- National and institutional challenges can & must be overcome to set up RIOs



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Thank you for Listening

Asanteni Sana!

