What academics want
(versus what they need)
(or what I think they need)

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LSHTM

Context / Positionality

DrPH student

Formerly Head of Research Governance & Integrity

Investigating oversight of research and introduction of checklists*

How would increase in oversight impact trust?

* See poster PP-071!

Method

- 26 Semi-structured interviews
  - 22 staff at LSHTM
  - 4 with editors of medical journals

Faculty	
EPH	7
ITD	8
PHP	5
PSP	2

Grade	
Prof	9
Associate Prof	4
Assistant Prof	4
Research Fellow	3
PSP	2

Topics

- Would you welcome endeavours from LSHTM to have more oversight of the research it publishes?
- What could LSHTM do to help you with your research?
- Do you feel that LSHTM trusts you to undertake research correctly? How is this shown?
- How would you feel if LSHTM introduced more checks on manuscripts prior to submission?
- How should we balance oversight of research without adding more burdens to the researcher?

What do Academics want?

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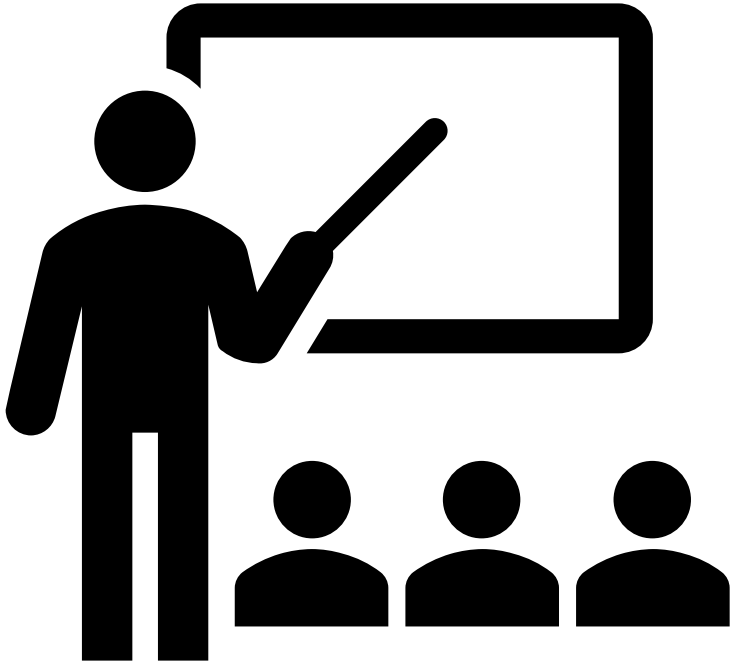
Results

Learn from mistakes
No more checklists
Not another barrier
Published QC
Checklist to strengthen research
Audits
Good training for doctorate
Carrot not stick
Not just a tick-box exercise
Early checklists and monitoring
Research prioritisation
Good training for doctorate
Less bureaucracy
Quality check
Be supported
Checklist at funding stage
Checks and balances
Peer review
Stopping of rubbish papers
No more checklists
Time and space
Academic freedom
Autonomy
Be trusted
Avoid publishing rubbish
Illusion of monitoring
Checklist
Internal informal review
Checks on research for ECRs
Checklist to strengthen research
Strengthen induction training
Help not hindrance
Checklist
Carrot not stick
Audits
Be trusted
Preserve standards
Less paperwork
Academic freedom
Don't rely on metrics
Help not hindrance
Learn from mistakes
Peer review
Education and training
Illusion of monitoring
Carrot not stick
Be trusted
Less bureaucracy
No change
Be supported
Checklist
Not another barrier
Checklist at funding stage
Academic freedom

Education and Training



"I think there should be a mandatory programme of Research Integrity for Masters students and PhD students."

"Checklists are good because they're quite short, you know, checklists, can be presented in quite concise way"

Carrot not Stick

not

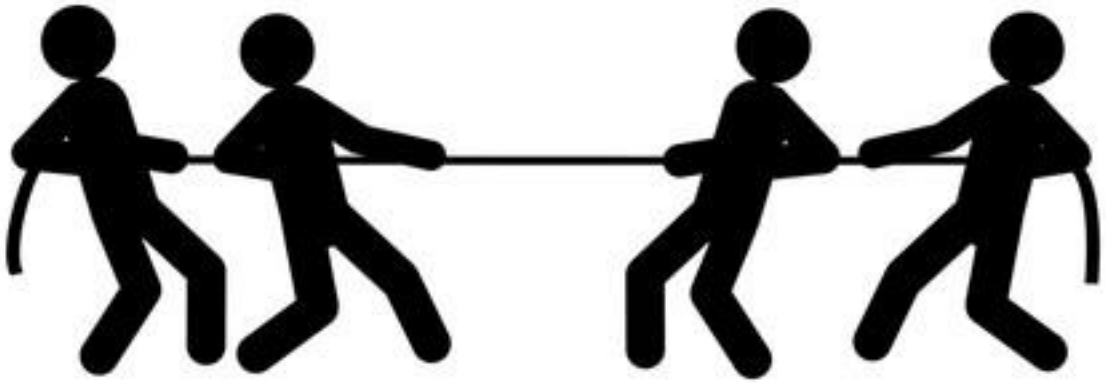
"Say, somebody sitting in an office in London School saying you can't submit this because you didn't fill in box 57 correctly. I don't think that would go down well, with these academics, but education and then encouragement and help, I think it would be, it would be helpful"

Academic Freedom

"it is incredibly liberating to a scientist to be trusted to use the resources you've got…to pursue your objectives and your aims"

"I think you'll get if you suddenly imposed a mandatory process, you would get a reaction from the more senior investigators"

Freedom vs Oversight



"if we're putting anything, any extra layers in place, the best way to do it is: this is to support you to do things better, or to improve something this is not policing, we're checking you. Because they hate that and that interferes with their academic freedom"

PH: “and if there was an introduction of anything?”

AS : “That would be a sign of mis-trust”

Be Trusted

"There's a, I guess, almost an inherent trust in the researchers that they do the research correctly, and then they have that freedom to publish and … there's no institutional check"

"So, you might say, well, at a high level, we employ you and we want to trust you and we think you're a great guy. But here's a bunch of people from Central Services is going to check up on every part of your life and you have to reply and if you've don't, they'll send you a nasty email, and there are a lot of those, that's that's like, give with one hand take with the other, it's it's inconsistent. I think, and this is something that I think, that senior management leadership team don't really understand"

Why is it important to know what academics want/need?

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Conducive research culture

Understand academic needs

Understand academic wants

Balance between freedom and oversight

Appropriate messaging

Last thought

"But in the end, you know, without having a police state, it's difficult. And that's why an open environment and trust and constructive relationships, in my mind, has always been much better than a sort of heavy monitoring"

Let's Keep in Touch

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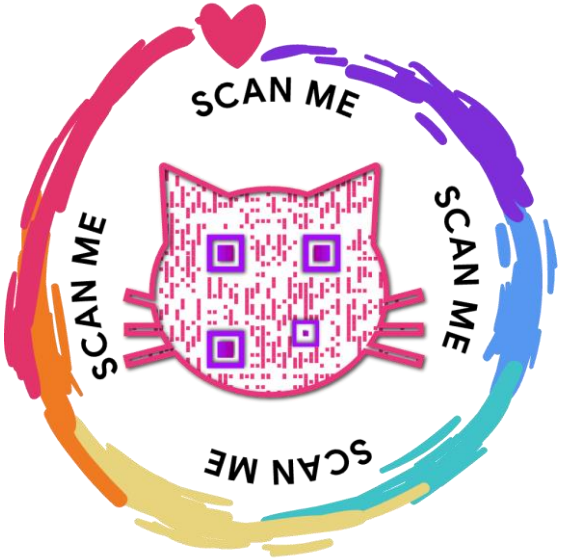
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