

A Research Institution's Experience of the Recommendations of Cooperation and Liaison between Universities and Editors (CLUE)

Dr David Blades*, Dr Dan Barr, Ms Anita Arndt | Research Ethics, Integrity, and Governance

*Me!

Declarations

1. The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence this paper.
2. Data is not available to share to preserve confidentiality of respondents to integrity matters and of publishers and editors.
3. A RMIT ethics committee reviewed and approved this research with the identifier of 27760.
4. David is a white Australian man, a university employee, and has a limited personal experience of publishing.





No libraries, no roads,
no power lines.

The Good

- This investigation identified an incorrect attribution of authorship in a book chapter.
- RMIT requested that the book chapter be corrected.
- The interaction with the publisher was ideal: communicative, timely, fair, and effective.



Variation in meeting recommendations of CLUE (2021)

The Okay

- This matter involved an undeclared conflict of interest in a research output.
- The journal acted in an author-centric way to prepare a correction before investigative processes were completed by RMIT.



The Unexpected

- This investigation identified multiple breaches including plagiarism, incorrect authorship listing, and conducting human research without ethics approval.
- RMIT requested multiple retractions.
- In one instance, an editor responded within half an hour of our request, and both retracted the paper and 'blacklisted' the author.



The Frustrating

- This matter involved mediation of an authorship dispute.
- Recommendations from the institution for transparent corrections to the paper were ignored by the journal.
- The publication was finalised by the journal with ‘ghost authors’—researchers who made significant contributions to the work, but who are not recognised anywhere in the publication.



The Bad

- This investigation identified an instance of text recycling and self-plagiarism.
- RMIT requested retraction of the duplicate publication.
- RMIT contacted the publisher and pursued the matter for 18 months when the publisher conducted its own investigation and dismissed concerns.
- The publisher did not share details of their investigation.



The Ugly

- This investigation identified falsified images and figures in many outputs.
- RMIT requested corrections and retractions.
- We experienced unexpected outcomes, such as publishers issuing corrections instead of retractions.
- We experienced publishers that privileged authors found to be in breach of principles of research integrity over institutions.





Assess integrity of research rather than
conduct of researchers



Release investigation reports to
publishers



Take responsibility for research even
when researchers have left institution



Consider anonymous or pseudonymous
allegations



Reflections

1. Improvement to reporting
2. Timeliness
3. Research integrity rather than researcher misconduct
4. Investigating researcher who had left the institution
5. Considering anonymous allegation





Report peer review concerns to university



Cooperation on corrigenda and retraction notices





Star Trek, 'Is There In Truth No Beauty?', 1968.

Reference

1. Wager, E., Kleinert, S. & on behalf of the CLUE Working Group. Cooperation & Liaison between Universities & Editors (CLUE): recommendations on best practice. *Research Integrity and Peer Review* **6**, 6 (2021).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s41073-021-00109-3>



Thank you!

Ms Anita Arndt | anita.arndt@rmit.edu.au

Anita contributed knowledge to this paper.

Dr Daniel Barr | daniel.barr@rmit.edu.au

Dan contributed knowledge to this paper, interacted with publishers, and reflected on his experiences of those interactions.

Dr David Blades | david.blades@rmit.edu.au

David contributed knowledge to this paper, interacted with publishers, reflected on his experiences of those interactions, and drafted and presented this paper.

Parts of this session have been presented elsewhere.

