

CHECKLISTS FOR MASTER STUDENTS, PHD STUDENTS, AND THEIR SUPERVISORS ON THE TRANSITION FROM ACADEMIC INTEGRITY TO RESEARCH ETHICS

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Abstract

The importance of research ethics and research integrity is a growing concern within the research community (Armond et al. 2021; Fanelli 2009; Helgesson & Bülow 2021; Tauginienė et al. 2019). This is in part due to the prevalence of scientific misconduct and bad research practices, which all risk undermining public trust in science and research. While there is no simple answer to the question of how to best prevent research misconduct and other deviations from good research practice, one way forward is to prepare students in higher education already at an early stage and to encourage a smoother transition from academic integrity to research integrity. Students are potentially future researchers thus developing their attitudes, knowledge and skills in line with responsible research conduct as well as their ability to deal in situations of unacceptable research practices is necessary (Gladwin 2018). It has also been recognised that next to formal education and training

students observe and learn from the behaviour of others in academia (e.g., researchers or supervisors) (Gladwin 2018; Löfström 2012; Rissanen & Löfström 2014); therefore, role modelling and mentoring are inherent parts of teaching and learning in research integrity and ethics (Holbrook et al. 2017; Hyytinen & Löfström 2017).

In line with that, we have developed three checklists which might be used to make sure that students adhere to the appropriate norms and values in research as they conduct their thesis work, whereas supervisors are there to guide and mentor them. The checklists are targeting students on the master level, PhD students, and supervisors respectively, and provide guidance on how they should act in order to retain integrity within their work, highlighting the importance of proper citations and references, handling of research data, checking institutional requirements, among

other things. The checklists have been developed as an output of Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project *Bridging Integrity in Higher Education, Business and Society* (BRIDGE, 2020-1-SE01-KA203-077973). A review of national and institutional level documents in six project countries (Sweden, Lithuania, North Macedonia, Czechia, and Ukraine) revealed that there is a need to bridge academic integrity and research integrity in early stages of research training. Commonly, in regard to students the focus is on academic integrity, whereas research integrity is confined to researchers and research conduct at further stages of academic (research) career. However, students *do* engage in research conduct and thus aspects of both academic integrity and research integrity must be combined in student training.

The checklists were created using the following methodology:

1. At the initial stage, each of the six project partners independently of others proposed a draft of checklists. We followed such a procedure to maintain objectivity and different views of all members of the project who come from different countries, research fields and have varied research and/or educational experiences. A total of 8 versions of checklists were created for master students, PhD students, and supervisors in the first round.
2. Subsequently, these checklist proposals were assessed during online project meetings and off-line feedback, and converted into a single file.
3. This file was discussed at a personal project meeting attended by all project members. The initial version of the

checklist has been recalled and modified.

4. The next 3 rounds of the comment procedure followed, where the members of the project commented not only on the content itself but also on the choice of words, relevance, and comprehensibility of individual checklist points.
5. After the last round of comments, the file was graphically processed and edited. This version is going to be presented to the conference participants.

In this co-creative workshop (Sanders & Stappers, 2008; Durugbo & Pawar 2014) we will present these checklists and empower participants to share their ideas on the connection between academic integrity, research ethics, and research integrity. While the term academic integrity incorporates “compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, practices and consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship” (ENAI, 2018), the complementary terms research ethics and integrity focus on the ethical aspects of research and the integrity of researchers, research, and research-related institutions and systems (Helgesson & Bülow, 2021). Being students, PhD students, and supervisors, workshop participants are also representatives of the stakeholders thus ensuring us through the co-creation of the checklists that relevant opinions and needs are met. Our plan is to present this tool and to engage participants by asking them to test the checklists and the extent to which they are suitable for creating a bridge between academic integrity on the one hand and research ethics/integrity on the other.

The workshop will be structured as follows:

1. A short introduction to the idea of checklists.
2. Workshop activity: Workshop participants will be split into 3 groups and each group will receive a prepared blank worksheet. In each group, participants will be asked to identify the main points that should be included in a checklist for a respective target group - master students, PhD students, or supervisors.
3. Discussion: Each workshop group will share their results and compare them

with a respective checklist provided by workshop organisers. A short discussion will follow up each checklist.

With the consent of workshop participants which will be asked for at the beginning of the session, workshop organisers will unobtrusively take notes of group activities and workshop discussions to preserve the feedback and suggestions from workshop participants. They might be further used to advance project outputs.

Workshop takeaways:

1. For workshop participants: broader knowledge on how to facilitate the transition for students from academic integrity to research ethics/integrity
2. For workshop organisers: hands-on feedback from workshop participants on proposed checklists.

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