

Y4

Research groups work as transparently and openly as possible!
(cf. ECoC 2017, p. 5)

Description and background

This learning unit:

Introduces researchers to norms in research collaborations

Builds competency to set common objectives and norms in research collaborations

Challenges researchers to choose norms on which their partners in a research collaboration agree

Emphasises openness and transparency and its limits



An advocate for research integrity

Kristina Bliznakova

Keywords

Collaborative working; openness and transparency; common objectives; agreement; roles and responsibilities

This unit has been prepared for interdisciplinary learning groups.

Learning objectives

- 1** *Listen actively and present your own wishes, aims and goals*
- 2** *Accept and learn to respect others' wishes, aims and goals*
- 3** *Practice being able to understand others and be understood by them in dialogues*
- 4** *Learn to formulate an agreement with logically traceable arguments*

Learning stages

- 1** *Become familiar with the topic*
- 2** *Dive into an interesting story*
- 3** *Discuss and come to an agreement*
- 4** *Reflect on collaborative research*

“Research collaborations open doors for joint scientific activities that can provide amazing results that benefit our society.”
(Kristina Bliznakova, an advocate for research integrity)





1 Become familiar with the topic:

Homework (before the unit starts) or reading session

Read the paragraph on good research practice in “The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”. Discuss the meanings of any unknown words.

Ask around whether it is possible to read an agreement of collaborative work from your institution. If you are able to, read one!



2 Dive into an interesting story:

Read or recall Hannah’s protocol and flesh out her character in six adjectives.

Imagine that Hannah receives an answer from her friend Rory the next morning. Read the message aloud in class:

Dear Hannah,

thank you for stepping in for me at the conference meeting. You really saved the day. It seems you encountered one of the more interesting meetings :) In my experience, a research integrity policy would be desirable.

Did I already tell you that one partner (we can call him 07) from our international collaboration asked me to store his data recently? At first I was surprised about the odd request – 07 just asked us bluntly via email to store the data. After a few emails back and forth I found out that his (very prestigious) institution had restrictive data protection rules and 07 was trying to bypass them by using us. After thinking about it for a while I refused to store the data. Even if it’s not legally forbidden, I assume that these data are ethically questionable. Seriously, 07’s last email ended with this: YOUR INSTITUTION DOESN’T HAVE A CODE OF CONDUCT! IF YOU DO NOT STORE THE DATA WE WILL NO LONGER CONSIDER YOU A PARTNER IN THIS COLLABORATION.... see what I mean about needing a research integrity policy?

:) I just realised I’ll be in your neighbourhood on Wednesday evening. Do you have time for a drink? I can tell you the rest of 07’s story... but only if you want! Promise!!

Best,

R

3 Discuss and come to an agreement:

Come together in groups of three to four people. Make sure that you have different disciplinary backgrounds. Imagine you start a collaboration. Give your collaboration a meaningful title, and think about what each of you can contribute to this collaboration.

One partner asks you to agree on complete transparency and openness in your collaboration from start to finish. Discuss what that means and indicate any limits this request. Give reasons for these possible limitations. Together, write a paragraph on transparency and openness for your collaboration agreement that everyone approves of.

Take one rule/norm from your agreement paragraph and discuss how each of your actions would look if you adhered to this rule.

Read some of the agreement paragraphs aloud!

4 Reflect on collaborative research:

Come together as a class and discuss the following questions:

- When should researchers insist on a written agreement?
- What fields (roles and responsibilities, interests, compliance, training and supervision etc.) should an agreement cover at a minimum?

