

Wednesday late afternoon session Track C, Wednesday, Sep 24 2025, 14:00-15:30

Location: Seminar 5

Session: Concepts and Definitions

Chair: Maura Hiney

OR-65

Normative Analysis of Research Integrity Concepts: What is the Difference Between Research Misconduct and Questionable Research Practices?

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Different interpretations of key concepts related to research integrity are challenging in collaborative and international research and in efforts to promote research integrity and handle allegations of research misconduct across institutions and countries. ENRIO recognizes this issue and has established a working group (WG) aimed at mapping its members' definitions of key research-integrity related terms. Through normative analysis, the ENRIO WG on Key Definitions will provide interpretations and recommendations for these crucial concepts of research integrity.

Research Misconduct (RM) and Questionable Research Practices (QRPs) are central concepts in discussions of research integrity for decades. Key documents on research integrity, such as the ALLEA Code [1] and the Singapore Statement from the World Conference on Research Integrity (WCRI) [2], define RM and QRPs as violations of the principles of good research practice (GRP). However, a survey conducted among ENRIO members revealed that ambiguities remain regarding both definitions. Consequently, ENRIO WG on Key definitions believes that having clear definitions of both RM and QRPs is essential for enhancing collaborative and international research efforts.

To resolve ambiguities, we will first outline definitions of RM and QRPs as specified in the national documents on research integrity used by ENRIO members. Next, we will present the key components that should be included in both definitions based on our survey findings. We will highlight common elements of both concepts, such as violations of GRP, their impact on trust in science and the reputation of the research community, and their occurrence at all stages of research practices.

Furthermore, we will present the results of our normative analysis and compare the survey findings with the principles outlined in key documents on research integrity and relevant literature. One notable finding is that while the distinction between GRP and RM/QRPs is clear, the boundary between RM and QRPs is less well-defined. This observation presents an opportunity to reconceptualize RM beyond just fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

Finally, we will share ENRIO's recommendations for the definitions of RM and QRPs.

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[1] ALLEA, The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – Revised Edition 2023. Berlin (2023). DOI 10.26356/ECOC

[2] The Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (WCRI, 2010).