

CLUE: Cooperation & Liaison between Universities & Editors

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Update

- Meeting in Heidelberg, July 2016
- Supported by EMBO and COPE



CLUE workshop participants at EMBO in Heidelberg, Germany.

Setting the scene

Two participants from Heidelberg meeting

- **Paul Taylor**

- Director, Research Integrity, Governance & Systems
- RMIT University, Melbourne

- **Chris Graf**

- Director, Research Integrity & Publishing Ethics
- Wiley, Oxford
- Co-Chair, COPE (Committee On Publication Ethics)

(i) Lines 6-11

- (i) National research integrity bodies (or other appropriate organizations, e.g. major funders) should keep a register of people responsible for research integrity at their country's institutions, to enable journal editors (and others) to contact them. Where such lists are not available, journals should request corresponding authors to provide the name and contact details of their institution's research integrity officer (or of an individual with responsibility for handling research integrity cases).

(ii) Lines 13-20

- (ii) Journals should develop criteria for determining whether, and what type of, information relating to the validity or reliability of research reports should be passed on to institutions. In addition to sharing any direct evidence of plagiarism, fabrication or falsification with institutions, journals should share reviewer or editor suspicions that work is “too good to be true” or of something being “not right”. Journals should not reveal the identity of peer reviewers or whistleblowers (unless this is already published or the individuals have given permission for this disclosure). Anonymous or pseudonymous allegations to journals should be judged on their merit and not dismissed automatically.

(iii) Lines 22-26

- (iii) While journals should normally raise concerns with authors in the first instance, they should also have criteria to determine when the authors' institution(s) should be contacted immediately without (or at the same time as) alerting the author(s). This would normally occur only in exceptional cases when journals have strong suspicions or clear evidence of substantive or significant falsification or fabrication of data.

(iv) Lines 28-30

- (iv) Research institutions and major funders should have systems to ensure that essential research data are retained for at least 10 years, and ideally permanently. Responsibility for data storage (e.g. for multicentre studies) should be defined in funding agreements.

(v) Lines 32-34

- (v) Journals and publishers should retain peer review records for at least 10 years to enable the investigation of peer review manipulation or other inappropriate behaviour by authors or reviewers.

(vi) Lines 36-38

- (vi) Institutions should develop mechanisms for assessing the validity of research reports that are submitted to, or published by, academic journals; these processes should be independent from systems to determine whether misconduct has occurred.

(vii) Lines 40-43

- (vii) Institutions should publish their processes for conducting inquiries and investigating misconduct and should share information about such processes with journals, on request. Anonymous or pseudonymous allegations to institutions should be judged on their merit and not dismissed automatically.

(viii) Lines 45-50

- (viii) Institutions should notify journals directly and release relevant sections of reports of misconduct investigations to all journals that have published research that was the subject of the investigation. The report should clearly indicate which articles or manuscripts are affected. Witness names may be redacted to ensure privacy. Institutions should allow journals to quote from misconduct investigation reports or cite them in retraction statements and related publications (e.g. explanatory editorials or commentaries).

(ix) Lines 52-53

- (ix) Institutions and funders should respond to journal requests for information to ensure that peer reviewers' and authors' competing interests are properly disclosed.

Proposals requiring further discussion

- Researcher employment contracts should indicate that the researcher's name and relevant details of the affected research may be released to a journal or appropriate authority in cases of misconduct.
- Journals should require authors (as part of their publication contract) to disclose any allegations or proceedings relating to the submitted or published work.
- Institutions should maintain internal repositories of all submitted manuscripts so researchers' work can be reviewed and changes to manuscripts identified, if needed.