Researchers’ responsibilities

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EMBO
your responsibilities
your responsibilities
EMBO is an organization of leading life scientists that fosters new generations of researchers to produce world-class scientific results.
EMBO Science Policy Programme

• Three areas of work
  - biotechnology
  - responsible conduct of research
  - scientific publishing

• Technology assessment

• Policy practice

• Governance
Governance

• Processes leading to laws, oversight, self-regulation, etc.
• Policy and politics
• Tensions between individual stakeholders, groups, administrators, governments
• Tradeoffs, compromises, trust
• Who decides?
Why be responsible?

• Public funding, better science

• Trust

• Responsibility is ultimately about good citizenship, within science and in the larger community
Why be responsible?

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Why be responsible?

- Public funding, better science
- Trust
- Responsibility is ultimately about good citizenship, within both the scientific and in larger communities
What does it mean to be responsible?

• For today’s talks, “being responsible” is a demonstrable capability in a research setting, not a moral state
  - These are skills that can be developed
• Who decides what “being responsible” means?
Definitions of responsibility come from:

- Ethics
- Philosophy
- Policy
- Law
- Culture/society
- Institutions
- Research administrators
- The research community
Emerging policy concepts

• Responsible research and innovation (H2020)
  - Public engagement
  - Open access
  - Gender
  - Ethics
  - Science education
Emerging policy concepts

- Open Innovation, Open Science, Open to the World (EC DG-Research)
- Whose responsibilities?
  - “Science”? (institutions)
  - Scientists?
Researchers’ responsibilities

- In your role within the research community, what are your responsibilities?
- What do you do in practice to fulfill those obligations?
- Where are the gaps in your knowledge or in the support you think you need to be responsible?
Principles of research integrity/RCR

- Honesty
- Accountability
- Professional courtesy and fairness
- Good stewardship

(Singapore Statement)
What are the precise responsibilities?

- It’s a fairly long list (14 points)
- We will not cover all of these today
- Range from technical issues such as adherence to regulations, to broad societal considerations (risks and benefits)
Stakeholders

- Researchers
- Evaluators
- Journals/editors/publishers
- Research administrators
- Policymakers
- Publics
Responsible Conduct of Research

• Processes
  - Proposing, performing, evaluating
  - Reporting
  - Codes and norms
• But, specifics (e.g., law) matter also
• Does not presume misconduct
  - Deepwater Horizon
Responsible Conduct of Research

• History
  - Human experimentation: Nuremberg, Helsinki, Belmont
  - Public funding

• Foundations
  - Freedoms, rights, responsibilities
  - Responsible research is better research
Basic oversight

- Institutional review boards
- Institutional biosafety committees
- Animal care committees
- General (industrial) safety
- Dual use
  - These are sometimes combined into “ethics review” boards
  - Responsible official(s)
Training

• Requirements
  - European and national

• Resources
  - Institutional
  - Scientific organizations
  - Your networks
THE PANDORA'S BOX CONGRESS

By Michael Rogers

140 Scientists Ask: Now that We Can Rewrite the Genetic Code, What Are We Going To Say?