

# A culture of integrity through the lens of supervision

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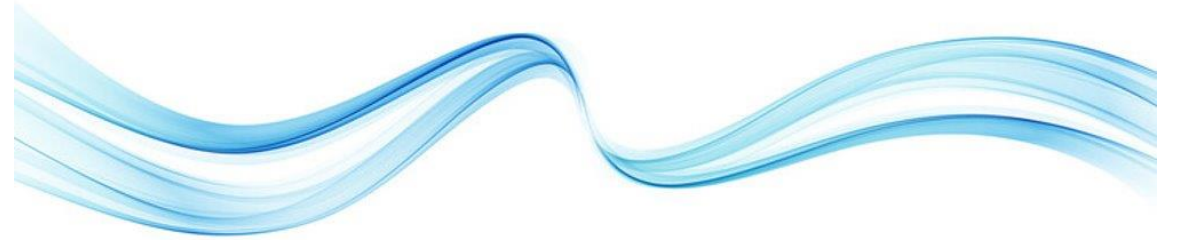
*UKRIO Conference, 25 May 2022*    *@rscsam*





How do we support  
doctoral supervisors to  
promote, teach and  
embody Research  
Integrity?

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“While there were some examples of poor behaviour by principal investigators (PIs) and other supervisors, these were in the minority. Most respondents saw their supervisor as decent and trying their best, but constrained by a system that rewarded outputs and money over individuals”


Wellcome’s [“What researchers think about the culture they work in”](#) Report, 2020

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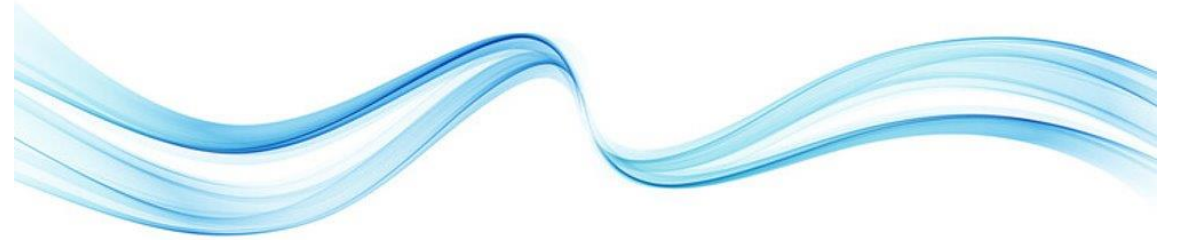
How do we support doctoral supervisors to promote, teach and embody Research Integrity?

- 1. Do we recognise the complexity of the supervisor's role for Research Integrity?**
  - 2. To what extent can training help?**
  - 3. To what extent can improving Research Culture help?**
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1. Do we recognise  
the complexity of the  
supervisor's role for  
Research Integrity?

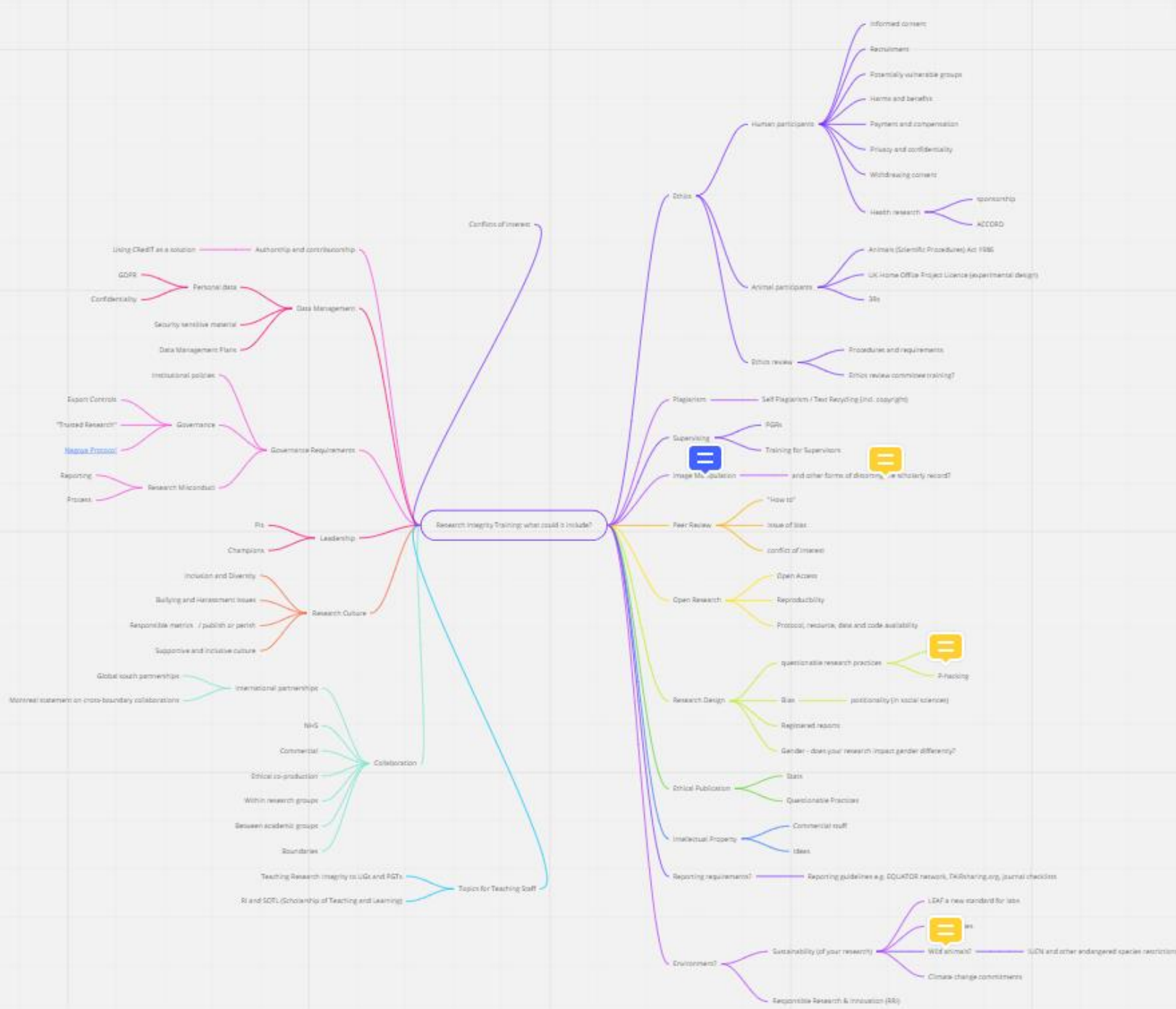
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“A common model assumes that supervisors will instruct their researchers in research integrity. In many cases, however, supervisors are not trained themselves and may not feel recognised for providing this instruction.”

[UKRI Research Integrity: a Landscape Study \(2020\)](#)



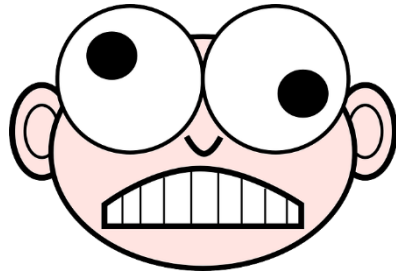
What does “instructing researchers in research integrity” involve?



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Integrity  
Guardian?



Victim?



Villain?



Role Model?


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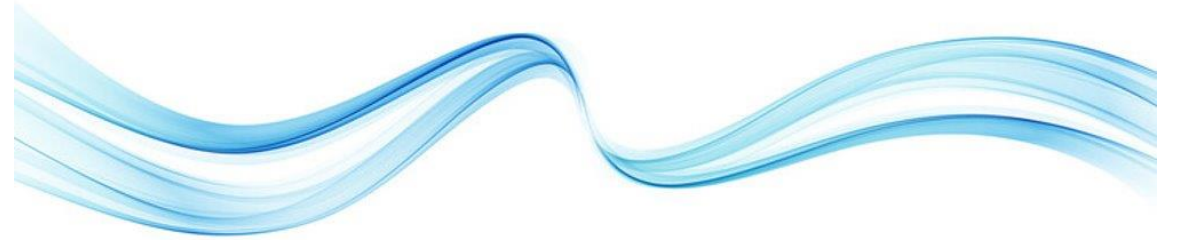
**We should support supervisors explicitly with the risks and challenges of Research Integrity, as well as placing our high expectations on them.**

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2. To what extent  
can training  
provide the  
answer?

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# Integrated Integrity training

## **UofG Integrity Training for PGRs:**

= Introductory, foundation. We aim to inform and “activate” the PGRs

## **UofG Integrity Training for Staff / Supervisor module:**

= we tell them what we tell the PGRs and make explicit what supervisors need to follow up on

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# Supervisors need to follow up on...

- ❖ Subject specific advice on
    - ❖ What good research looks like
    - ❖ Questionable research practices to guard against
  - ❖ The local research culture:
    - ❖ How to contribute and succeed in that environment
    - ❖ Care & respect for all (equality, diversity & inclusion)
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# Supporting Supervisors: positive action

Ways to promote integrity:

1. Review data / material: supportive, occasional spot checks
2. Ensure standards & expectations are understood
3. Minimize stress
4. Ensure necessary training is completed
5. Positive approach to compliance

***“What would that look like in practice for you?”***



# Supporting Supervisors: peace of mind

Evidencing your support for research integrity:

1. Keep a record of discussions of data, expectations and standards
2. Integrate supervision with wider group/ disciplinary discussions
3. Explicit support for training & required governance activities (data, ethics, funder terms etc.)

*“What support do you need?”*

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### **3. To what extent can improving research culture provide the answer?**

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# Research Culture is big right now!

At the University of Glasgow, we define a positive culture as one in which colleagues

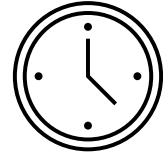
- are recognised and valued for their varied contributions to research
  - support each other to succeed
  - are supported to produce work that meets the highest standards of academic rigour
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## Supporting Supervisors:

- ❖ People e.g. Graduate Schools, Research Data Team, Research Integrity Champions & Advisers, central Integrity team etc.
- ❖ *\*new\** Supervisor Community of Practice & workshops



## But what about TIME?

“...little emphasis would be given to activities such as training or supervision, for which there are insufficient structures in place to measure performance”

Wellcome's "[What researchers think about the culture they work in](#)" Report, 2020



**More discipline-specific activity on  
integrity topics could enable  
conversations at scale?**

## Supporting Supervisors with Research Integrity:

Give them a manageable, sustainable role...  
That's part of a Research Integrity ecosystem with  
adequate support & policies, an interesting &  
integrated training programme and timely, targeted  
communications...

Plus: echo back the PGR voice too

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# Supervisors *could* role model...

- ✓ Constant **quest for quality**: interrogate their current practice to find improvements (and greater openness)
- ✓ **Positive debate**: show humility and an open mind
- ✓ **Resistance**: to the inexorable pull to publish faster at the expense of quality, and work harder at the expense of wellbeing
- ✓ Actively **promote kindness**: a supportive and inclusive culture is essential for quality research



From our Team's blog, a few relevant post...

- Supervisors as RI role models: <https://theauditorium.blog/2022/02/02/supervisors-and-research-integrity-roles-and-challenges/>
- Supervisors and managing PGR stress: <https://theauditorium.blog/2022/05/05/reducing-stress-in-doctoral-supervision-engage-with-your-community/>
- PGR Research Culture: <https://theauditorium.blog/2022/04/19/what-does-research-culture-mean-for-pgrs/>

Blogs for supervisors on Culture & more:

<https://supervisingphds.wordpress.com/>

<https://drhiddencurriculum.wordpress.com/>

University of Glasgow Research Culture pages:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/ris/researchculture/>



**Thank you!**

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***@rscsam on Twitter***