

naturejobs

**THE CAREERS
MAGAZINE FOR
SCIENTISTS**

At what has been billed as the first global meeting to focus on research ethics in graduate education, representatives from the United States, Canada, Europe, China, Australia, Hong Kong and Botswana agreed on a set of principles designed to help suppress the amount of fabrication and plagiarism around the world. Although somewhat vague, the guidelines might at least help draw attention to the problem.

The September meeting, held in Florence, Italy, and run by the US Council of Graduate Schools, came up with some broad consensus points — “scholarly integrity is a core value of all universities”, for example. It also proposed ways to consolidate the vast differences in ethical principles between nations: exchanging “best practices and resources” such as codes of conduct, regulatory frameworks and curricular materials. The meeting concluded with delegates drawing up five action points for organizations to consider when setting up collaborations. These included: developing an open-access website that could be used to exchange resources and best practices; using dual and joint degree programmes to standardize scholarly integrity; and finding ways to address ethical dilemmas that arise from the mobility of scholars — such as inconsistent rules related to plagiarism between countries.

Sceptics would point out that the details of the proposals are scant, broad-based and incomplete. And no mention was made of how the principles might be enforced to ensure compliance, especially on an international basis. But perhaps even just the discussion and deliberation of research ethics will help research leaders to recognize instances of misconduct and prepare them to address violations. Given the increasing mobility of scientists, universities should work to lessen the risk of some nations or regions becoming known as places with substandard research ethics. After all, if science is to be made rigorous throughout the world, then leaders should at least attempt to globalize a culture of responsibility before budding researchers earn permanent jobs and take those values into their own labs.

Gene Russo is editor of Naturejobs.

CONTACTS

Editor: Gene Russo

European Head Office, London

The Macmillan Building,
4 Crinan Street, London N1 9XW, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4961
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996
e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

European Sales Manager:

Andy Douglas (4975)
e-mail: a.douglas@nature.com

Natureevents:

Ghizlaine Ababou (+44 (0) 20 7014 4015)
e-mail: g.ababou@nature.com

UK Corporate:

Nils Moeller (4953)

Southwest UK/RoW:

Alexander Ranken (4944)

Northeast UK/Ireland:

Matthew Ward (+44 (0) 20 7014 4059)

France/Switzerland/Belgium:

Muriel Lestringuez (4994)

Scandinavia/Spain/Portugal/Italy:

Evelina Rubio-Hakansson (4973)

North Germany/The Netherlands/Eastern

Europe: Reya Silao (4970)

South Germany/Austria:

Hildi Rowland (+44 (0) 20 7014 4084)

Advertising Production Manager:

Stephen Russell
To send materials use London address above.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7843 4816
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7843 4996
e-mail: naturejobs@nature.com

Naturejobs web development: Tom Hancock

Naturejobs online production: Dennis Chu

US Head Office, New York

75 Varick Street, 9th Floor,
New York, NY 10013-1917
Tel: +1 800 989 7718

Fax: +1 800 989 7103

e-mail: naturejobs@natureny.com

US Sales Manager: Peter Bless

India

Vikas Chawla (+91 1242881057)
e-mail: v.chawla@nature.com

Japan Head Office, Tokyo

Chiyoda Building, 2-37 Ichigayatamachi,
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-0843
Tel: +81 3 3267 8751
Fax: +81 3 3267 8746

Asia-Pacific Sales Manager:

Ayako Watanabe (+81 3 3267 8765)
e-mail: a.watanabe@natureasia.com

Business Development Manager, Greater

China/Singapore:

Gloria To (+852 2811 7191)
e-mail: g.to@natureasia.com