

Magna Charta Observatory  
Research Integrity  
Workshop Paris  
23 May 2018

### **Group 1**

Why and how is integrity under threat?  
What are some effective responses?

The concept of 'integrity' is to a certain extent culturally dependent. Attempts to agree a single and universally acceptable definition are unlikely to be successful. However, components on which there is likely to be agreement include 'honesty', 'fairness', 'healthy', 'whole', 'professionalism', 'transparency', 'intellectual consistency' and 'trust'.

The group found that integrity was under threat as a consequence of one or more of the following:

National government or political agendas;  
Funding-related issues which may arise from governments, national agencies or commercial sources of funding;  
International issues, such as the forming of partnerships with universities in other countries;  
The self-interests of academics who did not appreciate the whole and responsibility elements of academic freedom and  
The pressures and behaviours generated by the various world rankings of universities.

Effective responses which were identified included:

Universities going 'back to basics and specifics' including codes for doctoral students, statements of principles and practical guidelines;  
Keeping statements and solutions simple;  
Including statements of ethical expectations in contracts;  
Engaging in dialogue with stakeholders, external and internal, about these things (for example, reaching specific agreements with local civic authorities, discussions with commercial partners);  
Universities speaking up about their values and getting involved in national, political and transformative discussions;  
Universities evaluating how their responsibility to society is exercised; (the process for this might usefully involve discussions with students, staff and external stakeholders)  
Regarding collegiality as a cornerstone of the university from which integrity can grow from the bottom up – perhaps by frequent discussions on specific issues and  
Saying 'no' to projects and proposals where these do not align with the university's values.

The group was facilitated by the MCO President Dr. Sijbolt Noorda and the rapporteur was the MCO Secretary General, David Lock.

The MCO would welcome additional comments or questions from readers of this report. Please address these to [davidjohn.lock@unibo.it](mailto:davidjohn.lock@unibo.it)

