Building Ethics Infrastructure in Academia

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Structure

• Concept of ethics infrastructure
• Means of ethics infrastructure
• Importance of ethics infrastructure
Ethics infrastructure
(Tenbrunsel et al., 2003: 287; Hoffman et al., 2001: 39; Nijhof et al., 2012; Tauginienė, 2016)

• Ethics infrastructure consists of *formal and informal systems* – each including *communication, surveillance, and sanctioning components* – as well as *the climates* that support these systems
  
  – **Compliance approach**
Ethics infrastructure
(Hoffman et al., 2001; Nijhof et al., 2012; Sharp Paine, 1994; Tauginienė, 2013)

• Ethics infrastructure is the *entirety of selected means for ethics institutionalisation*, in accordance with *organisational mission and values*, that helps to ensure deliberation, self-control and integrity of an organisation

– *Value-led approach*
Rules and values are ethical allies
University applicants vs university administration
(Kelley et al., 2005)

• In 2005 over 70 applicants to prestigious MBA business programs went to a Web browser and typed in a stolen pass code in an attempt to determine whether they had been accepted to the program of their choice prior to official notification from the schools.
University applicants vs university administration  
(Kelley et al., 2005)

• The reactions of three of these institutions to this behavior:
  – Harvard rejected all of the applicants since they had violated the university’s ethical norms.
  – Stanford requested explanations from the transgressors regarding the motivating factors that led to their behaviors.
  – Dartmouth accepted its candidates.
University applicants vs university administration (Kelley et al., 2005)

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**QUESTION**

What kind of approach is inherent to each university? Would the decision be different in case of IT programs?
Means of ethics infrastructure

(Driscoll et al., 1999; Francis et al., 2003)

- ethics training
- codes of ethics
- ethics committees
- helplines
- diverse procedures
- e-tools
- ombudsman or compliance services
- ethics audit
- reporting
LITHUANIA: National Ethics Infrastructure for Research Misconduct

Research Council of Lithuania (Government)

Commission for the Ethics of Research Performance

- Examination of violation of ethical principles of research performance;
- Ethical supervision of researchers’ behavior

Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures

- Ethical infringements of higher education and research institutions (in higher education and research)
- Advisory Committee Ad hoc expert groups

Parliament

Equal Opportunities Ombudsman

- Examination of violations in higher education and research institutions in terms of equal opportunities

Ministry of Health (Government)

Bioethics Committee

- Ethical supervision of biomedical research
Importance of ethics infrastructure

ESG 2015

STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
ESG 2015

• **Standard:** Institutions should have a policy for quality assurance

• **Guidelines:**
  – <…>
  – Academic integrity and freedom and is vigilant against academic fraud
  – <…>
Some scientific evidence
(Resnik et al., 2015)

• Having a national [research misconduct] policy positively associates with research and development funding ranking and intensiveness

• Lack of agreement on the definition of misconduct hampers promoting integrity in international research
ESG 2015

• **Standard:** Institutions should assure themselves of the competence of their teachers

• **Guidelines:**
  
  – [No training envisaged as compulsory component (e.g., on integrity in teaching materials, cultural differences, handling academic fraud)]
We should teach by habit, example and exhortation
ESG 2015

• **Standard:** Institutions should monitor and periodically review their programmes

• **Guidelines:**
  
  – [No evaluation on ethical behaviour of teachers, students and administration]
Malpractices are not a victimless crime
So...

We have only two options:

- Fantasy-based, i.e. we will fix it on our own
- Idealistic, i.e. inhabitants from the Mars planet will come and fix this

There is always another better option
References


Thank You!

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