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Research Integrity in New Zealand Current Framework, Challenges and Recommendations

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Current Framework



ICSU

International Council for Science

- No comprehensive, designed national approach concerning research integrity
- Instead, complex web of legislation, codes, ethics committees, some developed in response to sentinel events, others to growing sensitivity to particular issues or advances in scientific knowledge which have introduced new ethical dilemmas.

Legislation-examples ICSU International Council for Science

- Animal Welfare Act 1999 (research with animals)
- Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996 (research with genetically-modified organisms)
- Human Assisted Reproductive Technology Act 2004 (research with human embryos)
- Health Research Council Act 1990 (oversight of human participant research)
- Human Tissue Act 2009, Privacy Act 1993

Committees-examples ICSU International Council for Science

- Institutional Animal Ethics Committees
- Institutional Biological Safety Committees
- National Advisory and Ethics Committees on Assisted Reproductive Technology
- Health and Disability Ethics Committees
- Institutional Human Ethics Committees



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- Emphasis is on research ethics supplemented by professional and institutional codes
- Framework well-established
- Provisions generally well-understood and accepted by the research community



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Challenges



- Gaps in framework
e.g. human participants in non-health areas
- Concentration on Research Ethics rather than Research Integrity
- Institutional commitment not always highly visible
- Insufficient published information to judge effectiveness
- Recognition of impact of changes in the research culture
- Differing standards in different sectors



- At the level of individual institutions, there should be explicit recognition of the wider area of research integrity rather than the current concentration on research ethics.
- Attention should not be solely on personal integrity but also directed to the group and institutional level in an integrated manner.
(Good behaviour needs to be modelled right through an institution at all levels, in both governance and management lines.)

Recommendations ICSU International Council for Science

- Leaders of research institutions need to champion the development of an institutional-wide culture which explicitly embraces integrity in all activities and, specifically in research, a commitment to self-review in order to maintain an informed balance between open and commercial science imperatives.

Recommendations ICSU International Council for Science

- Transparency concerning the incidence of breaches of research integrity in universities and research institutions needs to be encouraged. National statistics, publicly reported on an annual basis, would allow the health of the New Zealand research system to be demonstrated rather than inferred.

Recommendations ICSU International Council for Science

- Institutions need to devote continuing resources to the education of staff and students in research integrity, taking full advantage of technological innovation, so that information is readily available to promote meaningful discussion between researchers and consistency of decision-making at all levels of the institution.