



1. Affairs of the Association

Meetings:

General Assembly: October 21, 2020

Meetings of the Commission: April 12, August 27, October 2 to October 6, and December 4,

2020

Board Meetings: April 20 and October 19, 2020

In accordance with the COVID-19 regulations, all meetings were virtual.

Board:

Helmut Denk was unanimously elected to the position of deputy chair of the Association. For the appointment of **Sabine Seidler**, the board had to co-opt her as a member because in accordance with the By-Laws she could officially be made a board member only at a meeting of the General Assembly. At the General Assembly, both were elected or re-elected as board members for two years.

To strengthen the collaboration between the OeAWI and the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research, the Board decided that on relevant topics, **Heribert Wulz** (representing the Ministry) would be invited to board meetings as a guest.

Members:

In 2020 the OeAWI increased its membership. The new members are:

- FH Johanneum GmbH since February 15, 2020
- Complexity Science Hub Vienna (CSH) since April 1, 2020

At the end of 2020, 46 institutions were full members of the OeAWI.

Administrative Office—Staff:

Samuel Muehllechner's employment status was increased from "marginal" to 20 hours per week. His position is financed via EU projects; he provides administrative and financial support services to the Admin Office.

In the fall of 2020 the office hired two new employees (to substitute Sabine Schnetzinger). Since October 8, 2020 **Melanie Lettl** has served as assistant to the managing director. Since October 12, 2020 **Eva Korus** has supported the Commission as coordinator in all its business matters. Both started with 20 hours per week. In December 2020 **Melanie Lettl's** position was upgraded to 40 hours and **Eva Korus's** to 30 hours.

Introduction of the BKMS® Compliance System:

In December 2020, we installed the high-security communication system BKMS® Compliance System on the homepage of the OeAWI. It is a communication medium that meets the highest standards of technology and security. Henceforth, inquiries for information and consultation regarding research integrity, reports to the Commission, expositions of facts and confidential documents can be submitted by members, partners and third parties very conveniently and with maximum security. The BKMS® Compliance System offers informants the possibility of complete anonymity, as the login or user data of external users cannot be viewed by either the Administrative Office of the OeAWI or the operators of the BKMS® Compliance System. The system also guarantees maximum confidentiality for both sides in ongoing investigations and regarding ongoing correspondence with the office: this can be done via the option of a "post box", a virtual and encrypted mailbox. On the basis of the transmitted data and information, all of which are treated with utmost confidentiality and the greatest care, the inquiring individual receives all information regarding any further steps or updates on ongoing proceedings from the Admin Office.

2. Raising Awareness and Prevention

<u>Train-the-Trainer:</u>

The OeAWI considers itself a driving force for the implementation of the Standards of GSP (Good Scientific Practice) in research. In response to requests of member organizations, the OeAWI has developed a training program entitled "Train-the-Trainer (TtT)," which is to demonstrate didactic methods fostering GSP.

So far, the TtT has been conducted twice in German and once in English. Altogether 52 persons from various fields and the most diverse professional backgrounds have participated. This represents a challenge for the didactic development of TtT. The feedback to the courses has been very good so far. Participants were primarily from Vienna but a few also from the federal states.

There were originally plans to offer TtT to the universities in Graz in early summer but given the COVID-19 regulations, it had to be cancelled.

On October 27, 2020 and November 5, 2020, as part of the VIRT²UE project, the TtT, conceived as blended learning, took place exclusively online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of ten participants from Austria and Switzerland took part. A follow-up meeting of TtT will take place in spring 2021.

Consultation:

In 2020, the Office addressed 61 inquiries. In terms of their contents, these queries were quite diverse. They pertained to:

- Authorship, refusal of authorship, honorary authorship.
- Obstruction of research
- ➤ (Non)-sanctioning of misconduct
- Procedures regarding the investigation of research misconduct
- Affiliation of researchers
- Confidentiality obligation in research projects
- (Non)-reaction of editors to reported research misconduct
- Questionable use of academic titles
- Non-compliance with mandatory publishing of clinical studies
- International equivalents of the OeAWI
- ➤ Whistleblower software
- Unfair accusations
- Publication ethics
- Plagiarism
- Ghostwriting
- Citation
- Research data management (who owns data/who may present data/term of data storage)
- Possible data manipulation
- > EU projects (nature of cooperation with partners, use of data, responsibility for research integrity)
- External evaluators and quality of reviews
- Intellectual property, theft of ideas, use of intellectual property
- Ethics approvals
- ➤ Infrastructure for ethics and research integrity (e.g., ethics commissions, ombudspersons, commissions for research integrity)
- Issues of research ethics
- Research Training Standards
- Obstruction of career development (due to a previous case)
- Other: mobbing, sexual harassment (in connection with career obstruction), GSP Training requests (international)

Events, Workshops, Presentations:

Workshops and presentations on good research practice focus on the following topics: Research integrity in national and international contexts; principles of good scientific/scholarly practice; planning and implementation of scientific/scholarly projects; data management (documentation, data archiving, data ownership, data use in collaborative projects, etc.); responsible use of research findings; publication and authorship/ownership; responsibilities and support/supervision ratios; responsible cooperation with colleagues; conflicts of interest; peer review; research misconduct; "sloppy science"; questionable and unacceptable research practice; discussion of fictitious cases of research misconduct.

Until the end of February 2020, workshops, presentations and Train-the-Trainer took place on site. After that, due to the COVID-19 regulations, the format was online.

Presentations on the Activities of the Agency (OeAWI)

5/14	Virtual Workshop (Vilnius): Investigation of Cases on Research Misconduct in Austria
7/23	GRIN Webinar (for Latin America): The Importance of RI Policies in Academia
10/12	I3S Webinar (Porto): Responsible Conduct in Research: what can you do from your place?
10/22	GRIN Webinar (for Africa): Principles of Research integrity: Statements and Guidelines Developed by International and Regional (e.g. European) Networks

<u>Lectures, Workshops, Seminars, and Panel Discussions on "Good Scientific Practice"</u>

1/16	Workshop (English) for doctoral students at the Centre for Doctoral Students at the University of Vienna
1/22	Workshop (English) at the University of Graz
1/22	Workshop (German) at the Applied Science University FH Joanneum
1/29	Workshop (German) at the Applied Science University IMC Krems
2/6 – 2/7	Workshop (German) at the Ombudssymposium of Ombudsman für die Wissenschaft in Berlin, together with Gerlinde Sponholz: "Train the Trainer" – Ombudspersons in the Development of Good Scientific Practice
2/20-2/21	Lecture (English) at the Reward Equator Conference in Berlin, Teodora Konach: "Rationales for a stronger regulation of research integrity at the European Union level: a legal-comparative analysis"

2/20-2/21	Discussion (English) at the Reward Equator Conference in Berlin, Nicole Föger: Externally initiated session: Best Practices and Strategies to Implement the Hong Kong Principles
2/26	Lecture (German) on academic integrity and fighting and preventing plagiarism at the LEHR-Stammtisch, Technical University of Graz
5/13	Webinar (Vilnius): PhD Supervision
10/1	Webinar (German) for Wifo
11/25	Webinar (English) "Good Scientific Practice" at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna

ÖAWI- eLearning

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting restrictions on public gatherings, some workshops on Good Scientific Practice at various member organizations had to be cancelled. To cope with the demand for effective knowledge sharing on research integrity, the existing workshops on Good Scientific Practice were transformed into eLearning courses. Five courses in English were created encompassing the following topics: *Good Scientific Practice, Research Misconduct, Authorship & Publication, Plagiarism, Data Management*.

To make these courses available to all parties belonging to one or more member organizations, an eLearning environment was created on the OeAWI website. Members of these organizations can register free of charge with the organization's email address. In mid-December 2020 access was granted to selected member organizations and their feedback was requested. After revising the courses, in spring 2021 all member organizations will have access to the eLearning environment of the OeAWI.

3. Activities of the Commission

The Commission for Research Integrity received a total of 19 inquiries in 2020. The OeAWI Admin Office is responsible for the organization and preparation of the agenda of the meetings; it supports the members of the Commission in their interaction with all parties affected, informants, external expert reviewers and the institutions concerned (i.e., universities and research institutes); and it also advises Commission members.

The inquiries submitted to the Commission covered the following topics: Conflicts about authorship, queries regarding suspected plagiarism in final theses, obstruction of research, data theft, false/flawed interpretation or analysis of data, theft of ideas, deliberate distortion of data, doubts about the accuracy of an external review of a dissertation, unlawful use of the title

"university professor", obstruction of career development, change of biographical data, and violation of due process in an appointment procedure concerning a management position.

New Chair of the Commission:

In August 2020, there was a change in the chairpersonship of the Commission for Research Integrity: **Gerd Müller**, member of the Commission since 2015 and chair of the Commission from January 2019 to August 2020 completed his term. **Beatrice Beck-Schimmer** was elected interim chair in September 2020. Since December 2020 **Philipp Theisohn** has been the new chair of the Commission. **Alexandra Kemmerer** was elected deputy chair in December 2020.

New Members of the Commission:

In October 2020, Elisabeth Staudegger concluded her assignment as consulting, non-voting member for Austrian law. She was succeeded by Nikolaus Forgó, Head of the Department for Innovation and Digitalisation in Law at the University of Vienna. Frits Rosendaal, Head of the Department for Clinical Epidemiology at the Leiden University Medical Centre (Netherlands) joined as the new member representing medicine. He succeeded Beatrice Beck-Schimmer, who had been a member of the Commission for six years. Joachim Heberle from the Free University of Berlin replaced Gerd Müller as member of the Commission for the natural and technical sciences. At the meeting of the Commission in early December 2020, Nikolaus Forgó and Frits Rosendaal commenced their work. Joachim Heberle became a member of the Commission in May 2021.

4. EU Projects



European Network of Research Ethics and Research Integrity

The key objective of this EU project was intensive info sharing among experts in research ethics and research integrity as well as the harmonization of processes in ethics reviews and investigations of alleged research misconduct. **ENRIO (European Network of Research Integrity Offices)** and **EUREC (European Network of Research Ethics Committees)** were key ENERI project partners. OeAWI was a member of ENRIO and represented the network as a project partner in the EU project, which began in September 2016 and was completed in August 2019 (free extension until October 2019).

On January 21, the final review meeting with representatives of the European Commission took place in the office of the OeAWI. The project was completed in 2020.

For more information on ENERI, see http://www.eneri.eu/



VIRT²UE (June 2018 – May 2021)

The EU project VIRT²UE (Virtue-based Ethics and Integrity of Research: Train-the-Trainer program for upholding the principles and practices of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity) has been up and running since June 2018.

The objective of this EU project is the development of a sustainable Train-the-Trainer program for teaching research ethics and research integrity. In order to promote Good Scientific Practice effectively, it is desirable to communicate the principles of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ECoC) not only as guidelines but also as a moral compass for scientific practice. For this purpose, a great number of mix-and-match teaching and learning materials (e.g., eLearning courses, YouTube videos, learning maps, case studies) have been developed, updated and made available to teachers. A blended learning approach (a combination of online training and face-to-face teaching) has been chosen. The OeAWI has been coordinating the development of online materials. A YouTube channel and a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) are to be set up.

The results and materials of this EU project have been published on the online platform "Embassy of Good Science" (http://www.embassy.science/) Open Access.

Deliverables:

By the end of January 2020, the "Delivery of first MOOC courses for VIRT²UE toolbox" was due. Since the format was that of blended learning, the first three eLearning courses were developed as preparation for the face-to-face teaching units of the VIRT²UE Train-the-Trainer program. In many European countries, these are already being used in the Train-the-Trainer courses as part of the project. Based on the received feedback the courses were revised twice and made publicly available on the online platform Embassy of Good Science.

- Introduction to research integrity
- Introduction of virtue ethics to research integrity
- Virtue ethics applied under current research conditions

In 2020, the following deliverables were on the agenda: Development and release of seven more YouTube videos by the end of May 2020; and by the same deadline, the development of a toolbox for trainers in support of the implementation of the face-to-face teaching units of the VIRT²UE Train-the-Trainer program. The toolbox is accessible on the platform Embassy of Good Science (VIRT²UE Training Guide).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the corresponding legal provisions the production of the videos was delayed considerably. The deliverable regarding the release of seven more YouTube videos was postponed to the end of March 2021.

By the end of March 2021, the deliverable of three more MOOC courses will be due. These will also be published via Embassy of Good Science.



SOPs4RI (January 2019 – December 2022)

SOPs4RI (Standard Operating Procedures for Research Integrity) is a multi-partner project funded by the European Commission to promote a strong culture of research integrity consistent with the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, and to support research funding organizations as well as research performing organizations in the transition from principles to practice. The newly published SOPs4RI Toolbox provides orientation and inspiration for research organizations in Europe and beyond by identifying and addressing the main areas of research integrity. In 2020, the partners of the consortium published the article "Research integrity: nine

ways to move from talk to walk" in *Nature*. The paper was rated among the top 5% of all research output evaluated by Altmetric and was listed as one of the most essential readings on the topic of research integrity by DORA in 2020.

The OeAWI is responsible for the pilot studies at selected institutions, among them the FWF, La Caixa, EARMA and GUILD (an academic network comprising 19 of the most research-intensive European universities in 14 countries). The implementation phase and thus the updating and expansion of the Toolbox is scheduled to start in April 2021.

The duration of the project is from January 2019 to December 2022.

For more information on this project, see https://sops4ri.eu/



ROSiE (starting in spring 2021)

In 2020, the OeAWI joined a consortium led by the University of Oslo and prepared a successful application for the call ""Responsible Open Science: an ethics and integrity perspective". In 2021, the group of eleven international partners will start the project "Responsible Open Science in Europe" (ROSiE), which intends to explore and develop the standards and good practices of research ethics and research integrity within the framework of Open Science und Citizen Science.

The OeAWI will lead the work package that aims to facilitate the use of responsible and open research. The key objective is to create a strategic policy paper for an action-oriented and practice-oriented policy on research ethics and research integrity within the Open Science Initiative and to integrate this into the European Code of Conduct.

5. National Networks, Co-operations and Events

Working Group HSK on Research Ethics und Research Integrity

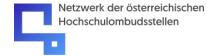
At the request of the Ministry, a national working group on the topic "Research Ethics (RE) and Research Integrity (RI)" was established within the University Conference in 2018. At the suggestion of the Ministry **Klement Tockner** held the chair. The goal was to develop a national document on RE and RI. The OeAWI was heavily involved and collaborated with the editorial team in the creation of this document. In co-operation with **Klaus Taschwer**, science journalist at the daily *Der Standard*, the practical guide was finalized editorially and reviewed by four independent experts.

The practical guide comprises three chapters and addresses the fundamental principles of research integrity and research ethics, the function of ethics commissions and commissions for research integrity in Austria, and areas of activity illustrating good scientific practice and research ethics plus best-practice examples. The guide provides clear recommendations for all universities, colleges and special research institutions and is designed as a "living document".

The document was published in autumn 2020 and translated into English. Both language versions are available on the website of the OeAWI and can be downloaded.

You can find the Practical Guide for Integrity and Ethics in Research at

- Praxisleitfaden für Integrität und Ethik
- Best Practice Guide for Research Integrity and Ethics



Netzwerk der österreichischen Hochschulombudsstellen

To increase the collaboration of all offices of ombudsmen and support their further growth, in June 2016 an informal Austrian network of all existing offices of ombudsmen and similar (mediation) organizations was established in Klagenfurt.

One of the first joint activities was the creation of the brochure "Ombudsstellen und ähnliche Einrichtungen im österreichischen Hochschul- und Forschungsraum" (Offices of Ombudsmen and Similar Organizations in the Austrian University and Research World). The brochure was updated und re-issued in summer 2020.

For more information, see: http://www.hochschulombudsnetz.at/



RRI-Plattform Österreich

The OeAWI is a member of the RRI Platform. This organization considers itself a *Kompetenznetzwerk* for Responsible Research and Innovation. In Austria and internationally it gathers existing knowledge and experience from national and international RRI projects; it promotes research exchange; it raises awareness of the RRI concept among stakeholders and the public; it supports RRI projects and promotes the implementation of RRI in Austria through these activities. The members meet approximately every two or three months.

For more information, see: http://www.rri-plattform.at/

6. International Networks, Co-operations and Events



ENRIO - European Network of Research Integrity Offices

The European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO) is an informal network with the aim of promoting the exchange between national and other institutions dealing with research integrity. **Nicole Föger** was the chair of the network from April 2012 to October 2018. During the last two years, there have been discussions about establishing ENRIO as a legal entity. It is the wish of the European Commission that all national RI organizations become part of ENRIO. The OeAWI has benefited tremendously from this network and will become a founding member in the proposed organization (a non-profit association based in Brussels).

Two virtual meetings took place in 2020 (March 26 and 27, and October 8 and 9). During the Corona pandemic ENRIO published a statement on research integrity, which demands that the Rules of Good Scientific Practice be upheld despite the high speed in research output relating to the pandemic:

ENRIO Statement: Research integrity even more important for research during a pandemic

New members of ENRIO are the Committee for the Integrity of Research in Catalonia, The Montenegrin Ethics Committee and Nämnden för prövning av oredlighet I forskning, Sweden. The first ENRIO conference (Helsinki) was planned for October 2020. Nicole Föger is a member of the Programme Planning Committee. Due to the COVID-19 regulations, the conference has been postponed to autumn 2021.

For more information, see: http://www.enrio.eu/



EnTIRE

Entire is an EU-funded project that aims to develop an online platform providing all information on research ethics and research integrity. **Nicole Föger** is a member of the advisory board. This is also of great significance for the EU project VIRT²UE because both projects are perceived as a shared vision, and the respective results and findings are made available to the scientific community on the common platform Embassy of Good Science.

Embassy of Good Science went online in autumn 2020. There users can make their own contributions on the topic of Good Scientific Practice or add to others' articles. Furthermore, Embassy of Good Science comprises a large collection of documents on Good Scientific Practice, such as training materials, guidelines, case studies, etc.

For more information on EnTIRE, see http://www.entireconsortium.eu/
For more information on Embassy of Good Science, see https://embassy.science/wiki/Main_Page



ETINED - Pan-European Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education

ETINED is a network of specialists who have been appointed by the Council of Europe and the signatory states of the European Cultural Convention. High educational quality will be achieved and corruption will be effectively addressed only when society is committed to fundamental ethical principles. **Nicole Föger** was nominated by the Ministry of Science to represent Austria on the platform. Due to the COVID-19 regulations no meeting took place in 2020.

For more information, see https://www.coe.int/en/web/ethics-transparency-integrity-in-education



Path2Integrity

Path2Integrity develops formal and informal methods of learning to contribute to a culture of research integrity. These include particularly "research integrity role-models" and "rotatory role-playing". The training is not only aimed at persons who are directly or indirectly involved in science but also at students at the secondary level as well as students at the post-secondary level and junior scientists. **Nicole Föger** is a member of the project's advisory board.

For more information on Path2Integrity, see http://www.path2integrity.eu



ETHNA System

The aim of the project "Ethics Governance System for RRI in Higher Education, Funding and Research Centres" (ETHNA System) is to implement internal management for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) in six European research funding and research organizations. By means of ethical governance the RRI aspects of gender equality, open science and citizens' engagement and research integrity and research ethics are to be strengthened. **Nicole Föger** is a member of the project's advisory board.

For more information on ETHNA, see https://ethnasystem.eu/

7. Collaboration in Policy Documents and Publications

Working Group HSK on Research Ethics and Research Integrity:

At the request of the Ministry this national working group on Research Ethics (RE) and Research Integrity (RI) was established within the University Conference. Its aim was to develop a practical guide to RI and RE. The OeAWI was heavily involved and was part of the editorial team. The document was published in autumn 2020 and translated into English. Both language versions are available for download on the OeAWI website.

The Best Practice Guide for Research Integrity and Ethics can be accessed at:

- Praxisleitfaden für Integrität und Ethik
- Best Practice Guide for Research Integrity and Ethics

Hong Kong Principles for Assessing Researchers:

The Hong Kong Principles (HKP) were discussed and endorsed at WCRI 2019 in Hong Kong. When evaluating scientists, the implementation of the principles should lead to a focus on behaviour strengthening research integrity. **Nicole Föger** is a co-author.

The five principles are:

- 1. Assess responsible research practices
- 2. Value complete reporting
- 3. Reward the practice of open science
- 4. Acknowledge a broad range of research activities
- 5. Recognise essential other tasks like peer review and mentoring

Examples of "good practice" are collected and published on the website of the World Conferences on Research Integrity Foundation. There, institutions as well as individuals can support the HKP with an official endorsement. The OeAWI and its member organizations Wifo and FWF were among the first to support the HKP. In July 2020, the HKPs were published in PLOS Biology: *The Hong Kong Principles for assessing researchers: Fostering research integrity*; PLOSBiol18(7): e300073 https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.3000737

For more information, see https://wcrif.org/guidance/hong-kong-principles



SOPs4RI

A first version of the Toolbox was already put online in autumn 2020 and presented to the scientific community along with a publication in the journal *Nature*: *Research Integrity: Nine ways to move from talk to walk*; Nature **586**, 358-360 (2020); https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-02847-8

Anthology Publication Consulting at Universities

In co-operation with the editors Karin Lackner, Lisa Schilhan, and Christian Kaier from Publication Services at the University of Graz, **Nicole Föger** has contributed the chapter "Wissenschaftliche Integrität im Publikationsprozess" to their anthology:

Karin Lackner/Lisa Schilhan/Christian Kaier (Eds.), *Publikationsberatung an Universitäten* (149-162). Bielefeld: transcript Verlag. https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839450727-008

The book was published in May 2020. It deals with practical experiences, suggestions and recommendations for good publication support as well as basic know-how for the development and expansion of needs-oriented publication services.

About the ÖAWI

The Austrian Agency for Research Integrity (OeAWI) was established as an association in late 2008 by its twelve founding members. The association has now grown to more than 40 member institutions, including all Austrian public universities, universities of applied sciences, various non-university research institutions and research funding agencies. The Agency is funded entirely by its membership dues, which are calculated in accordance with the size of each member institution.

Key Tasks of the ÖAWI:

The Agency makes its knowledge available for the sake of **preventing research misconduct** and **raising awareness**. It also offers advice on issues related to research integrity. Furthermore, the Agency offers lectures and workshops on the topic of Good Scientific Practice for member institutions.

The Austrian Commission for Research Integrity is an independent body of the Agency, which was established to deal with specific cases of alleged research misconduct. The Commission consists of up to eight members—all of whom renowned researchers in their respective fields. To guarantee the independence from the Austrian science and research system, the seven voting members of the Commission are from abroad. As a non-voting member, an Austrian legal scholar serves on the Commission to provide expertise on the Austrian legal system. The Commission provides a neutral and factual platform for investigating (putative) cases of research misconduct thoroughly and objectively. It operates on the basis of its Rules of Procedure and the Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice (attached to the Rules of Procedures—available at http://www.oeawi.at/).

The OeAWI is also a member of the **European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)** and thus internationally strongly connected with similar organizations. More than 20 European countries have their national officials responsible for research integrity represented in ENRIO. From April 2012 to October 2018, **Nicole Föger** served as Chair of ENRIO.

Administrative Office: Austrian Agency for Research Integrity

Dr. Nicole Föger

Managing Director of the OeAWI, Consulting and Training

MMag. Teodora Konach

EU Projects SOPs4RI and VIRT2UE, Training

Samuel Muehllechner, BA

Administration of EU Projects, System Administrator, IT-Management

Armin Schmolmüller, MSc EU Project VIRT2UE, Training

Mag. Sabine Schnetzinger (sick leave since 08/2020)

Assistant to the Managing Director

Melanie Lettl (since 10/2020)

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