

S4

Research groups work as transparently and openly as possible! (cf. ECoC 2017, pp. 6–7)

Description and background

This learning unit:

Introduces students to research collaborations

Challenges students to understand the conditions of good collaborative research

Enables students to understand research agreements

Emphasises the recognition of roles and responsibilities in research collaborations



An advocate for research integrity

Kristina Bliznakova

Keywords

Reliable working relationships; mistrust; agreement; research roles and responsibilities; openness; transparency; respect

This unit has been prepared for non-disciplinary learning groups.

Learning objectives

- 1** *Listen actively and present aims and wishes in research groups*
- 2** *Learn to respect and accept the aims and wishes of others in research groups*
- 3** *Practice understanding and being understood in a dialogue*

Learning stages

- 1** *Become familiar with the topic*
- 2** *Dive into an interesting story*
- 3** *Engage in role play and come to an agreement*
- 4** *Reflect on collaborative research*

**“Research collaborations open doors for joint scientific activities that can provide amazing results that benefit our society.”
(Kristina Bliznakova, an advocate for research integrity)**



1 Become familiar with the topic:

Homework (before the unit starts) or reading session

For basic explanations of collaborative work, you can watch the short video “Collaborative Research Solutions” by Graham Sustainability Institute. In your own words, what is research collaboration?

Read the paragraph on collaborative working in “The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity” and discuss the meanings of any unknown words.

Look up Path2Integrity’s comic about collaborative work, “Building a Foundation”. What can you see? Which principles play a role?

[Collaborative Research Solutions \(Graham Sust. Institute\):](#)



[European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity:](#)



[Building a Foundation \(Path2Integrity\):](#)



2 Dive into an interesting story:

Review or look up the story from LONA Science Centre (video or text). The research the students are talking about is a collaborative research project studying how people react in stressful situations. The results will be used to adapt professional training programmes for firefighters, police and rescue crews.

Sketch the different roles within this research project by drawing stick figures for each of the following four collaborative players on your classroom chalk board or flip chart:

Prof. Weis’ team

LONA Science Centre
conducting the research

Police & fire brigade

funding the research

Prof. Surinares

Pakistan
collecting additional data

Education agency

developing evidence-based training courses for fire fighters and police officers

Embellish the stick figures with representative heads and coat buttons.

3 Engage in role play and come to an agreement:

Be open and transparent so that the research can flourish.

In groups of three or four, imagine that each of you is one player in this collaborative research project. You are all reluctant to cooperate because in your last collaborations you experienced disagreements and disrespectful accusations. But this research project is too important to fail. Future fire fighters and police officers, as well as the people who rely on them, are depending on your results being reliable. That is why you want to establish a strong base from the beginning.

Allocate a stick figure to each person and take on that role. Prof. Weis’ team fears overly protective partners. The police and fire brigade fear communication problems. Prof. Surinares fears unequal contributions from the different participants and getting insufficient recognition. The education agency needs clarification about roles and responsibilities in this undertaking.

Ask your partners what they expect from your cooperation. Make sure that you all understand each other correctly. Each of you should use the following phrase at least twice:

Do I understand you right that you want me to...

Leave your group and consider the wishes you heard from your project partners. To avoid jeopardising the research project, draft a contract in which you pay attention to fulfilling your partners’ wishes.

Come back together in your group and compare your drafts. Discuss if differences appear and alter the texts until all partners agree.

Research collaborations

Research collaborations can help increase the likelihood of finding answers to challenging questions. At the beginning of a collaboration, in order to be successful, all collaborators agree on

- taking on “[...] responsibility for the integrity of the research”;
- “[...] the goals and [...] the process for communicating”;
- the “[...] expectations and standards [that will apply]”;
- the “[...] procedures for handling conflicts and possible cases of misconduct”;
- being “[...] properly informed and consulted about submissions for publication of the research results.”

(ECoC 2017, pp. 6–7)

4 Reflect on collaborative research:

Come together as a class and discuss:

- What advantages does collaborative research have?
- What pitfalls exist in research collaborations and how can they be overcome?



Research / espionage

Shared knowledge / secret information

Openness / mistrust

Transparency / disguise

