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# Feedback from doctoral supervisors training in France

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# Adoc Mètis

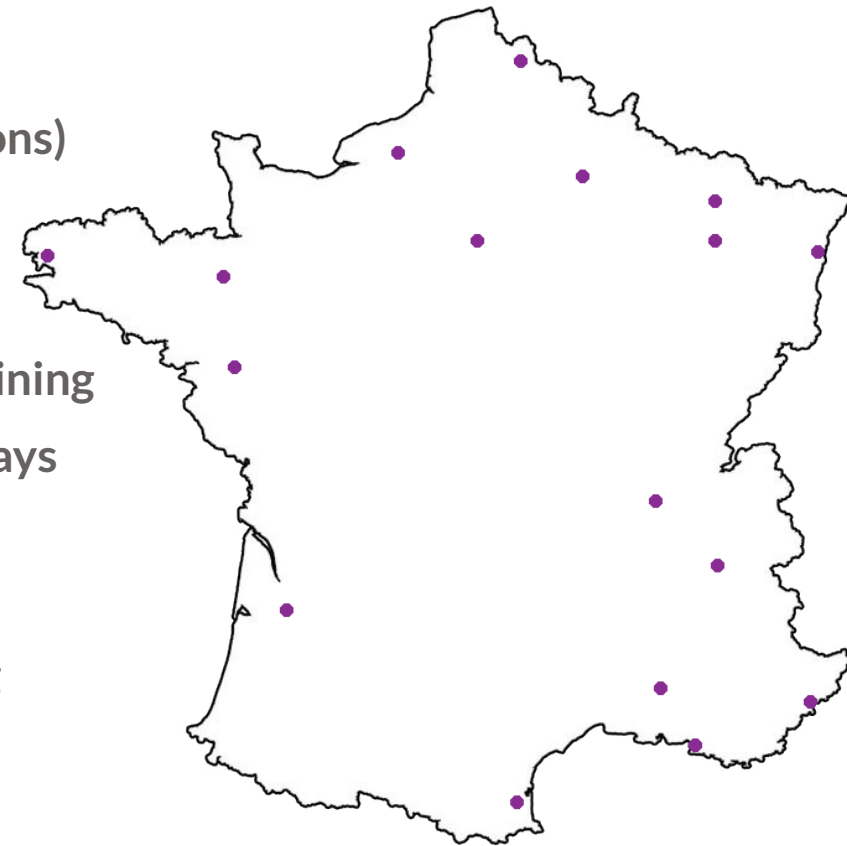
- Consulting and training firm, specialized in Human Resources Management for Higher Education and Research (since 2012)
- 6 PhDs : consultants, trainers and researchers
- Trainings about
  - Research methodology (including research integrity)
  - Equality & diversity
  - Management (including doctoral supervision)
  - Pedagogy





# Feedback from our trainings

- Feedback from exchanges during trainings
- No formal interviews, no surveys
- Scope
  - France (13 universities + 3 national research organizations)
  - 2019-2023
- Feedback collected
  - Through written syntheses by the trainer, after each training
  - Through evaluation surveys sent to the trainees a few days after the training
- Feedback from
  - Doctoral supervisors training (general courses including research integrity)
  - Feedback sessions 4 to 6 months after the training
  - Doctoral researchers training dedicated to research integrity





# Outline



- The need to address research integrity (RI) during supervisors training
- Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers
- Feedback from the doctoral supervisors





# The need to address RI in supervisors training

- Doctoral supervisors are rarely trained about RI
  - Only a few organizations made RI training mandatory for supervisors
  - Supervisors do not know that resources are available
    - e.g. MOOC « *Intégrité scientifique dans les métiers de la recherche* » (*Scientific integrity in research jobs*) by Université de Bordeaux, available on the France Université Numérique platform

The screenshot shows a course page on the FUN platform. At the top, there are two red tabs: 'Education et formation' and 'Outils pour la recherche'. The main title is 'Intégrité scientifique dans les métiers de la recherche' with the reference 'Réf. 28007'. Below the title, it lists 'Durée : 5 semaines', 'Effort : 15 heures', and 'Rythme: Auto-rythmé'. A paragraph states: 'Le MOOC « Intégrité scientifique dans les métiers de la recherche » est une formation gratuite et ouverte à toute personne qui s'interroge sur ce qu'est une recherche intégrée et responsable.' On the right, the 'université de BORDEAUX' logo is visible, along with social media icons for Twitter and Facebook. Below that, it says '2 sessions sont actuellement ouvertes pour ce cours' and a red button labeled 'Choisir maintenant'. At the bottom, there is a large image of the 'INTÉGRITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE' logo, which consists of a stylized 'I' made of colorful triangles followed by the text 'INTÉGRITÉ SCIENTIFIQUE'.





## The need to address RI in supervisors training

- RI trainings broach the subject from the fraud angle
  - Plagiarism
  - Falsification of data
  - Forging of data
- Other aspects are rarely talked about
- Lack of awareness of emerging issues (e.g. open science)
- RI trainings lack practical advice on how to address RI with doctoral researchers
  - Most supervisors only talk about the “risks of getting caught”

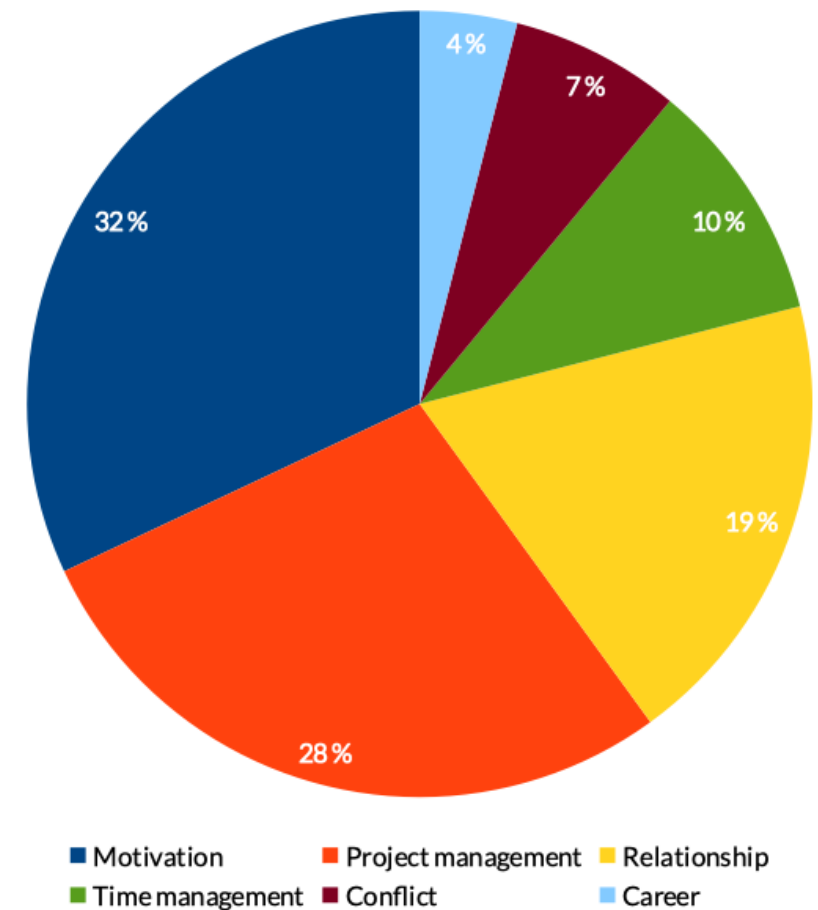




# The need to address RI in supervisors training

- RI is not seen as an issue by supervisors
  - Not once mentioned in pre-training questionnaires
  - Very rarely mentioned during introductions at the beginning of a training
  - When it is, it is because of a fraud experience

Expectations for a supervisor training (pre-training questionnaire)





## The need to address RI in supervisors training

- Supervisors are rarely trained
- Trainings are mainly about fraud and plagiarism
- Lack of practical advice
- Not an issue for supervisors







# Outline



- The need to address research integrity (RI) during supervisors training
- **Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers**
- Feedback from the doctoral supervisors





## Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers

- Theory in trainings  $\neq$  reality in labs
  - Focus on publication rather than on quality
  - Signature of articles is often “political”
- Doctoral researchers feel trapped between the pressure to publish and the RI guidelines
- Doctoral researchers do not have the power to change things even if they believe in RI





## Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers

- Trainings on RI are mandatory (since 2016)
- Mainly deal with fraud, sometimes specifically with plagiarism
- Angle : “what you risk if you get caught”





## Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers

- Presentations during general meetings of the doctoral school
  - Yet another administrative information
  - Focus on the mandatory aspect of the training
  - 1/3 of the doctoral researchers felt like they were talked down to
    - Legal risks involved with improper research
    - “Young researchers tend to rush rather than to favor quality”





## Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers

- Trainings are mainly about fraud
- Trainings are hard to put in practice
- Presentations by doctoral schools are boring and/or condenscending





## Outline



- The need to address research integrity (RI) during supervisors training
- Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers
- **Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors**





## Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors

- 4 to 6 months after initial training : feedback session
- Supervisors try to put in practice teachings from the training
- Discussion of what works and what does not





# Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors

- One-on-one discussions work better
  - Doctoral supervisors who rely on the mandatory trainings and/or on doctoral schools often express disappointment regarding the practices of their supervisees
  - Doctoral supervisors who took the time to discuss RI in private with doctoral researchers report interesting results
- Doctoral researchers are more interested in RI
- Doctoral researchers question the practices in the team/lab
- Discussions lead to questions supervisors find interesting

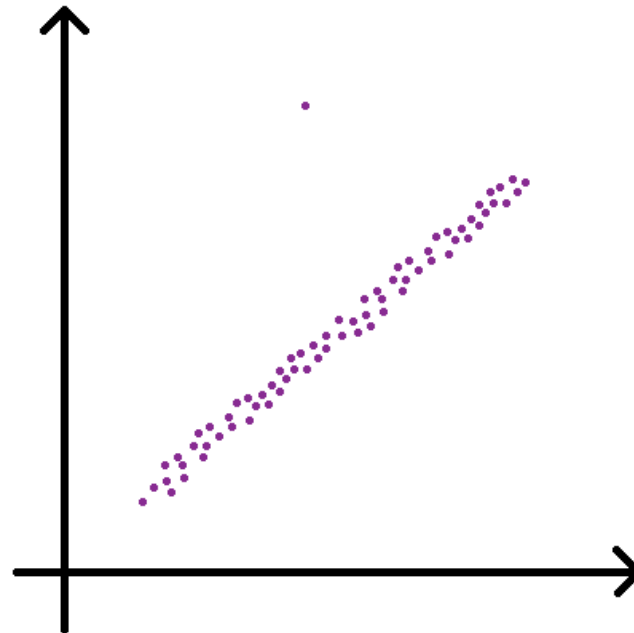






## Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors

- Giving sense to RI principles is important
  - Supervisors who ask supervisees to blindly follow the rules (“it’s always been like that” / “just do as you are told”, *etc.*) often express frustration regarding the lack of discipline
  - Supervisors who explain why the RI principles exist seem more content with the ensuing behavior of doctoral researchers
  - Example :





## Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors

- During initial trainings AND feedback sessions : supervisors express frustration about the system not encouraging integrity
  - Pressure to reduce duration (doctoral schools)
  - Pressure to publish more papers (recruitment bodies / grants)
  - Bibliometric evaluation : mandatory publication in order to grant the PhD defense (doctoral schools)
  - Supervisors are “evaluated” by number of papers (co-)written by supervisees





## Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors

- One-on-one discussions are more efficient
- Give sense to RI principles
- Systemic issues are still the main problem





# Outline



- The need to address research integrity (RI) during supervisors training
- Problems with RI trainings according to doctoral researchers
- Transmitting RI principles : feedback from the doctoral supervisors





## Conclusion

- Doctoral supervisors play a central role in raising doctoral researchers' awareness of research integrity
  - Doctoral researchers are rarely convinced to change their practices by trainings or doctoral schools meetings
  - One-on-one discussions allow to give sense to RI principles
- Research environment is also essential
  - “Do as I say, not as I do”
  - Few senior researchers are trained to RI
- Systemic pressure to publish remains the main problem
  - Doctoral researchers must choose between quality and quantity
  - Doctoral supervisors feel guilty if the supervisees do not publish enough





## Recommendations

- Due to lack of funding, most RI trainers are senior researchers who are not specialized in RI
  - Provide training and/or resources to trainers
  - Create a network of RI trainers
- Currently, mandatory trainings have little impact on practices<sup>1</sup>
  - Find incentives for RI trainings
  - Mention RI in other trainings
- Training powerless researchers is pointless
  - Provide trainings to heads of teams/labs
- Reduce the use of bibliometry in research evaluation

