

How many codes of research conduct do we need?

Ping Sun
Office of Research Integrity
Ministry of Science and Technology, China

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The codes of conduct in China

- * **Developed by different agencies and institutions**
 - * Government departments
 - * Universities and research institutions
 - * the national academies and learned societies
- * **In different forms**
 - * Guidelines for ethical conduct of research
 - * Norms for special activities etc.
- * **For different audiences**
 - * all science workers
 - * member of universities or research institutions
 - * academicians and journal editors, etc.

Major types of codes of conduct

Proponents	Audience	Forms
—Government etc.	Science workers	Guidelines
—Learned societies	Science workers/ Members	Codes of conduct
—Academies	Members & affiliations	Codes of conduct
—Universities/ Institutions	Staff & students/ Researchers	Codes of conduct Regulations
—Journals/ Scholar groups	Signatory journals/ Fellow scholars	Proposed norms/ Declarations

Examples of “national” codes

- * Five ministries and organizations (1999). *The Guidelines on Code of Conduct for Science Workers*
- * China Association for Science and Technology (2007). *The Norms of Scientific Ethics for Science Workers (Trial)*
- * A committee under the Ministry of Education (2009). *The Guidelines on Academic Norms of Humanities and Social Science Studies for Universities*
- * A research group commissioned by the Office of Research Integrity, Ministry of Science and Technology (2009). *The Guidelines on Research-Related Integrity*

Elements to be considered

- * 1. Function (guidelines/code/norms/rules...)
- * 2. Authority (the agency, content, procedure...)
- * 3. Jurisdiction (Institutional/Disciplinary/
professional...)
- * 4. Audience (general/specific disciplines...)
- * 5. Content (length, level of detail, clarity...)
- * 6. Implementation (inspirational/enforceable)
- * 7. Effectiveness (response, assessment...)

Problems with an ordinary code

- **1. Purpose**
 - A code is adopted as a guidance for a specific audience, while its core principles are often universal ones (repetitive).
- **2. Content**
 - Both proper and improper behaviors are listed, while the lists cannot exhaust all such behaviors.
 - Behaviors (proper and improper) are often poorly defined.
- **3. Implementation**
 - A code was usually well publicized at the time of issuance, but it is not clear whether the target audience being aware of it.
 - Do not know how the code influences behavior.

Objectives and strategies

- **Objectives**——

1. A one- or two pages code with critical principles (e.g. Hippocrates: The Oath of Medicine), instead of a full length document
2. Professional codes, instead of institutional ones
3. International codes (e.g. Singapore Statement)

- **Strategies**——

1. To assess the effectiveness of the existing codes;
2. To increase the relevance of the codes with the audience, e.g. through audit and enforcement;
3. To develop supplementary norms and regulations.