

### *Lesson 6: Conflict of interests between policy, funding and research*

#### Learning outcomes:

LO#13 - The student can discuss and formulate arguments and confront opinions in the context of real cases of scientific policies.

LO#14 - The student can effectively communicate, negotiate terms and persuade different target audiences including policy makers for programme bodies, senior management of research institutions, research managers, and researchers.

LO#16 - The learner interiorizes and commits to the values and the mission of the institution.

LO#17 - The student demonstrates curiosity and interest for systemic approaches and for the organization of the research ecosystem.

LO#18 - The student is able to accept others' views, and work together to provide the necessary support for the proposal's preparation.

LO#19 - The student is critical regarding his own work and that of others taking on a constructive attitude.

LO#20 - The student takes responsibility for its own work.

This lesson is dedicated to exploring conflict of interest between research policies and funding frameworks (policy makers) and research (researchers, individuals).

#### **Articles for discussion:**

- *Grit Laudel, The art of getting funded: How scientists adapt to their funding conditions, Science and Public Policy, Volume 33, Issue 7, August 2006, Pages 489–504, <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154306781778777>*
- *Marc A. Edwards and Siddhartha Roy. Environmental Engineering Science. Jan 2017. Academic Research in the 21st Century: Maintaining Scientific Integrity in a Climate of Perverse Incentives and Hypercompetition. DOI: 10.1089/ees.2016.0223*

The abstract and a brief summary describing the methods, results and conclusions of the article, or simply a brief summary of the articles are used.

The aim is to explore the role and perspectives of different stakeholders (policy makers; researcher funding agencies, RMAs) in interpreting the conclusions drawn in the articles to better understand the role of the actors involved in research and innovation.

**Context:**

Both articles address the consequences of the highly competitive environment of academic research. LAUDEL's article focuses on the consequences of the funding pressure, while EDWARDS & ROY focus mainly on the pressure raised by research performance metrics. LAUDEL emphasises that the changes in the funding research scenario leads to changes in the behaviour of researchers and on academic values. EDWARDS & ROY argues that those changes tend to lead to unethical behaviours and lead to scientific error or fraud.

Point to cover over the discussion:

1. Which funding changes have occurred in the last decades?
2. What other factors have changed in the last decades that seem to affect the way research is conducted?
3. What are the micro mechanisms by which researchers adapt to the current pressures of the research environment?
4. Which behaviours related to the way researchers conduct their research have been observed?
5. Which ethical dilemmas are raised in the articles?
6. If you were a Researcher/Funding Agency/Policy maker/ RMA, you abide by which values? Consider the values of the citizen, the researcher and those of the institution.
7. What course of action would you consider for the future?

In this lesson time can be allocated to assess the progress of the students in the development of their project proposal tasks.

**Bibliographic references:**

- Edwards, M. A., & Roy, S. (2017). Academic Research in the 21st Century: Maintaining Scientific Integrity in a Climate of Perverse Incentives and Hypercompetition. *Environmental Engineering Science*, 34(1), 51–61. <https://doi.org/10.1089/ees.2016.0223>
- Laudel, G. (2006). The art of getting funded: how scientists adapt to their funding conditions. *Science and Public Policy*, 33(7), 489–504. <https://doi.org/10.3152/147154306781778777>