

Lesson 6 - Conflict of interests between policy, funding and research

Keywords

- Competitive research ecosystem
- Behaviour in research
- Funding pressure
- Ethical dilemmas
- Values

Learning Objectives

13 14 16 17
18 19 20



Scan for complete LOs

Go to the exercise

<https://learningapps.org/watch?v=pi93ak8et22>

Go to video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJxRXYp1W1c&t=3s>

This lesson is devoted to exploring the **conflict of interest between research policies, funding frameworks (policymakers) and research *per se* (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

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

The aim is to explore the role and perspectives of different stakeholders (policymakers, research 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 how changes in the funding research scenario may lead to changes in the behaviour of researchers and in the shaping of academic values. EDWARDS & ROY argue that these changes tend to generate unethical behaviours and may result in scientific error or fraud.

Points to cover in the discussion:

- Which changes to funding have occurred in the last decades?
- Which other factors have changed in the last decades that seem to affect the way research is conducted?
- What are the micro-mechanisms by which researchers adapt to the current **pressures** coming from the research environment?
- Which **behaviours** related to the way researchers conduct their research have been observed?
- Which **ethical dilemmas** are raised in the articles?
- If you were a Researcher/Funding Agency/Policymaker/ RMA, which values would you stand for? Take into consideration the **values** of the citizen, the researcher and those of the institution.
- What course of action would you recommend for the future?

During this lesson, time can be allocated to **assess the students' progress** 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>