

Funded PhD position (4 years): Research Ethics and Research Integrity

Institute of Ethics, Dublin City University (DCU), Ireland

Deadline for applications: 15 April 2017

(Remains open until position filled)

Supervisor: [Professor Bert Gordijn](#), Director of [DCU Institute of Ethics](#).

The PhD is funded by the EnTIRE project (Horizon 2020; Call: H2020-SwafS-2016-17; Science with and for Society). Funding is available for a PhD student for 4 years, to cover university fees and an annual tax-free stipend of €16,000.

DCU Institute of Ethics

The DCU Institute of Ethics engages in high quality research, teaching and services. The Institute promotes a systematic approach to applied ethics in the fields of government, business, media, science, technology and health care. It is engaged in a variety of international funded research projects (see [research portfolio](#)).

Focus of the PhD

The changing scientific environment puts researchers under more and more pressure: publication pressure, reducing research funds, public pressure to justify spending public research budgets and promotion of public-private partnerships. Together these external factors can ultimately lead to a research environment where ethical norms may lose out to other norms and so-called questionable research practices arise. In addition, new areas of research are emerging where the ethical norms themselves are blurred and need to be clearly stipulated and substantiated to begin with. In response to these changing research environments, the areas of Research Ethics and Research Integrity (RE+RI) are rapidly evolving. Against this backdrop the PhD research will tackle one of the emerging normative issues in the RE+RI arena (depending on the specific interests of the PhD student). It will develop and apply an appropriate normative framework in order to analyse the issue at hand, and come up with normative recommendations as to how to handle the issue.

Project

Many European countries, regions and institutions have drafted guidelines, standards, and laws in the RE+RI field. However, the effect can be mixed: because of the resulting diversity and continuously changing norms, researchers lack up-to-date and easily accessible information on relevant rules and regulations as well as on how to apply them. The same is true for RE+RI evaluation committees that are hindered by the absence of easy access to cases and practices elsewhere. RE+RI leaders and followers lack a platform that provides easy access to RE+RI norms, and serves as a basis for deliberation, fostering improvement and practical relevance of these norms. The overall aim of the EnTIRE project is to create a platform that makes the normative framework governing RE+RI easily accessible, supports application in research and evaluation, and involves all stakeholders in a participatory way, thus achieving sustainability. The platform will foster uptake of ethical standards and responsible conduct of research, and ultimately support research excellence and strengthen society's confidence in research and its findings. To achieve its overall aim, the EnTIRE project will address the following objectives:

- Objective 1: To undertake an in-depth stakeholder consultation across EU countries exploring RE+RI experiences and practices, defining the boundaries of data to be collected, and developing a mapping structure adapted to user needs

- Objective 2: To assemble the relevant normative elements, including RE+RI rules and procedures, educational materials, illustrative cases, and relevant institutions across EU countries
- Objective 3: To develop a user-friendly platform, including a website and online resources, to facilitate access to RE+RI knowledge and experience, and support application in research and evaluation, thus fostering uptake of ethical standards and responsible conduct of research

Tasks to be performed in the EnTIRE project

The DCU Institute of Ethics offers a challenging position in an inspiring international and interdisciplinary environment, bridging ethics, law and social science. The PhD student will play an important role in the EnTIRE project where he/she will be part of the DCU team together with a postdoctoral researcher and professor Bert Gordijn. In collaboration with other international project partners the PhD student will work in Work Package 5 (WP5): “Cases, casuistry and scenarios”. Within WP5 and together with international colleagues the PhD student will focus on the following tasks amongst others:

- Identify potential sources of RE+RI cases, for example, a) academic literature; b) reports by RE+RI committees and regulatory bodies; c) grey literature such as government documents, white papers, theses and dissertations, conference proceedings and policy statements; d) media outlets such as newspapers and magazines; and e) the blogosphere.
- Develop appropriate systematic methods to conduct searches within these sources so as to gather RE+RI cases, e.g. through a systematic literature review.
- Develop a system of categories, a ‘thesaurus’, for tagging cases that enhances retrievability and orientation within the EnTIRE database. Tagging methods will involve traditional approaches, e.g. tagging according to issues such as misconduct, falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, fake peer-review, data management, as well as innovative methods, for example tagging according to the main ethical principles from the RE+RI normative framework that have been violated. Use the developed methods to tag RE+RI cases.
- Conduct a systematic literature review to identify case analysis methods suitable for the analysis of RE+RI cases.
- Analyse a set of particularly prominent and/or topical RE+RI cases showcasing relevant case analysis methods.
- Develop a set of RE+RI scenarios for educational purposes and in order to stimulate strategic thinking about RE+RI.

Your profile

- You have an excellent academic record (first class or II.1 primary degree or a postgraduate qualification, e.g. M.Sc.) in Philosophy, Ethics, Applied Ethics or a related discipline.
- You are eager to work in and learn from multi-disciplinary and multi-organization teams from ethics, social sciences and law. You have a proven ability to communicate across disciplines, or a clear interest in developing this ability.
- You are highly motivated, ambitious, have good social and strong written and oral communication skills, have excellent analytical skills, and can work independently.
- You have an excellent command of the English language. You should have English language certification if English is not your first language, the requirement being: IELTS: 6.5+, TOEFL iBT: 92+, TOEFL pBT: 580+, or equivalent (Please visit: [DCU registry](#) for details).

Apply

Please email a cover letter, a CV, a writing sample and the contact details of two referees to professor Bert Gordijn (bert.gordijn@dcu.ie). For all further informal enquiries, please contact professor Bert Gordijn. There will be a screening and interview process.

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