

# Integrity

Wageningen University & Research



WAGENINGEN  
UNIVERSITY & RESEARCH



## Enable dilemma discussions

Prevention is the best medicine: this also applies to integrity concerns that can arise in the workplace. This sheet with a few examples of dilemmas is intended as a tool to enable a discussion with your team or department about integrity dilemmas. Having regular discussions with each other as a team or department will contribute to the creation of an open culture in which “unspoken” norms and dilemmas can be discussed and reviewed. In this way you make new agreements/working rules, confirm established ones, and it becomes normal to discuss dilemmas and doubts in your work.

### Suggestions for use

- This sheet contains a total of six dilemmas: three general dilemmas and three dilemmas that relate to scientific integrity.
- Use the sheet in one of your regular team meetings. For example, discuss one dilemma in each work meeting (5 minutes) or organise a themed session in which you discuss all dilemmas (possibly supplemented by dilemmas from team members).  
Below are a few tips for a “good conversation” that you can use as an initiator/manager.

## General

1

### Shared interests

During a project leader meeting, an announcement is made that a new, temporary project leader will join the team to create a project website. This new colleague is the daughter of the client. What are your thoughts about this? What do you do in this case?

2

### Behind your back

Your manager calls you to account. She is not happy with an e-mail from a project leader you work with. This project leader is unhappy about the results so far and has sent her an e-mail about it. You don't know anything about this. What do you do in this case?

3

### Belonging

For the past three years, you have worked in a great research department where everyone has worked together for a long time. Recently, a few international colleagues have joined, but they seem to be left out a bit. They are not automatically asked to join informal activities, and jokes are made about their appearance and nationality in their presence, but they laugh about them too. Other than that, they usually retreat into their own group. Should you say something about this and/or take action?

1

### Your PhD and two competing professors

You have two PhD supervisors as a PhD candidate, but they seem to increasingly disagree with each other about the approach to your PhD research. You want to maintain a good relationship with both of them, but this seems impossible as they both want to move in different directions. What do you do in this case?

2

### Name dropping?

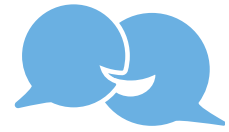
As a researcher, you're working on several publications at the moment. A colleague has recently completed a publication in which you are mentioned as co-author. By the same token, he expects that you now also include him as co-author in one of your publications.

- How substantial must a contribution be to warrant a mention as co-author?
- What do you do when your supervisor tells you to add authors?

3

### Small changes

Your group regularly conducts interesting research assignments for a reputable organisation. Your contact person at this organisation has found a new job, and this is why the results and conclusions of a study were discussed with their successor. She is more interested in the impact of the research on policy and thinks that your conclusions are too nuanced. She asks you to rewrite the conclusions to include more substantial statements. You think that the data do not allow for such confidence. What do you do in this case?



### Tips for a 'good' conversation

- The objective is to discuss integrity dilemmas with each other; it is not about right or wrong answers. Real dilemmas usually occur in grey areas. Good intentions do not guarantee success either.
- Make clear agreements about confidentiality, such as anonymity, when discussing personal examples.
- Ensure that you, the initiator/supervisor, are not the only one speaking. Take on a listening role, summarise occasionally, and make sure that participants listen to each other. Ask clarifying questions about the context and perceptions of participants. Avoid judgements.
- If some participants find it difficult to speak in a group, then start by presenting one dilemma which participants can discuss in pairs or small groups. After that, the dilemma can be discussed with other pairs and/or in the group to share more insights.
- Do you find it difficult to lead such discussions yourself? If so, you can ask a colleague from outside the team, such as an HR or communication colleague who enjoys leading these conversations.
- Thank participants for their positive attitude and their brainstorming about this type of dilemma, and let them know that this type of discussion contributes to a pleasant work environment where you can share these matters in the team. If the participants feel the same, then it might be possible to repeat it.