

CBS Practice Committee - Annual Report 2018

Introduction

The Practice Committee at CBS was established in late 2016, and hence 2018 was the second full year of the committee's work. There were no cases decided by the Committee in 2018 (see below).

The chair of the committee, Søren Friis Hansen, has spent some time during 2018 visiting a number of departments, presenting the Committee as well as the Danish 2017 Act on Research Misconduct and the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Most departments at CBS have now been visited. Søren Friis Hansen has also participated in a training course for Ph.D. supervisors.

Meetings

The Committee had scheduled a meeting in November 2018 but this meeting had to be cancelled due to the fact that the chairman was on sick leave at that time. The meeting was rescheduled to 31 January 2019.

Concrete cases

No complaints were raised before the Committee in 2018. At the end of 2018 there was just one pending case.

Pending Case: Complaint regarding possible plagiarism

In June 2017 the Practice Committee received a complaint regarding possible plagiarism by a former employee at CBS. After hearing the parties and receiving an opinion from an independent expert, the Committee remained in doubt as to the nature of the problem. Since the Committee was not certain whether the case concerned plagiarism or Questionable Research Practice, the Committee decided to forward the case to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct (NVU) in order to be advised if the case shall be dealt with by the Practice Committee or the national committee. In November 2018 the CBS Committee received the decision in the case from the National Committee. The conclusion of the NVU was that case did involve plagiarism.

The CBS Practice Committee notes that it is a serious problem for all parties involved in any case concerning Questionable Research Practice or Research Misconduct that the national Committee has not been allocated the resources necessary to decide cases being forwarded from the local committees within a reasonable time frame. The parties involved in a case are put under a considerable strain and uncertainty, while the case is being processed by the national committee. The CBS Practice Committee strongly suggests that the time required by the national Committee for deciding cases referred from the local Committees shall be significantly reduced, once the 2017 Act on Research Misconduct is fully implemented in practice.

Questions raised as a Result of Contact with the Press

In the fall of 2018 the chairman was asked on a number of occasions to comment on concrete stories in the press. Søren Friis Hansen refused to give any comments on specific cases.

If the chairman (or indeed any of the members of the Committee) were to comment on a concrete story in the press, the chairman would, according to forvaltningsloven, automatically be legally incapacitated (inhabil) and thus prevented from participating in the Committee's decision, if a case concerning that story were subsequently brought before the Committee as a formal complaint.

The Chairman was also asked by the press if the Practice Committee would, on its own initiative, raise a complaint case against named researches at CBS as a result of that story.

The rules on raising a complaint before the Committee are laid down in § 8 of the Committee's Statute. § 8 (1) reads as follows:

*§ 8. Udvalget kan behandle sager, der indbringes af en klager eller en person, der anmoder Udvalget om at blive renset for verserende rygter eller anklager om brud på god videnskabelig praksis. Endvidere kan forskningsdekanen forelægge Udvalget en sag af særlig betydning, **ligesom Udvalget på eget initiativ kan tage en sådan sag op.***

The Committee understands the last sentence of § 8 (1) in such a way, that the Committee may raise *general matters of special importance* on its own initiative. However, the Committee does not have the competence to raise a complaint against an individual CBS researcher on its own initiative. If the Committee were given the competence to raise a complaint against an individual CBS researcher on its own initiative, the Committee would be both prosecutor and judge in the same case, which is not permissible under the rule of law. Furthermore all Members of the Committee would automatically be legally incapacitated (inhabile) according to forvaltningsloven, if they were to participate in any decision regarding a complaint which had been raised by the Committee itself.

Initiatives

At the meeting held on 31 January 2019, the Committee decided to raise three questions of special importance on its own initiative (§ 8 (1) of the Statute).

According to Section III, 1.1 iv), of the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, undergraduate (bachelor) and graduate (master's) programmes should include an introduction to the principles of research integrity and responsible conduct of research.

According to Section III, 1.2 iv), of the Code, the Institutions are responsible for ensuring that all staff and students involved in research have sufficient knowledge of and receive training in the principles of research integrity and responsible conduct of research.

In order to gain an overview of how the students at CBS are introduced to the principles of Research Integrity, the Committee decided to ask the Dean of Education to send the following question to all study boards at CBS:

“How do you comply with the requirement to give the students at your programme an introduction to the principles of research integrity and responsible conduct of research?”

Based on the answers received from the Dean, the Committee will reflect on how to proceed.

The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity requires (Section II, 6.1 i), that all parties involved in research disclose any *conflicts of interest*, i.e. situations in which financial or other interests have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgement.

The Committee decided to emphasize the need for the introduction of CBS guidelines on Conflicts of Interest. The Committee expects that the Dean of Research shall give the Committee opportunity to comment on a draft for CBS guidelines on Conflicts of Interest, before such guidelines are adopted.

Finally, the Committee would like to ask both Deans, if they think there is a need for institutionalizing an Ethical Research Board at CBS, which could deal with questions regarding research ethics, and possibly the need for an additional ethical approval of research projects. Additionally it should be considered whether there is a need for establishing an ethical council at CBS (different from the Ethical Research Board mentioned) which could provide guidance and help to researchers and management on sensitive ethical issues, before any decisions on research are made.