

CBS Practice Committee – Annual Report 2020

Introduction

The Practice Committee at CBS was established in late 2016, and hence 2020 was the fourth full year of the committee's work. One case was decided by the Committee in 2020 (see below).

The chair of the committee, Søren Friis Hansen, was due to participate in a Nordic Conference Research Misconduct in Oslo in September 2020. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the conference was postponed.

Meetings

Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the Committee decided the one case received during 2020 in writing.

Concrete case

One complaint was raised before the Committee in 2020. The Committee decided to refer the case to the Danish National Committee on Research Misconduct (NVU).

Pending Case: Complaint regarding potential fabrication and / or falsification of research data

In April 2020 the Practice Committee received a complaint regarding potential research misconduct. The complaint is concerned with potential fabrication and / or falsification of research data. The complaint was raised by the editor of an international journal.

During the journal's peer-review process, a report about data irregularities prepared by the journal indicated that research data had most likely been altered manually, as several measured variables showed significant autocorrelations for which no satisfactory explanation was given.

After hearing the parties, the Committee concluded that the complaint met all requirements laid down in the law, and that the complaint could not be dismissed as manifestly unfounded.

On this basis, the Committee decided to forward the case to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct (NVU) according to § 11, stk. 2, of lov om videnskabelig uredelighed.

During the hearing, the defendant presented a number of potential explanations for the alleged data irregularities. These explanations were however, rejected by the complainant.

The case is now pending with the Danish National Committee on Research Misconduct, which shall decide whether research misconduct has in fact taken place.

Initiatives

In February 2021, the Statutes of the Committee was amended regarding the provisions on the Named Person. The amendment means that there are now two equal Named Persons, instead of one Named Person and one substitute.

The chairman of the Committee has previously visited all departments at CBS. The Committee invites all Departments to ask the chairman to give a short presentation and update about the Committee and the Code of Conduct at Departments meetings, whether online or on Campus, if and when the Department considers this to be relevant.

The National Committee on Research Misconduct has recently sent a letter to all research institutions in Denmark regarding problems with plagiarism involving a Ph.D.-thesis. There are currently 22 cases on plagiarism related to a Ph.D. thesis pending before the National Committee.

The National Committee recommends that the institutions attempt to prevent these problems by applying some sort of anti-plagiarism-programme (e.g. iThenticate). These programmes should be included in the Ph.D training-programmes at the Institutions, and applied before the thesis is formally handed in.

The CBS Committee supports the recommendations of the National Committee.

If some anti-plagiarism programme is applied before a Ph.D. thesis is formally handed in, the Ph.D supervisor could be given an opportunity to react in order to prevent problems connected with plagiarism.