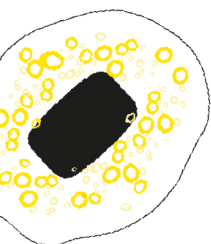
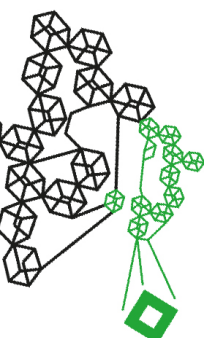
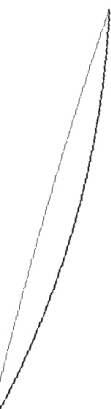


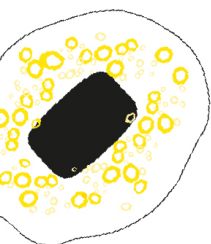
UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE.



SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE

Annual report 2022





COLOFON

SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEE
Service department: Strategy & Policy
CLASSIFICATION: PUBLIC

DATE
February 2023

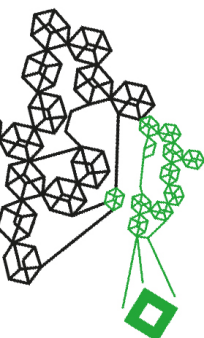
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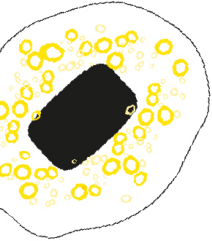
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Introduction

The Scientific Integrity Committee (CWI) advises the Executive Board (CvB) with regard to complaints about suspected violations of scientific integrity by (former) employees of the University of Twente. The committee provides an annual report of its activities. This report is public and will be published on the [CWI-website](#). This English version is a translation of the Dutch version.

1. Annual reporting

According to the UT's Scientific Integrity Complaints Procedure, the CWI accounts for its activities afterwards to the Executive Board in an annual report for the purpose of the university's annual report. Input for the UT-annual report was provided on January 12, 2023. The CWI, the relevant portfolio-holder of the Executive Board (i.e., the rector) and the confidential advisers meet at least once a year to discuss the CWI cases, the annual reports of the confidential advisors, and possible points for improvement. This consultation took place on February 3, 2023. This report contains the highlights as discussed during that consultation.

2. Composition

On January 1, 2022, the composition of the Scientific Integrity Committee was as follows:

- Prof.mr.dr. M.A. (Michiel) Heldeweg, LL.M., chair
- Em.prof.dr.ir. P. (Piet) Bergveld, member
- Prof.dr.ir. G.J. (Geert) Heijnen, member
- Prof.dr.ir. L. (Leon) Lefferts, member
- Em.prof.dr. J.M. (Jules) Pieters, member
- J. (Jessica) Greven LLB, secretary

As of July 1, 2022, the following colleagues have acceded to the committee:

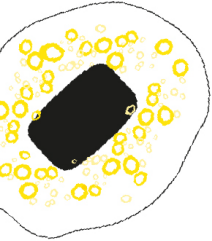
- prof.dr. A. (Armagan) Kocer, member
- prof.dr.ir. E. (Edwin) Zondervan, member

The confidential adviser for the complainant is Em. Prof.dr.ir. O.A.M. (Olaf) Fisscher. The confidential adviser for the accused is Prof.dr.ir. A. (Alfred) Stein. The confidential advisers draw up an anonymised annual report on their activities. These reports are shared with the Executive Board and the CWI, to discuss and to learn from.

3. Way of working

Only in case a violation of scientific integrity is suspected, a complaint can be submitted to the CWI. When a complaint is submitted to the CWI, contact takes place between the secretary and the submitter to verify which steps have already been taken and to assess whether a CWI complaints procedure is suitable. The submitter is, among other things, referred to the confidential adviser for the complainant and the rules that apply in accordance with the UT complaints procedure. When the complaints procedure starts, an ad-hoc committee is formed of at least three members, including (if possible) the chair of the CWI. The committee is composed of CWI members who can fulfil their role in handling the complaint impartially and independently. This ad-hoc committee firstly assesses whether the complaint is admissible. If the complaint is inadmissible, the committee cannot advise on the substance of the complaint and will inform the Executive Board accordingly. If the complaint is admissible, the committee will assess the complaint substantially. As part of the substantive assessment, both parties are, if not evidently superfluous, invited to a hearing. The committee also decides what further information is necessary to be able to give a proper assessment of the complaint. Ultimately, the committee draws up an advice, which is put to the complainant and the accused for checking on any factual inaccuracies. Convincing corrections will be incorporated into the final advice, after which the final CWI advice is submitted to the Executive Board. If necessary or desirable, the chair or secretary of the committee will explain the advice to the rector or EB in more detail. Ultimately, the Executive Board decides on the complaint.





The CWI secretary handles all correspondence with all parties involved and with the Executive Board. The secretary also handles the correspondence of the Executive Board with the National Body for Scientific Integrity (LOWI). All correspondence is confidential and will be treated and archived as such.

4. Complaints

Complaints are related to subjects such as intellectual property, financing, contracts, publishers, non-scientific interests, secondary positions and the reputation of science being at stake. These are often complex issues with a long history, sometimes accompanied by tensions regarding ethical or labour disputes, which may have damaged trust between parties.

In 2022, the Scientific Integrity Committee (CWI) issued advices on the three outstanding complaints from 2021. In two of these, additional advice was issued by the LOWI upon request of one of both parties to the procedure. In one complaint, the LOWI advised to declare the complaint wholly unfounded (advice [2022-14](#)), which deviated from the CWI advice to declare the complaint partly well-founded. In the other complaint, both the CWI and the LOWI (advice [2022-16](#)) advised the Executive Board to declare the complaint unfounded. The three complaints have been declared definitively unfounded by the Executive Board. In 2022, one new complaint was received, which the CWI could not consider due to inadmissibility. All complaints that were considered substantively are fully and anonymously published on the [UNL website](#). Summaries of the complaints can also be found on the [UT page](#) of the CWI.

5. Points of attention and points for improvement

This section contains an overview of the points of attention, points for improvement and lessons learned from cases or the processes.

a. *Composition*

- When compiling the ad hoc committee, parties involved and the Executive Board will henceforth be informed about the entire composition of the ad hoc committee, indicating the possibility to express objections to the composition. The CWI incorporates this lesson learned in its work process. Until recently, parties were only given this opportunity if the CWI deemed it desirable or necessary with regard to a specific member.
- In accordance with the complaints procedure art. 5, members of the committee, who are in any way involved with the persons or facts to which the complaint relates, are not eligible for handling the relevant complaint. This also applies to the chair. The criterion that a member may not be from the same faculty as one or more of the parties to the complaint, is not absolute. Crucially, any member factually needs to be independent and impartial. The CWI takes this into account in its assessment.

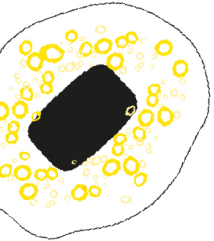
b. *Chair CWI*

- In the CWI process, each complaint received is henceforth discussed anonymously and, as previously, confidentially by the secretary with the chair, in order to assess what the composition of the committee could be and whether the chair of the CWI can be part of it.
- The advice of the University Council to appoint a second, external or vice chair will be discussed.

c. *LOWI*

- The LOWI is an independent advisory body, not an appeal body. In case the Executive Board receives advices from two expert committees (i.e., CWI and LOWI), the content of the considerations of both opinions is a key factor to the final decision of the Executive Board. It is certainly not the case that the most favourable advice to the defendant is





always followed; after all, a CWI advice that was favourable to the defendant would, in such approach, make it unnecessary for the complainant to go to the LOWI. Advices are always weighed in terms of content.

d. Conflicts of Interest, Publishing and Media

- The CWI suggested to the Executive Board to start a UT-internal follow-up debate on how to deal with (possible/perceived) conflicts of interest. The starting point of the Executive Board is that "*academic freedom is paramount, whereby situations are conceivable in which it is valuable to create clarity about perceived conflicts of interest before scientists participate in the public debate, with the common goal of safeguarding scientific quality and reputation*". An important question in the respect is how this relates to the responsibilities that follow from such academic freedom.
- With regard to the possibility of handling a complaint that has previously been discussed in the media, it can be concluded that the rule of confidentiality of the complaints procedure applies only once a CWI procedure has started. If a party expresses itself in the media during the procedure for handling the complaint, this can burden the handling to such an extent that the CWI could conclude that it cannot continue the procedure. Since the other party may still have an interest in continuation, such a far-reaching decision should not be taken too quickly. The CWI takes this into account in its assessment.

e. Intercollegiate resolution

- Several complaints have led to insights by the Executive Board and the CWI regarding the encouraging of informal consultation before starting a CWI complaints procedure. Before a CWI complaint procedure commences, the UT encourages to handle cases in a peer-to-peer setting, as also advised by the LOWI and the confidential advisors. The CWI has incorporated this lesson learned into its work process. Of course, every potential complainant retains the right to actually launch a complaint.

f. Trust and Learning process

- The UT relies on scientifically ethical behaviour of its employees. In the CWI procedure, this is expressed in 'presumed innocence/integrity of conduct, unless proven otherwise', in accordance with the Dutch code of conduct and the UT complaint procedure.
- With that, 'learn lessons' will be the primary goal for all involved: a complaint submitted does not necessarily mean a violation, violations occur in different degrees and not every violation justifies imposing sanctions. It remains a learning process, as emphasized by the confidential advisors and the University Council. The CWI will incorporate and promote this starting point in its work process.

g. Formality CWI procedure

- Upon receipt of a complaint, parties involved are informed that a complaint submitted to the CWI will be handled according to the rules of the complaints procedure, with an administrative final decision. It should be emphasized to parties that filing a complaint with the CWI results in a formal complaints procedure, in which the submitter acts as the 'complainant'. The CWI incorporates this into its work process.
- The CWI procedure is a complaints procedure, in which the task of the CWI is to assess complaints received and advise the Executive Board, as prescribed by the Dutch code of conduct and the UT-complaints regulation. This task does not agree well with a situation in which the CWI would also be called upon to fulfil other roles – considering the requirement of impartiality and independence.
- Despite the formal nature of the process as a complaints procedure, a personal approach must be maintained.



h. PhD students

- Signals regarding greater vulnerabilities in the position of PhD-students make the CWI extra receptive in case of any future complaints.

i. Transparency and Website

- To promote transparency towards the UT community, on the advice of the University Council, the [CWI website](#) will be updated with regard to, among other things, case histories and lessons learned.
- If necessary, the UT complaints procedure will be amended on the points mentioned in this report.

6. Follow-up on points of attention from CWI annual report 2021

This section contains an update of the points of attention from the annual report of 2021.

a. Attention to lead times

This remains an ongoing point of attention. It will be investigated whether the lead times as stated in the UT complaints procedure are feasible and whether the possible reasons for delays are sufficiently clear (such as: a hearing, an extra investigation or a LOWI procedure).

b. Investing in (after)care

In any complaints procedure, parties involved could be emotionally affected. As a point for improvement, the steps of aftercare are explicitly discussed in the Executive Board, after the CWI handled the complaint. Part of this is the step that the Rector meets with both parties and discusses the situation. This form of aftercare is experienced as positive and will be continued. Aftercare in the broadest sense of the word (by Executive Board, confidential advisors, or HR) remains a continuous point of attention, at least in the context of scientific integrity, and is the subject of discussion in, for example, UT-wide meetings such as the meeting for 'auxiliary staff' ('functionarissen hulpstructuur').

c. Appoint additional confidential advisers

Confidential advisers are extremely important and valued in the CWI process. The Executive Board and the CWI will endeavour to appoint additional (internal and possibly external) confidential advisers.

d. Personal approach

In line with points of attention mentioned above, this remains an ongoing point of attention.

