UNIVERSITY OF
GLOUCESTERSHIRE

This is a peer-reviewed, final published version of the following document and is licensed under All Rights Reserved license:

Kavanagh, Emma, Backhouse, Sue, Chester, Neil, Miles, Andy, Rhind, Daniel, Ryall, Emily S ORCID logoORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6050-4353 and Sharkey, Jack (2023) The BASES Expert Statement on Integrity in the Sport and Exercise Sciences. Sport and Exercise Scientist, 75 (1). pp. 8-9.

Official URL:
https://www.bases.org.uk/imgs/9864_bas_bases_tses___spring_2023___online_vr11_final_online___expert_statement542.pdf

EPrint URI: https://eprints.glos.ac.uk/id/eprint/12721

Disclaimer

The University of Gloucestershire has obtained warranties from all depositors as to their title in the material deposited and as to their right to deposit such material.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation or warranties of commercial utility, title, or fitness for a particular purpose or any other warranty, express or implied in respect of any material deposited.

The University of Gloucestershire makes no representation that the use of the materials will not infringe any patent, copyright, trademark or other property or proprietary rights.

The University of Gloucestershire accepts no liability for any infringement of intellectual property rights in any material deposited but will remove such material from public view pending investigation in the event of an allegation of any such infringement.

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR TEXT.

The BASES Expert Statement on Integrity in the Sport and Exercise Sciences

Produced on behalf of the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences by Dr Emma Kavanagh FBASES, Prof Sue Backhouse FBASES, Dr Neil Chester, Dr Andy Miles FBASES, Dr Daniel Rhind, Dr Emily Ryall and Jack Sharkey.

Introduction

Threats to the integrity of sport arise when moral and ethical values, such as honesty and fairness, are compromised (Kihl, 2020). In 2021, UK Sport's strategic plan set out a commitment to win with integrity and a rejection of a 'win at all costs' approach to competition. Whilst it is recognised that integrity is a crucial aspect of sport participation, governance, and administration (Gardiner *et al.*, 2017), it remains unclear how this commitment will be implemented and realised. Certainly, it will rely on the collective understanding and action of individuals and organisations.

BASES practitioners are often prominent and influential members of the networks that surround various client groups currently accessing professional support, education and research. To ensure professional standards are upheld and integrity is protected, these practitioners have a responsibility to act in a manner that safeguards those in their care. Similarly, BASES, the professional body representing sport and exercise scientists, has a duty to enable and support its members to act with integrity at all times.

> **Maintaining integrity as a guiding principle in sport and exercise contexts requires collective action from individuals, institutions, policies, and practices**

In this expert statement, we recognise sport integrity across four levels (Gardiner *et al.*, 2017): personal integrity, organisational integrity, procedural integrity, and the integrity of sport itself. This expert statement aims to explore the scope of integrity within the sport and exercise sciences while focussing on the moral importance of acting with integrity as a practitioner and consider the challenges that may be faced in doing so. Finally, we make suggestions for further research to establish a deeper understanding of integrity in the field of sport and exercise science.

Integrity in the sport and exercise sciences

Recent examples of challenges to the integrity of sport and exercise, such as doping an d abusive behaviour, reflect both individual misconduct and institutionalised deviations from professional standards set by organisations such as sport governing bodies. According to Manoli *et al.* (2020), the failure of sports organisations to effectively address these integrity threats has led to a normalisation of the lack of integrity in sport.

In response to these challenges, there has been a trend towards establishing organisations specifically tasked with the development, promotion, and maintenance of sports integrity (e.g., Athletics Integrity Unit, International Tennis Integrity Agency). In the UK, Sport Integrity has been established as a pilot programme to provide independent disclosure and investigation to support national governing bodies to deal with relevant allegations of bullying, harassment, discrimination, or abuse.

By establishing partnerships with organisations such as UK Anti-Doping, the Science Council and the Health and Care Professions Council, BASES is evidencing its commitment to excellence in sport and exercise science (BASES, 2021). The BASES Accreditation scheme and the Sport and Exercise Psychology Accreditation Route (SEPAR) are key components of the quality assurance processes governing trainee and sport and exercise scientists in the United Kingdom . These pathways are supported by policies, procedures and documents that uphold professional standards. These include a Code of Conduct, a Safeguarding and Welfare Policy, and a series of evidence-based Expert and Position Statements.

Acting with integrity as a BASES practitioner

When applied to people, integrity refers to a person's strength of character and adherence to ethical values and virtues. Integrity can be conceptualised as a world-view, which guides our decisions and actions. When we enact personal integrity others can rely on us to act honestly and consistently, even when faced with adversity. This consistency creates an environment of trust and enables effective and efficient communities of practice. However, integrity is not just about being consistent and trustworthy, since it does not provide any normative direction on what the underlying ethical values or principles should be beyond this (Gardiner *et al.* 2017).

Such ethical values can generally be found in Professional Codes of Conduct, such as the BASES Code, although it is acknowledged that such codes are only useful if individuals have regular opportunities to discuss what these principles mean in practice. Moreover, whilst individual's may demonstrate integrity in upholding their own personal values, as members of a wider community they have to balance their individual values against social and cultural

Table 1. Ideas for future research

Level Stage	Antecedents	Implementation	Outcomes
Personal	How is integrity understood?	Are practitioners acting with integrity?	How does integrity impact practitioners' role, performance and well-being?
Organisational	What policies and structures promote integrity?	How can integrity strategies be effectively implemented?	How does integrity impact organisational performance and reputation?
Procedural	How can effective procedures be developed?	What factors support or prevent disclosures?	What can be learned from integrity cases?
Sport	How does the culture of sport influence integrity?	Can we safeguard integrity through comprehensive multi-sport interventions?	How does integrity impact other outcomes (e.g., participation, sponsorship)

[1] BASES practitioners will be adopted hereon in, to account for Trainees (typically those who are undertaking BASES SE or SEPAR), and Sport and Exercise Scientists (typically those who hold BASES Accreditation or Health and Care Professions Council, HCPC, Registration).

norms. High performance sport, for example, can present complex challenges, particularly when it comes to negotiating power relationships. In such contexts, moral courage may be one of the key virtues required for a BASES practitioner, since raising concerns and 'speaking up' often involves difficult choices that may lead to adverse consequences for that individual.

Research priorities and future directions

Recent consideration of integrity in sport as a key concept warrants research into a range of related issues. Potential questions are outlined in Table 1 with suggestions being considered with respect to personal, organisational, procedural and sport forms of integrity. Topics are identified related to the antecedents (e.g., factors facilitating or hindering integrity), implementation (e.g., experiences of integrity strategies) and outcomes of integrity.

There is a need for studies which explore the root causes of integrity violations in the sport and exercise sciences, as well as interventions that can effectively prevent and address these concerns. Additionally, research that examines the ethical and moral dimensions of integrity in the field, such as the role of trust and the impact of integrity violations on the public perception of sport is merited to inform efforts to promote both integrity in sport as well as people's trust that sport has integrity. Finally, there is a need for research on the experiences of BASES practitioners in upholding integrity, including the challenges they face and the support they need in order to act with integrity.

It is through conducting research on such topics that an evidence-based approach can be adopted to support individuals to have the capability, opportunity and motivation to act with integrity. Research can provide insight that will facilitate effective procedures being implemented as well as inform organisations on how cultures can be developed which promote integrity. The evidence base would thus inform policies, education and good practice guidelines regarding integrity in sport.

A call to action for the sport and exercise sciences

Maintaining integrity as a guiding principle in sport and exercise contexts requires collective action from individuals, institutions, policies, and practices. The lack of a collective approach could lead to significant challenges to promoting and safeguarding integrity in sport. To address these challenges, we make the following recommendations in the training of future and current BASES practitioners:

- Recognise the importance of integrity by embedding integrity-related learning activities throughout the practitioner journey (e.g., within undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, within core accreditation and re-accreditation requirements and within ongoing CPD).
- Enable and encourage sport and exercise scientists at all stages of their careers to intentionally reflect on matters of integrity.
- Invest in research to better understand the barriers and enablers of integrity in sport, and use this information to future inform policies, practices and training. ■

Dr Emma Kavanagh FBASES

Senior Lecturer in Sport Psychology and Coaching Sciences at Bournemouth University. Emma is a BASES accredited HCPC Registered Practitioner Psychologist, involved in research in athlete well-being and the Chair of the BASES Integrity Advisory Group.

Professor Susan Backhouse FBASES

Director of Research in the Carnegie School of Sport at Leeds Beckett University. Sue is a HCPC Practitioner Psychologist actively involved in research related to sports integrity and welfare.

Dr Neil Chester

Senior Lecturer in Sport and Exercise Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University. Neil's interests include sports nutrition, anti-doping and research ethics.

Dr Andy Miles FBASES

Principal Lecturer at Cardiff Metropolitan University with over 25 years of experience of involvement in Child Protection and Safeguarding training.

Dr Daniel Rhind

Reader in Organisational Psychology at Loughborough University and actively involved in research and consultancy projects related to safeguarding in and around sport.

Dr Emily Ryall

Reader in Applied Philosophy at the University of Gloucestershire. Emily delivers and co-designed the BASES Professional Ethics workshop for Supervised Practice.

Jack Sharkey CSci

Applied Sport Scientist with 10 years' experience working in professional football. His current role is with the Australian Women's National Football Team as the Head of Sport Science.

References:

Gardiner, S. et *al.* (2017). Integrity and the corruption debate in sport: Where is the integrity? European Sport Management Quarterly, 17(1), 6–23.

Kihl, L. (2020). Sport integrity systems: A proposed framework. In D. Shilbury & L. Ferkins (Eds.), Routledge Handbook of Sport Governance (395–409). Routledge.

BASES (2021). BASES Strategic Plan 2021-2025 Available at: https://www.bases.org.uk/imgs/8628_bas_bases_strategic_plan_21_25_hr476.pdf

Manoli, A.E., et *al.* (2020). Perceptions of integrity in sport: insights into people's relationship with sport. International Journal of Sports Policy and Politics. 12:2, 207-220

Download a PDF of this article: www.bases.org.uk/BASES-Expert-Statements

Copyright © BASES, 2023

Permission is given for reproduction in substantial part. We ask that the following note be included: "First published in The Sport and Exercise Scientist, Issue 75, Spring 2023. Published by the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences - www.bases.org.uk"