

# Dilemma Game

## Instructions & Suggestions

# The Dilemma Game:

## Professionalism and Integrity in Research

**Like in any profession, scientists are frequently faced with dilemmas: Can I exclude particular observations from my research? Can I use exactly the same data set for multiple papers? Should I agree on a colleague being a co-author on a paper to which she has not made a significant contribution? By exposing you to such dilemmas in the context of a critical dialogue, this game aims to support you in further developing your own “moral compass”. This dilemma game was developed as one of the initiatives of the EUR Taskforce Scientific Integrity (chaired by prof.dr. Finn Wynstra). The objective of the taskforce has been to raise awareness for and to develop proposals to help maintain scientific professionalism and integrity.**

The game lets you consider, choose and defend (and possibly reconsider) alternative courses of action regarding a realistic dilemma regarding professionalism and integrity in research.

Participants will also come to appreciate the dilemmas that others are faced with, how they resolve them and the reasoning behind these solutions. The game encourages participants to discuss issues relating to professionalism and integrity, and to help one another to find solutions for their own dilemmas.

The game can be used in a variety of settings. It can be used in a course setting, for instance for a group of PhD students. Or it can be used in a research strategy meeting of a department or institute. Depending on the objectives, it may be used primarily as an exercise to let people exchange opinions and experiences, or also as a step towards defining more formally defined principles, on for instance co-authorship. Often, it may be very effective to let participants come up with their own dilemmas, after playing

a number of dilemmas from the game. Whichever setting or objective, the game may be helpful in bringing attention to “The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice” (Association of Universities in the Netherlands, 2014), which is applicable to every university scientist in the Netherlands.

The 75 dilemmas included in the game have been collected through sessions at different EUR schools, and among researchers who use different research strategies and who are in different stages of their careers. In that way, we have aimed to develop a set of dilemmas that are relevant to a diverse population of researchers. While the dilemmas are based on actual cases, they should be recognizable and relevant to many researchers. Should you wish so, you can preselect a particular set of dilemmas to ‘play’, based on for instance a particular phase of the research process you want the discussions to focus on. Further information on the use of the game, and digital copies of the game itself, can be found at [www.eur.nl/integrity](http://www.eur.nl/integrity).

We hope that the game, as one of many initiatives, may help foster more continuous awareness to dilemmas in research, and in particular stimulate a more open and critical discussion of our respective norms and behaviours.

Prof.dr. H.A.P. Pols,  
Rector Magnificus

# Instructions

Below are the instructions for the standard procedure to play the dilemma game. Experience shows that discussing each dilemma takes about 10 minutes, and that playing between five and eight dilemmas in total is the most effective: it offers sufficient variety while not becoming too long.

Often, after playing a number of dilemmas from the game, it may be very effective to address the dilemmas of participants themselves.

A plenary debrief, particularly when there are several groups, may be useful, for instance to identify dilemmas or more general themes for which there was strong disagreement.

In total, playing the game typically takes between one and two hours. Still, you are free to use the dilemmas in whatever way you see fit!

# Dilemma categories

Each dilemma has been classified in terms of three categorisations:

**Researcher Position**, **Research Strategy** and **Research Phase**

In the Dilemma Overview in the back of this rulebook, you can find which dilemmas relate to which specific research strategy, research phase and researcher position. This may help you to select a particular set of dilemmas, should you wish to do that. Alternatively, you may leave it up to each group to skip some dilemmas. The symbols and colours on each dilemma card may help decide quickly on whether to skip it or not.

Still, do not use the categorisations too restrictively, and preferably not in combination with each other. For instance, there may only be a few dilemmas in the set for Research Leaders active in Survey Research. For a relevant discussion, most of the dilemmas can be easily 'translated' to your own specific dilemmas.

## Also bear in mind the following:

In each of the three categorisations, we have used the label "General" if it applies to more than one category (e.g. to both survey and experimental research).

Some categories are not always clear-cut; e.g. dilemmas in Data Processing & Analysis are often related to dilemmas during the Publication phase.



General



General



General



Research Leader



Survey Research



Research Design



Researcher



Experiment/Clinical



Data Collection



PhD Student



Existing/Collectable data



Data Processing & Analysis



Data Archiving & Access



Publication

# Preparation

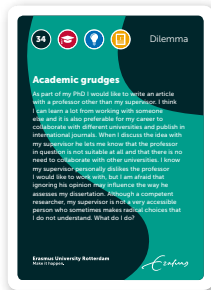
Participants are divided into groups of four. The game can also be played in groups of three or five, if that fits better with your group size. Each group receives a tracking sheet. (Please make copies of the original tracking sheet from the game.) Each individual player receives four option cards (A, B, C and D), and “OK” and “Not OK” voting cards.

The dilemma cards are placed on the table with the text facing up.

The participants of each group of four decide who will go first.

**Note: When playing the game with multiple groups, it may be useful – but not necessary – for an effective plenary debrief to use the same dilemmas.**

Dilemma Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Choice of player 1	A	B	C	D			
Choice of player 2	A	B	C	D			
Choice of player 3	A	B	C	D			
Choice of player 4	A	B	C	D			
Number of players who chose this option							
Number of players who chose after the dilemma							
Total							



# Playing the game

- 1 The first participant (“player”) takes a dilemma card from the deck and reads it out loud.
- 2 Each of the four participants chooses one of the four alternative courses of action, which best reflects his/her preference.
- 3 Each of the four participants places the card with the letter of the chosen option (A, B, C or D) face down on the table.
- 4 The player turns the option card over and explains her/his preferred course of action.
- 5 The other participants take turns to each reveal and explain their own preferred action.
- 6 In case of disagreement, the participants challenge and defend the different options (max. 5 minutes).  
(Note: in this discussion, participants can be encouraged to reflect on the different actions with respect to basic principles, such as the ones in The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice.)
- 7 All four participants reconsider their own choice, putting their option card face down again.
- 8 The player reveals her/his final choice.
- 9 The other three participants then each decide whether that choice is acceptable to them and lay the appropriate voting card (“OK” or “Not OK”) face down on the table.
- 10 One by one, the other participants turn over their cards to reveal their “votes” and the results are noted in the tracking sheet.
- 11 The next player reads the next dilemma aloud.

Note: Putting the option and voting cards face down first ensures participants make an independent choice first.

# Debriefing the game

After playing a number of dilemmas, a plenary debrief is typically helpful. This is where the tracking sheet may be used. There is no winning or losing in this game.















- For which dilemmas did most of the players agree with the final choice?
- Do these dilemmas relate to particular categories or themes?
- For which dilemmas did most of the players disagree with the final choice?
- Do these dilemmas relate to particular categories or themes, e.g. data analysis?
- What were the main points of contention?
- How come people disagreed (e.g. differences in experience, training, background, ...)?
- What were the most popular other options?
- For which dilemmas did most players change their mind as a result of the discussion?
- What were the most convincing arguments used in the discussion?

Depending on the particular setting in which the game is played, this debrief may be continued with a discussion on which areas the participants feel there is insufficient consensus, and how to

Hence, the tracking sheet is not meant to identify which people changed or did not change their opinion. Rather, the game debrief may focus at the dilemmas, addressing questions such as:

best address such future dilemmas in their daily work, and how to achieve a more commonly shared set of values and principles.

# Overview of dilemma topics

Researcher Position		Card numbers
 General		2; 5; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 14; 15; 16; 17; 18; 19; 20; 23; 24; 26; 28; 35; 36; 41; 44; 48; 51; 53; 55; 56; 57; 63; 64; 66; 67; 68; 72 and 74.
 Research Leader		1; 4; 7; 22; 27; 31; 33; 37; 43 and 71.
 Researcher		3; 6; 13; 21; 29; 30; 42; 45; 46; 49; 65; 69 and 73.
 PhD Student		25; 32; 34; 38; 39; 40; 47; 50; 52; 54; 58; 59; 60; 61; 62; 70 and 75.
Research Strategy		Card numbers
 General		1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 10; 11; 13; 14; 15; 16; 17; 20; 22; 23; 25; 27; 29; 31; 32; 33; 34; 35; 36; 37; 38; 39; 40; 41; 42; 43; 44; 45; 46; 47; 48; 49; 50; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 58; 60; 61; 62; 63; 64; 65; 66; 68; 69; 70; 71; 73; 74 and 75.
 Survey Research		9; 12 and 72.
 Experiment/Clinical		18; 19; 21; 24; 26; 28; 30 and 67.
 Existing/Collectable data		57 and 59.
Research Phase		Card numbers
 General		1; 33; 37; 42; 60; 61; 70 and 71.
 Research Design		23; 29; 40; 45; 62 and 64.
 Data Collection		26; 28; 30; 57; 67 and 75.
 Data Processing & Analysis		11; 12; 14; 15; 17; 21; 24; 32; 49; 50; 59; 65; 66; 72 and 73.
 Data Archiving & Access		13 and 16.
 Publication		2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9; 10; 18; 19; 20; 22; 25; 27; 31; 34; 35; 36; 38; 39; 41; 43; 44; 46; 47; 48; 51; 52; 53; 54; 55; 56; 58; 63; 68; 69 and 74.

Additionally there are some dilemmas about external funded research. These dilemmas can be found on cards 23; 28; 29; 31; 33; 35; 37; 39; 42 and 45. Lastly, issues about reviewing can be found in the dilemmas 36 and 41.

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**[www.eur.nl/integrity](http://www.eur.nl/integrity)**

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