Online training and badges to incentivize transparent and reproducible research

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Building on the use of badges for publications to promote open research, what is the potential of badges for individuals to recognize their commitment to research transparency – combined with training on the topic? At present there is variable awareness among researchers of the importance of research transparency and reproducibility, and a lack of incentives in the research system.

Objectives: This initiative seeks to 1) improve awareness and 2) provide an incentive by delivering:

1. An openly available, animated **training course on transparency and reproducibility** in research, to raise awareness of transparent and reproducible research practices and their importance, explore dilemmas across disciplines, and feature videos of role models – both ECRs and leading academics including Professor Brian Nosek. The course seeks to educate, convince and inspire participants, encouraging them to adopt transparent research practices appropriate to their discipline.

2. A **research transparency badge** to recognize the commitment of individuals, who can use the badge if they complete the training course and commit to the principles in the University College London (UCL) Statement on Transparency. The badge is intended to incentivize completion of the course and adoption of transparent research practices.

Course development: The course content is based on the UCL Statement on Transparency, which was developed via a town hall with and survey of UCL researchers and consultation with the UK Reproducibility Network Steering Group. The content has been adapted into an animated video, featured alongside videos of role models, who encourage a transparent approach to research.

Implementation: After completing the course, participants will be given the option to register to use the badge, displaying it on their email signature or profile. The badge will then link to a webpage, which others can read to understand what the badge signifies and to access the course themselves.

Behavior change: In line with the COM-B model of behavior change (Michie et al., 2011), the training course will give researchers the capability to employ transparent practices and direct them to tools that provide the opportunity to do so. The badge then creates an incentive that gives researchers the motivation to do the training.