

Shared ethics

Published: January 17, 2026, 4:30 pm

I have Dr Martin Smith of the School of Chemistry at the University of St. Andrews to thank for drawing my attention to this comment in an editorial in [Chemistry World](#), the journal of the Royal Society of Chemistry:

Regulation has its place, but it is not a proxy for ethics. As a means of guiding fast-moving developments in science and technology, ethics — operating at the level of individuals, in real time — is much more relevant.

As Martin said to me:

Swap out sci & tech for finance, audit etc and ... in his editorial, deputy editor Philip Robinson ... absolutely nailed so much of what underlies a great deal of your blog in a single, short sharp sentence.

I agree. But then in the world of finance we suffer fools who deem that the world is governed by rules that are created for them to abuse. Maybe that exists in chemistry as well, or the discussion would not be needed there either. But I am glad to see that ethical common sense is a common language of real progress.