

UNIVERSITY OF COLOGNE

RESEARCH CODE OF CONDUCT



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PREAMBLE

The University of Cologne regards ethically reflected and responsibly conducted research as the foundation of its scientific work. The Research Code of Conduct formulates basic principles supporting this goal. It addresses the values guiding research, the ethical responsibility of researchers in carrying out scientific projects, and central standards of cooperation with third parties.



Fotos: Sebastian Knoth

THE FOLLOWING PRINCIPLES APPLY TO ALL GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY:

VALUES

1. PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE GAIN

Striving for new insights is the goal of scientific and scholarly activities. To this end, verifiable, comprehensible knowledge shall be generated. Students should be empowered to think, judge, and work independently.

2. INDEPENDENCE

Research is independent and free. It is guided by the quest for knowledge, independent of potential interests of third parties.

3. CONSCIENTIOUSNESS

Members of the University contribute their expert knowledge and carry out their research work conscientiously according to the best academic standards.

4. INTEGRITY

Members of the university act with integrity when conducting research projects and when reproducing research results in accordance with the [Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Academic Practice](#). Value-based research activities at the University of Cologne are incompatible with the abuse of power and the exploitation of relationships of dependency.

5. OPENNESS TOWARDS CRITICISM

The University and its researchers welcome constructive criticism as a beneficial component of scientific and scholarly development.

RESPONSIBILITY

6. SECURITY-RELEVANT RESEARCH

Members of the University are aware of their particular responsibility for research projects whose results could be misused for harmful purposes ("dual-use problem"). This applies in particular to research projects involving significant security risks to human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, the environment, or the peaceful coexistence of peoples, or where it can be assumed that they produce knowledge, products, or technologies which can be directly exploited by third parties for the violation of the above-mentioned legal rights. In these cases, members of the University can obtain comprehensive advice from the [Commission for Advice on Security-relevant Research with Substantial Hazard Potential \(FEG\)](#).

7. RESEARCH SUBJECT TO AUTHORIZATION

Research projects are carried out responsibly. Members of the University shall take all necessary precautions to protect the safety and health of project participants.

The execution of research projects is ethically reflected: This includes in particular that

- research on humans subject to authorization is only carried out after approval by a responsible commission (e.g. [Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Medicine](#)),
- research on animals subject to authorization is only carried out after examination and approval by the competent [state authorities](#) and after consultation with our [animal welfare officers](#),
- researchers can also make use of ethical and legal advice for projects that do not require authorization.

8. TRANSPARENCY OF RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of research projects are published promptly and transparently after implementation of the project. In accordance with the open science principles of the University of Cologne, open science serves as a guiding principle. Research results are not to be published only if there are substantial factual reasons that run counter to the fundamental idea of scientific transparency.

9. DOCUMENTATION OF RESEARCH DATA

The long-term preservation and provision of research data makes an important contribution to the replicability and quality of scientific work. Members of the University therefore handle research data responsibly, as prescribed in the applying [guidelines](#) of the German Research Foundation (DFG).

COOPERATION WITH THIRD PARTIES

10. PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH COOPERATION DESIGN

Cooperation with third parties must be consistent with the principles regarding values and responsibility set out above. Research carried out in the framework of a research cooperation, such as an endowed professorship or a joint doctoral programme, must be open and unbiased.

11. TRANSPARENCY IN THE USE OF THIRD-PARTY FUNDS

Third-party research is carried out transparently and appropriately. The members of the University are advised by the competent authorities in the university administration before a contract is concluded.

12. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Members of the University follow the regulations of the University of Cologne's patent policy, in particular the University of Cologne's patent and exploitation strategy, when it comes to the development and exploitation of intellectual property. In cases of transfer of intellectual property rights to third parties (e.g. business cooperation agreements), the University is committed to striving for joint patent and trademark applications.

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