

National Statement on Scientific Integrity

In a knowledge society in which scientific research, technological development and innovation are essential assets for progress and sustainable economic growth, scientific integrity is of particular relevance as a value that underlies and ensures good research practice. A commitment to high-quality science requires integrity and accountability in the performance of research – attitudes that constitute the primary basis for the advancement of knowledge, and for trust in and consolidation of the scientific heritage.

The growing social and economic impact of science, along with its essentially transnational and cooperative nature, mean that the responsible conduct of research activities, honesty, objectivity, impartiality and trust need to be built on relationships among scientists and their colleagues, as well as between scientists and society.

Universities and research institutions, as the main agents in knowledge creation and transmission, along with scientific societies and academies, which are also involved in the development of science and technology and the promotion of their social role, must accept responsibility for ensuring that the fundamental principles of professional ethics inform scientific activity. Accordingly, these institutions should adopt codes of good practice and promote, define, implement and disseminate clear policies for scientific integrity. In addition, and ultimately in order to foster an institutional culture of honesty, they must assume an essential role in making their staff members aware of and sensitive to ethical matters, and in training their staff in ethical professional practices. Only through suitable training can possible departures from good scientific practice be detected and diagnosed promptly and accurately, and only in this way can potentially troubling situations be handled and managed appropriately.

The present National Statement establishes ethical principles and professional responsibilities relating to research activity, and at the same time calls for joint efforts and commitment by all actors involved. Each institution or entity that subscribes to this Statement is responsible for its development and implementation, for facilitating and promoting awareness of ethical matters in general, and for ensuring that research activities are carried out in a responsible manner based on good scientific practice in particular.

The content of this Statement is applicable to all fields of research and scientific disciplines, and its aims are consistent with those of other important statements, codes and reports of relevance in this area.¹

Research aims and objectives. Researchers, in the performance and development of their scientific activities, must contribute to the advancement of knowledge for the benefit of humanity, respecting the dignity of human beings and their free will, protecting data of a personal nature, ensuring the wellbeing of animals, and preserving the environment.

Reliability of research results. Researchers must systematically seek objective knowledge that can be assumed to be true, that is, based on carefully tested and validated results as a guarantee of its credibility and rigor.

Methodology. Researchers must use appropriate methods and procedures, must base their conclusions on a critical, independent analysis of all results obtained, and must interpret their results completely and objectively.

Recording of data and results. Researchers must record the data and results of their work with precision, accuracy and clarity, in a manner that facilitates verification, reproduction and replication by others.

Public dissemination and communication of results. Carefully tested and validated results must be disseminated openly, transparently and honestly, with no limitations other than those necessitated by legal or institutional requirements arising from property rights. Accordingly, unnecessary delays should be avoided, and results should be communicated in the most unbiased and neutral manner possible, with professionalism and transparency, in a way that accurately reflects the actual state of the work. Subjective or unfounded interpretations of the results must be avoided, and information must not be intentionally omitted in a way that could lead to confusion, create false expectations or imply the existence of immediate or nonexistent solutions.

Authorship. Researchers must assume responsibility for the content of all studies, reports and expert opinions, publications or funding applications. All persons who have contributed significantly to the conception, performance, design, analysis or interpretation of the contents of any article intended for dissemination must be included as authors. All other types of contribution, including those from funding and sponsoring agencies, must be acknowledged. In addition, authors must cite any previously available work that has influenced the publication or communication in question.

- 1 Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2011) 2nd World Congress on Research Integrity
<http://www.singaporestatement.org/statement.html>
Montreal Statement on Research Integrity in Cross-Boundary Research Collaborations (2013) 3rd World Congress on Research Integrity
<http://www.researchintegrity.org/Statements/Montreal%20Statement%20English.pdf>
European Charter for Researchers. European Commission
<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess/index.cfm/rights/europeanCharter>
European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. European Science Foundation/All European Academies (2011)
http://www.esf.org/fileadmin/Public_documents/Publications/Code_Conduct_ResearchIntegrity.pdf
OECD (2008) Best Practices for Ensuring Scientific Integrity and Preventing Misconduct
<http://www.oecd.org/sti/sci-tech/40188303.pdf>
Statement of Principles for Research Integrity. Global Research Council
http://www.globalresearchcouncil.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/grc_statement_principles_research_integrity%20FINAL.pdf

Resource management. Researchers must use available materials and resources in a responsible manner, and use them for the purposes for which they were acquired. All resources must be accounted for and managed in accordance with criteria of economy, transparency and efficiency. The institutions researchers are affiliated with must support and facilitate the appropriate management and administration of resources.

Cooperation within research groups. Members of a research group must maintain frank, open and continuous communication that ensures that all members of the group are able to understand and interpret the research accurately. Under no circumstances should research by competing groups or groups with which researchers maintain discrepancies be obstructed or impeded.

Leadership performance. Researchers must perform their mentoring and leadership duties in a fair, sensible and responsible manner. They must oversee and supervise the research they lead, display exemplary professional conduct and maintain a pedagogical approach to their duties at all times. They must promote critical reasoning, an open exchange of views, peaceful coexistence and effective compliance with good scientific practice.

Promotion of responsible research. Researchers must collaborate with the institution they are affiliated with in promoting good research practices, formulating guidance and recommendations in this regard, offering training in scientific integrity, and in identifying, handling and managing departures from good practice.

Collaboration with other entities. Researchers must safeguard information and knowledge that are the property of their institution, choose the objectives of their research through a process of consensus, respect the rights of all parties involved, and assume the obligations that have been agreed upon.

Knowledge transfer. Researchers must abide by industrial and intellectual property policies at their institutions. They must contribute to knowledge transfer, and must uphold the interests of their institution when they agree to the conditions for contracted research, the ownership of industrial and intellectual property rights, and the licensing or transfer of exploitation rights.

Evaluation. When evaluating any research project or manuscript, publication derived from the research, or material submitted for any process involving selection, researchers must perform their evaluation in accordance with criteria of confidentiality, impartiality, objectivity, independence and diligence. They must decline to participate in the evaluation if they lack appropriate knowledge and expertise. They must abstain from participating as evaluators if there is any reason for recusal according to current regulations, or any other circumstance that could compromise the independence of their criteria or professional judgment. Access to information must never be assumed to imply consent for improper appropriation of the results.



Conflicts of interest. Any actual, apparent or potential conflict of interest must be declared if it might have an undue influence on or compromise the appropriate performance of research activities, collaboration with other entities, staff training, evaluation activities, or the dissemination of research results.

Integrity policy. Institutions must commit to the creation of appropriate environments for scientific activity, favor the responsible conduct of research, encourage good scientific practice, foster training and educational activities to make their staff members aware of and sensitive to ethical matters, and ultimately promote an institutional culture of scientific integrity. To these ends, institutions must take steps to include the principles of scientific integrity in their training programs, establish or identify the bodies responsible for these measures, and develop procedures for the identification, handling and management of scientific malpractice.

Madrid, 2 December 2015

Entities that wish to subscribe to this Statement must communicate their intention by contacting this email address: comitedeetica@csic.es. Requests for clarification on any point related with this document should also be sent to this address.