

Code of Conduct – Scientific Integrity at the University of Fribourg

Introduction

This Code of Conduct is addressed to all persons involved in research at the University of Fribourg (researchers, students, technical and administrative staff). It describes a shared understanding of good scientific practice and, as a voluntary commitment, supplements the University's existing regulations and guidelines.

Good Scientific Practice

In our scientific work, we adhere to the standards of scientific integrity and at all times act fairly, honestly, transparently and responsibly.

Research process: We design, conduct, analyse, document and publish our research with the greatest care and in awareness of our responsibility towards society, the environment and nature. We treat people, animals and research objects with respect and care. We assess possible harm and risks associated with research work and observe precautionary measures. In research involving animals, we strictly comply with the Swiss Animal Welfare Act and the relevant ordinances and consistently apply the 3R principles (Replace, Reduce, Refine). We strive for the best possible active transfer of knowledge and technology to teaching, business, society and public institutions.

Research involving human participants: In research involving human participants, and in the collection and analysis of biological material and personal data, we comply with the legal requirements (legislation on [research involving human participants](#) and on [data protection](#)) as well as with the applicable rules of good clinical practice and scientific integrity. We carefully examine whether our projects require approval from a cantonal ethics committee, a federal health authority (Swissmedic or FOPH) or an internal ethics committee of the University, and we submit them accordingly. We safeguard the interests, health, safety and personality of research participants. We act in good faith and with respect for their consent.

Supervision, qualification and power asymmetries: In scientific education and qualification, we take responsibility for fair, respectful and transparent supervision. We act with awareness of existing power asymmetries, promote the scientific independence of early-career researchers through appropriate guidance and feedback, and give proper credit to the contributions of students, doctoral candidates and staff. Dependencies must not be exploited; we address conflicts in the supervisory relationship at an early stage and seek suitable solutions.

Open science and data management: We ensure that our research is made accessible to a broad public as soon as possible, in line with the principle of open science. If research results prove to be incorrect, we publish corrections or retract the work. We also consider publishing negative research results. In applying the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and re-usable) and for

the sake of the verifiability and reproducibility of research results, we make research data accessible, provided that no third-party rights or legal provisions (e.g. in contracts or legislation, such as in the areas of data protection or intellectual property) preclude publication.

Conflicts of interest: A conflict of interest arises when personal or professional interests – such as family, friendship, financial, social or institutional relationships – influence, or could influence, professional judgement, conduct or decisions. This affects all areas of research, from the review of scientific publications or funding applications to the recruitment of staff and the awarding of contracts to companies. [Secondary employment](#), mandates or commitments outside the University can also lead to conflicts of interest or loyalty. They must not impair the independence, credibility and integrity of research, nor the reputation and mission of Unifr. We always disclose potential and actual conflicts of interest.

Private donations: Where our research is funded by external partners (companies, foundations, NGOs, etc.), we undertake to safeguard the autonomy and independence of the University as well as the freedom of teaching and research and the freedom of method and publication. We agree in advance on rights of use and publication, liability and confidentiality. We disclose the origin of donations as far as possible. The acceptance of donations must not give rise to conflicts of interest or damage the standing and reputation of the University.

Evaluation and expertise: We take our responsibility in the evaluation of performance and individuals seriously and are committed to objectivity, impartiality and confidentiality. The University of Fribourg is a member of the [Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#) and has signed its [Agreement](#). In this spirit, we recognise and promote the broad diversity of activities and careers that lead to excellence in research and teaching. In the review of research work and funding applications, and in all forms of recruitment and promotion, we strive for fair and transparent processes that put quality before quantity. We treat indicators such as the Journal Impact Factor, the h-index and university rankings with caution, and we do not use them in the evaluation of individuals.

Publications and authorship: We document our work in a transparent, traceable and truthful manner. An author of a publication is a person who, through personal scientific achievement, has made a decisive contribution to the planning, implementation, quality assurance and revision of a work result. Authorship does not arise from a person's mere function (e.g. a supervisory role). Where appropriate, we clarify authorship, the order of authors and the mention of specific contributions to a publication before it is submitted.

Exploitation of research results and intellectual property: We respect and use the intellectual property of third parties in compliance with all applicable legal provisions and contractual agreements. For research results and other intangible assets created in collaboration with internal or external partners, we ensure that the respective rights and obligations (copyright, patents, trademarks, designs, databases, etc.) are clearly defined, and we make sure that authors and inventors are appropriately involved and acknowledged. We disclose any dual roles as a researcher at the University and as a person involved in a company or start-up.

Contact and Information

Contact points at Unifr:

- [Research Promotion Service](#)
- [Knowledge and Technology Transfer \(KTT\) Service](#)
- [Data Protection Officers \(DPO\)](#)
- [Legal Service](#)
- [Ombuds Office](#)
- [Human Resources Service](#)

Binding legal bases at Unifr:

- [Guidelines on the procedure in cases of suspected scientific misconduct](#)
- [Guidelines on the procedure for imposing disciplinary sanctions under Article 101 of the Statutes of the University of Fribourg of 31 March 2000 in cases of breaches of the rules of good scientific practice in the writing of written work during studies](#)
- [Guidelines on private third-party funding at the University](#)
- [Guidelines concerning secondary employment of professors and scientific staff](#)

Further information:

- [Competence Centre for Scientific Integrity of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences](#)
- [Research involving human participants at Unifr](#)
- [Legislation and guidelines on research involving human participants \(Swissethics\)](#)
- [Declaration of Helsinki – Medical Research Involving Human Participants](#)
- [CoARA – Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment](#)
- [Ethical principles and guidelines for experiments on animals of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences](#)

This Code of Conduct is based in particular on the following sources:

- Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (2021): Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity. <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.4707560>.
- ALLEA (2023) The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – Revised Edition 2023. Berlin. DOI [10.26356/ECOC](https://doi.org/10.26356/ECOC)
- [Charter of the University of Fribourg](#)

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