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Research Integrity Code

of the University of Padua

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Research Integrity Code of the University of Padua

Article 1 - Foreword

1. The University of Padua promotes the knowledge and observance of the principles of research integrity, in full respect of the plurality of practices and the peculiarities of the various disciplinary areas, in any activity even if only indirectly related to the conduct of research, its financing and the evaluation of the results achieved.
2. In order to effectively pursue these objectives , also considering the solutions adopted internationally and the Guidelines for Research Integrity formulated by the CNR, in their last revision of 11 April 2019, the University of Padua adopts this Research Integrity Code, hereinafter referred to as the Code, which integrates, for any point not regulated therein, the legislation and regulations already in force at the University.
3. The Code outlines the principles of ethical and professional liability, honesty and fairness that must be respected at all stages of the research , whether carried out individually or in groups.
4. Behaviour contrary to the principles set out in Part I entails ethical or professional liability. The harmful conduct contemplated by Part II entails disciplinary liability. If the same behaviour results in an ethical and disciplinary violation, only disciplinary action is taken.
5. The Code does not interfere with any criminal, civil and administrative liability that may result from infringements of the principles and conduct described therein.
6. All references to positions, professions, titles and functions appearing in this Code in the masculine form are also understood to refer to the corresponding term of female gender.

Article 2 - Scope

1. The researcher affiliated with the University or who carries out research activities in it, even temporarily, is required to respect the values and ethical rules and conduct expressed in the Code.
2. The principles of research integrity and the conduct referred to in the Code constitute general principles of conduct for permanent and fixed-term professors and researchers, and in general for staff under public law pursuant to article 3, paragraph 2, Legislative Decree no. 165 of 30 March 2001, as compatible with the provisions of the respective legal systems. They also apply to technical and administrative staff.
3. The rules of the Code apply, insofar as they are compatible with the respective contractual regimes, to postdocs, graduate students, holders of research contracts and collaborators for any reason, including occasional ones.
4. The principles expressed in the Code also affect the research activities of students.

Article 3 - Research Integrity Commission

1. Within 15 days of the entry into force of the Code, the Academic Senate shall appoint, on the Rector's proposal, a Research Integrity Commission consisting of three tenured Professors, representing the University's three Macro-areas.
2. The Commission shall elect a chairperson from among its members and shall remain in office for three years.
3. The Commission monitors compliance with the principles and conduct set forth in the Code, exercising the functions indicated in Part III. It operates independently and can use technical tools and experts for every aspect of its mandate, including those from outside the University.

PART I - Principles of Research Integrity

SECTION I - General principles and rules of conduct

Article 4 - Fundamental values

1. Researchers must carry out their activity in loyal collaboration with colleagues and all those involved in the research, and must operate in a rigorous and transparent manner, safeguarding the reputation of the institution to which they belong, also in order to lend credibility and authority to the scientific activity.

Article 5 - Organisation and performance of the research

1. In compliance with the principles of freedom and independence of research, each researcher, when defining the aims and objectives of the research, is called upon to assess its feasibility and potential impacts, identifying the most appropriate organisational methods for its achievement in terms of effectiveness and sustainability.
2. The research must be conducted by using appropriate and adequately documented methodologies and tools.

Article 6 - Management of research data

1. In the collection of primary data, any negative impact on the biosphere and the environment should be avoided, or at least minimised and made proportionate to the objectives of the research, while respecting the dignity of people, the health of humans and other living species and adopting good bioethical practices.
2. The data obtained through research must be organised and managed in such a way as to ensure their conservation and accessibility in the forms and in the ways most appropriate for verifying the authenticity of the results and their reproducibility. Any loss or tampering with the data the researcher becomes aware of must be promptly reported to the director of the relevant department or, in cases where the research is carried out, through collaborative research groups, to the group's representatives.

3. The general rule on data accessibility may be waived in cases where researchers are subject to confidentiality constraints. However, these constraints must be regulated, also possibly with respect to the funding bodies, by commitments formally assumed and authorised by the University. In all cases, the rules on the processing of personal data must be strictly observed.

Article 7 - Scientific publications

1. Researchers are required to share the results of their studies with the scientific community, avoiding unjustified delays as well as artificial partitions of the research results for the sole purpose of obtaining a higher number of scientific products.
2. The reference literature and all the sources actually used in the research, whether they consist of works already published, or are in the process of being published or prepared, must always be clearly mentioned in scientific publications according to the practices adopted in the various disciplinary fields.
3. All and only the researchers who have actively contributed to creating the research products should be mentioned in scientific publications, in accordance with the practices adopted in the various disciplinary fields.
4. When choosing a publication venue, the researcher must assess its reputation in the scientific communities of reference, favouring, where possible, locations that can promote the widest circulation of ideas and research results. However, the researcher must make every effort to identify and avoid predatory publishing.
5. Researchers who, after publishing their own scientific contribution, detect errors or suspect a case of misconduct regarding the reliability or originality of the results, must evaluate the correction or retraction of the publication as quickly as possible, possibly in collaboration with other co-authors, informing the editors and interacting with them.

Article 8 - Evaluation of publications or projects

1. In the role of auditor, editor or member of the editorial board of scientific journals or collections, the researcher is required to operate with correctness and accuracy, based on their actual skills and scientific knowledge, and to act transparently, taking decisions based solely on an objective assessment of the quality, originality and relevance of the work submitted.
2. The same principles and rules of conduct must be applied when the researcher is called upon to make an assessment of the projects, scientific production or activities carried out by other researchers.

Article 9 - Disclosure of scientific knowledge

1. Researchers are called to contribute to the cultural and civil progress of society by participating, in the most appropriate forms, in the public debate in relation to their scientific expertise. In all cases, personal opinions must be clearly distinguished from scientific evidence.
2. Researchers who expose their affiliation to the University of Padua in the act of communicating are required to use measure and caution when their scientific opinion is requested, especially concerning matters of public relevance. In declaring their affiliation, researchers do not express the official position of the University, unless they have been expressly and formally delegated to do so.

Article 10 - Conflicts of interest

1. Potential conflicts of interest of any kind, professional or personal, must be adequately highlighted at all stages of the research, as well as when evaluating the products and projects of others.

Article 11 - Reporting conduct detrimental to the integrity of the research

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1. Regardless of their role and classification, researchers are required to report, according to the procedures indicated in Part III of the Code, any conduct that is detrimental to the integrity of

the research carried out by researchers belonging to the same organisation or with whom they maintain or have maintained a scientific collaboration relationship

SECTION II - Collaborative research groups

Article 12 - Roles, tasks and objectives

1. Research conducted by multiple researchers can benefit from establishing a group, which researchers join voluntarily sharing common goals and objectives. The researchers who make up the group must contribute to developing the project in a spirit of open collaboration, and strive to achieve the results, without pursuing individual interests.
2. The tasks of each group member are established in a shared and transparent way, from the start of the collaboration, based on the skills of the researchers involved and in such a way as to ensure the possibility of periodic rotation and gender balance in the management and coordination roles. Any updates of the project objectives as well as revisions of the assigned tasks must be discussed and agreed within the group.
3. The management and coordination tasks attributed to one or more reference figures of the group must be carried out in a transparent and shared manner, in particular in relation to: applications for funding; approval of expenses and subsequent reporting; processing, sharing, storage and safeguarding of the material and data used in the research; methods of approval of the scientific works to be submitted for publication; management of the communication of the research results.

Article 13 - Dissemination of research results

1. All the group members who have actively contributed to the project, as well as non-group researchers whose contribution has been significant, should be mentioned as co-authors in scientific publications. The order of the authors, the name of the corresponding author and the possible mention of the individual contributions are based on

shared rules and clearly defined within the research group, according to the practices of the different scientific areas.

2. Each co-author is, in any case, responsible for the entire content of the publications produced by the group, also with regard to falsification, fabrication and plagiarism, and is required to verify each part of the work and share the results prior to publication.
3. Each researcher undertakes not to disclose independently, without prior authorisation, information not yet made public on the activities carried out by the group, on the methodologies used and the results obtained.
4. When presenting the results, the research group must be appropriately acknowledged and named, including, if applicable, use of the acronym that identifies the group, provided that it is known and uniquely identified within the relevant scientific community.

PART II - Conduct detrimental to research integrity

Article 14 - Research activities

1. In carrying out their activity, researchers may not adopt conduct contrary to the principles of dignity, responsibility, fairness and diligence.
2. Any conduct that hinders the activity of other researchers, leads to discrimination or abuse, damages the reputation of the relevant institution or compromises the credibility of the scientific activity shall be deemed to be detrimental to research integrity.

Article 15 - Funding and tasks

1. The researcher cannot accept funding or tasks for research activities whose purposes are contrary to the founding principles of the University of Padua expressed in the By-Laws, in the University Codes and in the guidelines formulated by its governing bodies.

Article 16 - Conflicts of interest

1. The researcher must avoid and cannot even partially conceal conflicts of interest, actual or potential, that emerge at any stage of the research.
2. The researcher may not omit the mention of contributions obtained from public or private research funders in any document that is made public.
3. When acting as a peer reviewer, editorial manager or evaluator of projects or scientific activities of others, the researcher must refrain from taking decisions, providing opinions or intervening in any way in situations that may give rise to a conflict of interest of a personal or professional nature.

Article 17 - Relationships with other researchers

1. The researcher may not intentionally compromise, slow down or otherwise hinder the work of other researchers. Any reactions in defense of their legitimate interests must in any case be exercised in compliance with the general principles of research integrity.
2. The researcher must not make unfounded reports or accusations relating to alleged conduct detrimental to research integrity, confuse or mislead investigations, in order to obtain a personal or professional advantage or to damage the integrity and reputation of other researchers.

Article 18 - Coordination of collaborative research projects or groups

1. Researchers who are coordinators of a research project or play similar roles must not abuse their position.
2. In particular, abusive conduct includes the imposition of tasks that do not comply with the roles defined within a project or research group; the submission of funding applications not approved in the manner established within a project or research group; expenditure decisions that are not shared or inconsistent with project budgets; the use of collective research results for personal purposes; the imposition of prohibitions or limits on the use of data and research results not justified by confidentiality constraints or not attributable to the rules relating to using and

disseminating results.

Article 19 - Environment, health, human dignity and respect for animals

1. Research may not be carried out which could endanger human health, the safety and health of the environment or which would be contrary to human dignity or respect for other living species or which would otherwise be contrary to good bioethical practice.

Article 20 - Manufacture, falsification and theft of data

1. The researcher may not invent, alter or deliberately omit data or research results and publish data and results that are misleading or incomplete or not actually obtained by the methods described in the publication.

Article 21 - Preservation of and access to research data

1. Collecting in an artfully selective manner or destroying materials, data, records and information essential to verifying research results is not allowed.
2. The researcher may not use or give access to unpublished data, materials, methods and results without the consent of those who have processed or produced them.
3. With the exception of situations governed by copyright and intellectual property law or by the law on the protection of personal data or by specific agreements imposing confidentiality constraints, which must in any case be previously authorised by the University, the researcher may not prevent or impede access to the data used in research whose results have already been made public.

Article 22 - Plagiarism, self-plagiarism and citations

1. Researchers may not appropriate, either intentionally or as a result of negligent conduct, the project proposals, data, ideas or results of others, presenting them as their own.
2. Researchers must not use, even partially, publications, either of one's own or of others, without correctly mentioning the source. The ban also applies to translations of works already published in a different language without mentioning the original contribution.
3. Researchers cannot use or impose citing non-essential works for the sole purpose of increasing the impact of the scientific production, the prestige of a journal or a publication series or a research group.

Article 23 - Co-authorship

1. It is not allowed to state those who have not actually and significantly contributed to carrying out the research as the co-author of the scientific publication, even if they exercise functions of structural coordination, as well as to omit the mention as author of those who have played an active role in the elaboration of the scientific publication.
2. The creation of author hierarchies that suggest individual contributions other than those actually made to the research is not allowed.

Article 24 - Patents

1. If the product of research carried out by more than one researcher is patentable, it is forbidden to misappropriate the rights of the invention which, unless otherwise agreed, must be attributed to all researchers in equal parts.

Article 25 - Alteration of personal data

1. The researcher may not alter their scientific or professional credentials in any form of communication or document of public dissemination or relevance.

2. The researcher may not falsify the name of one or more authors of a publication for the purpose of fraudulently preventing their identification or for deception.
3. Likewise, any form of submission of manuscripts for possible publication that makes their origin untraceable is not allowed.

Article 26 - Declarations of affiliation

1. In scientific publications, the researcher may not omit to state the affiliation to the University of Padua, even in cases where they derive from activities carried out at or on behalf of other institutions or from activities carried out within research groups involving a plurality of subjects.

Article 27 - Evaluation of people, projects or publications

1. The researcher may not make deliberately misleading judgements about research projects, people or products.
2. The researcher may not violate obligations of confidentiality or in any case disclose data or confidential information about research projects or products.
3. The researcher must not hinder or deliberately slow down the publication of scientific works.

PART III - Procedures for action against violations of the code and relationship with the disciplinary proceeding

Article 28 - Whistle-blowing

1. Reports of alleged violations of the principles and conduct set out in the Code must be substantiated and adequately documented. Anonymous reports are not considered.
2. The reports are sent to the competent disciplinary body for the prior assessment of any disciplinary liabilities according to the provisions of the respective rules and regulations.
3. In any case, the University guarantees that the name of the reporter shall remain secret.

Article 29 - Preliminary phase

1. If the alleged violations include disciplinary infringements for which the disciplinary body is competent, the disciplinary body shall remain in charge of the proceedings, which will be conducted according to the rules and regulations applicable to disciplinary matters.
2. If the alleged violations do not constitute disciplinary infringements, the disciplinary body shall forward the documents to the Chairperson of the Research Integrity Commission, hereinafter referred to as the Commission, within 30 days from receipt of the report.
3. In compliance with the right to participate in the judgement and the right of defence, the Commission shall send a communication to the person reported and may ask the person making the report for any clarifications and additions it deems necessary and useful, either in writing or by means of a hearing, which must be minuted.
4. The recipients of the communication may submit written clarifications and propose any actions aimed at guaranteeing the immediate and definitive cessation of conduct that is detrimental to the values expressed by the Code and, where possible, the removal, or at least the mitigation, of its effects.
5. If the report implies checks and findings of particular technical and/ or scientific complexity, the Commission can make use, after authorisation by the Rector, of tools and/or unbiased experts with specific competence in the subject matter of the reported violations, possibly also from outside the University.
6. Within 30 days of receipt of the documents, the Commission shall draw up a document proposing to the Rector either to close the case or to proceed as envisaged for illicit ethical conduct. In the same document, the Commission may propose any actions to ensure the immediate and definite end of conduct that is detrimental to the values expressed by the Code and, where possible, the removal, or at least the mitigation, of its effects.
7. If it turns out that the report itself has been made in clear violation of the principles and conduct contemplated by the Code, the Commission, with no need of the preliminary investigation phase mentioned in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above, shall propose to the Rector to proceed against the reporting person as stated in paragraph 6 above.

Article 30 - Decision on the whistle-blowing report

1. Within 30 days of receipt of the Commission's report, the Rector shall take the appropriate initiatives to ensure the concrete, immediate and definitive cessation of conduct that violates the values expressed in the Code and, where possible, the removal, or at least the mitigation, of its effects.
2. If the Rector considers it an ethical offence, the Rector shall propose to the Academic Senate the imposition of one of the sanctions indicated in article 9, paragraph 8, of the By-Laws, based on the seriousness of the violations ascertained, to then implement the sanctions decided by the Senate with its own measure.

Article 31 - Criteria to identify and modulate the sanctions

1. In identifying and modulating the sanctions in the case of ascertained ethical violations, the following criteria must in any case be considered:
 - a) the role of the offender;
 - b) the intentionality, degree of guilt and possible reiteration of the conduct;
 - c) the consequences of the violation in terms of damage caused to other researchers, to the reputation of the University, to the scientific community and to society in general.

PART IV - Transitional and final provisions

Article 32 - Entry into force

1. The Code enters into force on the fifteenth day following the date of publication of the Rectoral Decree issued in the University Register.
2. The Code applies to all the reports received by the Commission after its entry into force.

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