

DISCLAIMER

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RESEARCH INTEGRITY CODE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PADOVA

Article 1 – *Preamble*

1. The University of Padova promotes knowledge of and compliance with the principles of research integrity, with full respect for the diversity of practices and the specific characteristics of the different disciplinary fields, in all activities, including those only indirectly connected with the conduct of research, its funding and the assessment of the results achieved.
2. In order to ensure the effective pursuit of these objectives, also taking into account the approaches adopted internationally and the ‘Guidelines for Research Integrity’ issued by the National Research Council of Italy (CNR), as last revised on 11 April 2019, the University of Padova adopts this Research Integrity Code, hereinafter referred to as the “Code”, which supplements, in respect of matters not governed herein, the legislation and regulations already in force at the University.
3. The Code sets out the principles of ethical and professional responsibility, honesty and proper conduct that must be observed at all stages of research, whether conducted individually or as part of a group.
4. Conduct contrary to the principles set out in Part I gives rise to ethical or professional liability. Misconduct covered by Part II gives rise to disciplinary liability. Where the same conduct constitutes both an ethical and a disciplinary breach, only disciplinary proceedings shall be pursued.
5. The Code is without prejudice to any criminal, civil or administrative liability that may arise from breaches of the principles and rules of conduct described herein.
6. All references in this Code to offices, professions, titles and functions expressed in the masculine form shall also be understood as referring to the corresponding feminine form.

Article 2 – *Scope*

1. Researchers affiliated with the University, or who carry out research activities at the University, even on a temporary basis, are required to comply with the values and ethical and behavioural rules set out in the Code.
2. The principles of research integrity and the forms of conduct covered by the Code constitute general principles of conduct for professors and permanent and fixed-term researchers, and more generally for staff governed by public law pursuant to Article 3(2) of Legislative Decree No. 165 of 30 March 2001, insofar as they are compatible with the provisions governing their respective employment frameworks. They also apply to technical and administrative staff.
3. The rules of the Code apply, insofar as they are compatible with the respective contractual arrangements, to research grant holders, PhD students, holders of appointments and persons engaged under collaboration

arrangements of any kind, including occasional arrangements.

4. The principles set out in the Code also apply to research activities carried out by students.

Article 3 – Research Integrity Committee

1. Within 15 days of the entry into force of the Code, the Academic Senate shall appoint, upon proposal of the Rector, a Research Integrity Committee consisting of three Full Professors currently employed by the University, each representing one of the University's three Macro-Areas.
2. The Committee shall elect a Chair from among its members and shall remain in office for three years.
3. The Committee shall oversee compliance with the principles and rules of conduct set out in the Code, exercising the functions specified in Part III. It shall operate with full autonomy and may, for any aspect of its remit, make use of technical tools and experts, including experts external to the University.

PART I

PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH INTEGRITY

SECTION I – General Principles and Rules of Conduct

Article 4 – Core Values

Researchers shall conduct their activities in a spirit of loyal cooperation with colleagues and all those involved in the research, and shall act rigorously and transparently, safeguarding the reputation of the institution to which they belong, also with a view to ensuring the credibility and authority of scientific activity.

Article 5 – Organisation and Conduct of Research

1. In accordance with the principles of freedom and autonomy of research, each researcher, when defining the objectives and purposes of the research, shall assess its feasibility and potential impacts and identify the organisational arrangements best suited to its implementation in terms of effectiveness and sustainability.
2. Research shall be conducted using appropriate methodologies and tools, which must be adequately documented.

Article 6 – Research Data Management

1. When collecting primary data, negative impacts on the biosphere and the environment shall be avoided or, at the very least, minimised and kept proportionate to the objectives of the research, with due respect for human dignity, human health and other living species, and in accordance with good bioethical practice.
2. Data obtained through research shall be organised and managed so as to ensure their preservation and enable access to them in the forms and by the means best suited to verifying the authenticity of the results and their reproducibility. Any loss of or tampering with data of which a researcher becomes aware shall be promptly reported to the heads of the relevant Units or, where the research is carried out by collaborative research groups, to the designated contacts for the group.
3. The general rule on data accessibility may be derogated from where researchers are subject to confidentiality obligations. Such obligations must, however, be governed, including where appropriate in relation

to funding bodies, by formally assumed commitments authorised by the University. In all cases, the rules governing the confidentiality of personal data must be strictly observed.

Article 7 – Scientific Publications

1. Researchers shall share the results of their studies with the scientific community without unjustified delay and shall avoid artificially fragmenting research results solely for the purpose of increasing the number of scientific outputs.
2. The relevant literature and all sources actually used in the research, whether already published, in press or still in preparation, shall always be clearly cited in scientific publications in accordance with the practices followed in the different disciplinary fields.
3. All and only those researchers who have made a substantive contribution to the production of the research outputs shall be acknowledged in scientific publications, in accordance with the practices followed in the different disciplinary fields.
4. When selecting a publication outlet, researchers shall consider its reputation within the relevant scientific communities and, where possible, favour outlets capable of promoting the widest possible dissemination of ideas and research results. Researchers shall in all cases make every effort to identify and avoid predatory publishing.
5. Researchers who, after publication of one of their scientific contributions, identify errors in it or suspect misconduct affecting the reliability or originality of the results shall assess, as quickly as possible and, where appropriate, together with the other co-authors, whether the publication should be corrected or retracted, informing and liaising with the relevant editorial staff.

Article 8 – Assessment of Publications or Projects

1. When acting as a reviewer, editor or member of the editorial board of scientific journals or series, researchers shall act properly and accurately on the basis of their actual scientific expertise and knowledge, and shall act transparently, making decisions based exclusively on an objective assessment of the quality, originality and relevance of the works submitted.
2. The same principles and rules of conduct shall apply when researchers are called upon to assess projects, research outputs or activities carried out by other researchers.

Article 9 – Communication of Scientific Knowledge

1. Researchers are expected to contribute to the cultural and civic advancement of society by participating, in the forms they consider most appropriate, in public debate concerning the scientific fields within their area of expertise. In all cases, personal opinions must be clearly distinguished from scientific evidence.
2. Researchers who state their affiliation with the University of Padova when communicating are required to exercise restraint and caution when asked to provide a scientific opinion, particularly on matters of public interest. In stating their affiliation, researchers do not express the official position of the University unless they have been expressly and formally authorised to do so.

Article 10 – Conflicts of Interest

1. At all stages of the research process, as well as in the assessment of the outputs and projects of others, potential conflicts of interest of any kind, whether professional or personal, must be appropriately disclosed.

Article 11 – Reporting Conduct that Breaches Research Integrity

1. Irrespective of their role or employment status, researchers are required to report, in accordance with the procedures set out in Part III of the Code, conduct that breaches research integrity by researchers belonging to the same organisation or with whom they have or have had a scientific collaboration.

SECTION II – Collaborative Research Groups

Article 12 – Roles, Tasks and Objectives

1. Research carried out by several researchers may benefit from the establishment of a group, which researchers join voluntarily, sharing its objectives and purposes. The researchers making up the group shall contribute to the development of the project in a spirit of open collaboration and shall work towards achieving its results without pursuing individual interests.

2. The tasks of each member of the group shall be established jointly and transparently from the outset of the collaboration, on the basis of the expertise of the researchers involved and in such a way as to ensure the possibility of periodic rotation in management and coordination roles, as well as gender balance. Any updates to the project objectives and any revisions to the tasks assigned shall be discussed and agreed within the group.

3. Management and coordination tasks, assigned to one or more designated members of the group, shall be carried out transparently and collaboratively, particularly in relation to: funding applications; approval of expenditure and subsequent financial reporting; the handling, sharing, storage and safeguarding of materials and data used in the research; procedures for approving scientific papers to be submitted for publication; and management of the communication of research results.

Article 13 – Dissemination of Research Results

1. Scientific publications shall list as co-authors all members of the group who have made a substantive contribution to the project, as well as researchers outside the group whose contribution has been significant. The order of authors, the name of the corresponding author and any indication of individual contributions shall be based on rules agreed upon and clearly defined within the research group, in accordance with the practices of the different disciplinary fields.

2. Each co-author shall nevertheless be responsible for the entire content of publications produced by the group, including in relation to cases of falsification, fabrication and plagiarism, and shall be required to check every part of the work and approve its content before publication.

3. Researchers shall undertake not to disclose, on their own initiative and without prior authorisation, information that has not yet been made public concerning the activities carried out by the group, the methodologies used and the results obtained.

4. The research group shall be appropriately acknowledged when the results are presented, including, where applicable, by means of the acronym identifying the group where that acronym is known and unambiguously identifies the group within the relevant scientific community.

PART II

CONDUCT THAT BREACHES RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Article 14 – Research Activities

1. In carrying out their activities, researchers shall not engage in conduct contrary to the principles of dignity, responsibility, proper conduct and diligence.
2. Conduct that breaches research integrity shall include any behaviour that obstructs the activities of other researchers, gives rise to discrimination or abuse, damages the reputation of the institution to which the researcher belongs, or undermines the credibility of scientific activity.

Article 15 – Funding and Appointments

1. Researchers shall not accept funding or appointments for research activities whose purposes are contrary to the founding principles of the University of Padova as set out in the University Statute, the University Codes and the guidelines adopted by its governing bodies.

Article 16 – Conflicts of Interest

1. Researchers shall avoid and shall not conceal, even in part, any actual or potential conflicts of interest arising at any stage of the research process.
2. Researchers shall not omit acknowledgement of contributions received from public or private research funders in any document made public.
3. When acting as a peer reviewer, editor or evaluator of projects or scientific activities carried out by others, researchers shall refrain from making 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 – Relations with Other Researchers

1. Researchers shall not intentionally compromise, delay or otherwise obstruct the activities of other researchers. Any action taken to protect their legitimate interests shall in all cases be carried out in accordance with the general principles of research integrity.
2. Researchers shall not make unfounded reports or accusations concerning alleged conduct that breaches research integrity, nor shall they confuse or misdirect investigations for the purpose of obtaining a personal or professional advantage or damaging the honour and reputation of other researchers.

Article 18 – Coordination of Projects or Collaborative Research Groups

1. Researchers who act as coordinators of research activities or perform comparable roles shall not abuse their position.
2. The following, in particular, shall be regarded as abuses: assigning tasks that are inconsistent with the roles defined within a project or research group; submitting funding applications that have not been approved in accordance with the procedures established within the project or research group; making expenditure decisions that have not been agreed upon or that are inconsistent with the project budget; using the results of collaborative research for personal purposes; and imposing prohibitions or restrictions on the use of research data and results that

are not justified by confidentiality obligations or cannot be traced back to the rules governing the use and dissemination of results.

Article 19 – Environment, Health, Human Dignity and Respect for Animals

1. Research shall not be conducted where it is liable to endanger human health, environmental safety or environmental health, or where it is contrary to human dignity or respect for other living species, or otherwise conflicts with good bioethical practice.

Article 20 – Fabrication, Falsification and Theft of Data

1. Researchers shall not fabricate, alter or deliberately omit research data or results, nor shall they publish misleading or incomplete data or results, or data or results that were not actually obtained using the methods described in the publication.

Article 21 – Storage of and Access to Research Data

1. Materials, data, records and information essential for verifying research results shall not be collected in a deliberately selective manner or destroyed.

2. Researchers shall not use, or provide access to, unpublished data, materials, methods or results without the consent of those who developed or produced them.

3. Without prejudice to situations governed by copyright and intellectual property law, personal data protection law, or specific agreements imposing confidentiality obligations, which must in all cases be authorised in advance by the University, researchers shall not prevent or obstruct access to data used in research whose results have already been made public.

Article 22 – Plagiarism, Self-Plagiarism and Citations

1. Researchers shall not intentionally, or through a failure to exercise due care, appropriate project proposals, data, ideas or results belonging to others and present them as their own.

2. Researchers shall not use, even in part, their own or others' publications without correctly citing the source. This prohibition also applies to translations of works already published in another language where the original contribution is not acknowledged.

3. Researchers shall not use or require the citation of works that are not essential solely for the purpose of increasing the impact of their own or others' research output, the prestige of a journal or scientific series, or the standing of a research group.

Article 23 – Co-authorship

1. No person who has not actually made a significant contribution to the research may be listed as a co-author of a scientific publication, even where that person holds a coordination role within a Unit. Likewise, no person who has played an active role in preparing the scientific publication may be omitted as an author.

2. Authorship hierarchies suggesting individual contributions different from those actually made to the research shall not be permitted.

Article 24 – Patents

1. Where the results of research carried out by several researchers are eligible for patent protection, no researcher may improperly appropriate the rights to the invention, which, unless otherwise agreed, shall be

attributed in equal shares to all the researchers concerned.

Article 25 – Misrepresentation of Personal Information

1. Researchers shall not misrepresent their scientific or professional credentials in any form of communication or document intended for public circulation or having public relevance.
2. Researchers shall not falsify the names of the authors, or of some of them, of a publication with the deliberate intention of preventing their identification or falsely claiming status or distinction.
3. Likewise, manuscripts shall not be submitted for possible publication in any form that makes their origin untraceable.

Article 26 – Statements of Affiliation

1. In scientific publications, researchers shall not omit their affiliation with the University of Padova, including where the publications arise from activities carried out at or on behalf of other institutions or from activities conducted within research groups involving multiple parties.

Article 27 – Assessment of Individuals, Projects or Publications

1. Researchers shall not make deliberately misleading assessments of projects, individuals or research outputs.
2. Researchers shall not breach confidentiality obligations or otherwise disclose confidential data or information concerning projects or research outputs.
3. Researchers shall not deliberately obstruct or delay the publication of scientific works.

PART III

PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE AND RELATIONSHIP WITH DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

Article 28 – Reporting

1. Reports concerning alleged violations of the principles and rules of conduct set out in the Code must be specific and adequately documented. Anonymous reports shall not be considered.
2. Reports shall be submitted to the competent disciplinary body for a preliminary assessment of any potential disciplinary liability, in accordance with the provisions of the respective regulations and applicable frameworks.
3. In all cases, the University shall ensure that the identity of the reporting person remains confidential.

Article 29 – Investigation Stage

1. Where the alleged violations constitute disciplinary offences falling within the remit of the disciplinary body, the proceedings shall remain under the responsibility of that body, which shall deal with them in accordance with the specific rules governing disciplinary matters.
2. Where the alleged violations do not in any way constitute disciplinary offences, the disciplinary body shall,

within 30 days of receiving the report, forward the relevant documentation to the Chair of the Research Integrity Committee, hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”.

3. In accordance with the principles of due process and the right to be heard within the proceedings, the Committee shall notify the person concerned and may request from the reporting person any clarifications and additional information it considers necessary and useful, either in writing or at a hearing, of which minutes shall be drawn up.

4. Recipients of the notification may submit written clarifications and propose any measures aimed at ensuring the immediate and definitive cessation of conduct that breaches the values set out in the Code and, where possible, remedying or at least mitigating its effects.

5. Where the report requires particularly complex technical and/or scientific checks and assessments, the Committee may, with the authorisation of the Rector, make use of tools and/or impartial experts with specific expertise in the subject matter of the reported violations, including experts external to the University.

6. Within 30 days of receiving the documentation, the Committee shall draw up a report proposing to the Rector either that the report be dismissed or that the procedures provided for in cases of breaches of professional ethics be initiated. In the same report, the Committee shall propose any measures aimed at ensuring the immediate and definitive cessation of conduct that breaches the values set out in the Code and, where possible, remedying or at least mitigating its effects.

7. Where it emerges that the report itself was made in clear violation of the principles and rules of conduct set out in the Code, the Committee may, without proceeding with the investigation stage referred to in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 above, propose that the Rector proceed against the reporting person in the manner indicated in the preceding paragraph.

Article 30 – Decision on the Report

1. Within 30 days of receiving the Committee’s report, the Rector shall take the appropriate measures to ensure the effective, immediate and definitive cessation of conduct that breaches the values set out in the Code and, where possible, to remedy or at least mitigate its effects.

2. Where the Rector finds that a breach of professional ethics has occurred, they shall propose to the Academic Senate the imposition of one of the sanctions referred to in Article 9(8) of the University Statute, depending on the seriousness of the violations established, and shall subsequently implement the sanctions decided upon by the Senate by means of a formal measure.

Article 31 – Criteria for Determining and Grading Sanctions

1. In determining and grading sanctions in cases where breaches of professional ethics have been established, the following criteria shall in all cases be taken into account:

- a) the role held by the person responsible for the violation;
- b) intent, degree of fault and any repetition of the conduct;
- c) the consequences of the violation in terms of harm caused to other researchers, the reputation of the University, the scientific community and society at large.

PART IV

TRANSITIONAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 32 – Entry into Force

1. The Code shall enter into force on the fifteenth day following the date of publication of the Rectoral Decree issuing it on the University Official Notice Board.
2. The Code shall apply to all reports received by the Committee after its entry into force.