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Special Code of Research

Approved by the Senate on May 31, 2023

1. Preamble

Researchers are responsible for actively upholding and advocating for the fundamental values and norms of academic work. These are outlined both in this code and in the Statutes on Good Research Practice of Europa-Universität Flensburg. [1]

Education in the foundations of good research practice begins at the earliest possible stage in academic teaching and scholarly training. Researchers of all career levels continually refresh their understanding of the standards of sound research practice and the evolving state of research. This process is further enriched by the constant exchange of knowledge and ideas between seasoned researchers and those in the early stages of their careers.

2. Responsibilities

2.1. The *Präsidium* [hereafter referred to as the "Executive Board"], faculty leadership, and directors of the university's flagship research centers create the conditions for research endeavors. They are tasked with promoting and ensuring adherence to sound research practices and providing appropriate career support for all researchers. The heads of the faculties and flagship research centers ensure that researchers can comply with legal and ethical standards.

The Executive Board bears the responsibility for establishing an appropriate institutional organizational structure. The size and organization of research work units are designed to ensure that leadership tasks—particularly in the areas of skills training, research guidance, supervision, and mentorship—can be appropriately carried out.

This organizational structure ensures that the tasks of leadership, supervision, quality assurance, and conflict management are clearly allocated in accordance with the size of each individual research work unit and appropriately communicated to the members, employees and affiliates. Europa-Universität Flensburg develops binding principles for research ethics and define procedures for assessing ethical issues related to research projects, as set forth in the statutes of its Central Ethics Committee and Ethics Commission.

The relevant regulations are contained in the Doctoral Regulations, the Habilitation Regulations, the Appointment Statutes, the Statutes for the Interim and Final Evaluation of Junior Professors, the Tenure-Track Professorship Statutes (TTP Statutes), the Senior Professorship Statutes, the Statutes on Performance-Related Bonuses, the Gender Equality Plan, and the Personnel Development Concept. These documents outline the established policies and procedures for staff

[1]Translators note: English titles of documents cited in the German version of this text are provided here for clarity, even if they correspond to documents for which no English translation exists. In all cases, only the German source text is legally binding. The original German titles of the documents cited in sections 1 and 2 are (in order of appearance): Statutes on Good Research Practice = *Satzung zur guten wissenschaftlichen Praxis*; Ethics Committee = *Zentraler Ethikausschuss*; Ethics Commission = *Ethikkommission*; Doctoral Regulations = *Promotionsordnung*; Habilitation Regulations = *Habilitationsordnung*; Appointment Statutes = *Berufungssatzung*; Statutes for the Interim and Final Evaluation of Junior Professors = *Satzung zur Zwischen- und Endevaluation der Leistung von Juniorprofessor*innen*; Tenure-Track Professorship Statutes (TTP Statutes) = *Tenure Track-Professuren-Satzung*; Senior Professorship Statutes = *Seniorprofessur-Satzung*; Statutes on Performance-Related Bonuses = *Leistungsbezüge-Satzung*; Gender Equality Plan = *Gleichstellungszukunftskonzept*; Human Resources Development Concept = *Personalentwicklungskonzept.*

selection and development, as well as for the promotion of early career researchers and equal opportunity.

2.2. The head an academic unit is responsible for the entirety of that unit. If seminars and/or departments exist within an institute, the leadership bears full responsibility for that area. The assumption of leadership tasks is associated with a corresponding responsibility. Basic provisions regarding roles, rights, and duties for each employee status group are outlined in the *Orientierungsrahmen*.[2] Individual regulations concerning roles, rights, and duties are determined with each staff member based on their specific job description. Annual staff performance reviews are conducted to support the reflection on and ongoing development of role understanding.

Researchers and research support staff benefit from a balance between support and autonomy appropriate to their career level. They are granted adequate status with corresponding participatory rights. Through gradually increasing autonomy, they are empowered to shape their careers.

2.3. The roles and responsibilities of the researchers and research support staff who participate in a research project must be clear at each stage of the project. Regular communication ensures this clarity by appropriately defining roles and responsibilities. Adjustments should be made as needed—especially if the research focus of a participating researcher changes.

2.4. The university leadership ensures that researchers who seek to identify suitable research questions have appropriate access to published research findings.

3. Dimensions of performance and assessment criteria

When assessing the performance of researchers, a multi-dimensional approach is adopted. Alongside academic and scientific achievements, other factors are also considered. Performance is mainly assessed on the basis of qualitative standards; quantitative indicators may only be incorporated into the overall evaluation in a thoughtful and nuanced manner. In addition to generation of and critical reflection on knowledge and findings, the evaluation considers other aspects of performance. These may include, for example, engagement in teaching, academic self-governance, public relations, and knowledge and technology transfer; contributions of broader societal interest can also be acknowledged. Professional integrity, openness to new knowledge and findings, and willingness to take risks are also considered.

Appropriate allowance for individual circumstances, such as absence periods due to personal, family or health-related reasons, or the prolongation of training or qualification periods resulting from such absences, and for alternative career paths or similar circumstances, is made in accordance with legal provisions. Details on the procedure are set forth in the Human Resources Development Concept, JunProfEvalS, TTP Statutes, the Senior Professorship Statutes, and the Statutes on Performance-Related Bonuses.

4. Research process

4.1. Researchers carry out each phase of the research process *lege artis*. In particular, this includes adherence to subject-specific standards and established quality assurance methods; processes such as device calibration, data collection, processing and analysis; the selection and

[2] Guiding Framework for Advancing Early-Stage Researchers Before and After Doctoral Completion and for Supporting Alternative Non-Professorial Academic Career Paths *[Orientierungsrahmen zur Förderung des wissenschaftlichen Nachwuchses vor und nach der Promotion und für akademische Karrierewege neben der Professur*] (passed by resolution of the Senate on November 25, 2015).

use of research software and its development and programming; and the keeping of lab notebooks.

4.1.a When planning a project, researchers comprehensively consider and acknowledge the current state of research. Identifying relevant and suitable research questions requires diligent research into existing published research studies.

4.2. Researchers use academically and scientifically sound and appropriate methods to answer research questions. In developing and applying new methods, they give special importance to quality assurance and the setting of standards. Setting and documenting standards for methods, software application, data collection, and the description of research findings are essential for the comparability and transferability of research findings.

4.3. Whenever possible, methods to avoid (unconscious) biases in the interpretation of findings are used. Researchers evaluate if and to what extent gender and diversity may be significant to the research project (in terms of methods, the work program, objectives, etc.). When interpreting findings, contextual conditions associated with each specific research outcome are considered.

4.4. Researchers exercise their constitutionally granted freedom of research in a responsible manner. They maintain an awareness of the potential to misuse research findings. Their responsibility extends beyond legal compliance to include the obligation to use their knowledge, experience, and skills so that risks can be recognized, estimated, and evaluated. In this, they pay special attention to the factors associated with security-relevant research (dual use). They comply with rights and obligations, particularly those arising from legal provisions and third-party contracts, and obtain and provide any necessary approvals and ethics statements. With regard to research projects, the potential research outcomes and their ethical implications should be thoroughly evaluated and assessed. The legal parameters of a research project also encompass documented agreements on the usage rights of the data and outcomes generated by that project.

5. Usage rights

Whenever possible and practicable, researchers make documented agreements on the usage rights of any potential research findings as early as possible in the research project. Documented agreements are especially useful when a research project includes multiple academic and/or non-academic institutions, or when it is likely that a researcher will change their institutional affiliation and continue using the data that they themselves generated. Usage rights primarily belong to the researchers who collected the data. In ongoing research projects, those who hold the usage rights also decide whether third parties should have access to the data (subject to data protection regulations).

6. Documentation

Researchers document all the information relevant to the generation of a specific research outcome as comprehensibly and transparently as is necessary and appropriate in that field in order to verify and evaluate that outcome. Consequently, they also document individual results that do not support the research hypothesis. The selection of results in this context is prohibited. If the subject area has existing guidelines for verification and evaluation, researchers adhere to these guidelines in their documentation. Should the documentation not meet these requirements, the constraints and reasons for them must be clearly and comprehensibly

explained. Manipulating research documents and results is strictly forbidden; they must be safeguarded as well as possible against any potential manipulation.

7. Public access to research findings

In principle, researchers present their research findings within the realm of academic and scientific discourse. In certain cases, however, there may be reasons not to publicize the findings (not only in the narrower sense in the form of publications, but also in the broader sense through other communication channels). This decision must not depend on third parties. Researchers themselves decide independently, considering the norms and conventions of the relevant subject area, whether, how, and where to make their findings publicly accessible. If a decision is made to publicize the findings, researchers describe them clearly and thoroughly. This includes thoroughly detailing all workflows and making available the underlying research data, materials, information, methods applied, and software used, to the extent that this is possible and reasonable.

When research findings are publicized (not only in the narrower sense in the form of publications, but also in the broader sense through other communication channels), the quality control mechanisms used must always be presented. This especially applies when new methods are developed.

In accordance with the principle of "quality over quantity," researchers avoid the fragmentation of their work into inappropriately small publications. As authors or co-authors, they limit the content repetitions in their publications to that which is necessary for the reader to grasp the context. In addition, they should cite their previously published results in the manner standard within the relevant discipline.

8. Authorship

Anyone named as an author of an academic contribution has made a genuine and identifiable contribution to the research publication. Authorship must be determined on a case-by-case basis and depends on the subject area involved. An identifiable, genuine contribution is particularly evident when a researcher has significantly and in an academically relevant manner collaborated in

- the development and conceptual design of the research project, or
- the drafting, collection, acquisition, or provision of data, software, or sources, or
- the analysis/evaluation or interpretation of data, sources, and the conclusions derived from them, or
- the writing of the manuscript.

If a contribution is not sufficient to justify authorship, the support provided can be appropriately acknowledged in footnotes, the preface, or the acknowledgments. “Honorary authorships” granted in the absence of such a contribution are not permissible. Holding a leadership or supervisory role does not, in itself, constitute co-authorship. Researchers determine which individuals are the author(s) of a research finding. The order in which author names are listed is decided upon in a timely manner, and normally no later than when the manuscript is being drafted, based on clear criteria that reflect the standards and conventions of each subject area. Researchers may not withhold their required consent to publish a research finding without a

sufficient reason. Refusal of consent must be justified with verifiable criticisms of the data, methods, or results.

Authors strive to ensure that, to the extent possible, publishers or infrastructure providers identify their contributions in such a way that users can correctly cite them. In addition, scholars must fully and correctly cite their own and others' prior work.

9. C**orrections; enabling replication; publicly accessible research data**

If researchers identify inconsistencies or errors after having publicly released their findings, they correct them. If these inconsistencies or errors warrant the retraction of that publication, the researchers act as quickly as possible by working with the relevant publisher or infrastructure provider to ensure that that it is corrected or retracted and properly indicated as such. The same applies if researchers are alerted to such inconsistencies or errors by third parties.

The origin of data, organisms, materials, and software used in the research process is clearly identified, and their subsequent use documented. Original sources are cited. The nature and scope of the research data generated during the research process are described, and the data is handled in accordance with the requirements of the relevant subject area.

One key requirement needed to enable replication is to provide the information needed to understand the research. Such information includes the data used or generated, the steps related to methodology, evaluation, and analysis, and – when relevant – how the hypothesis came about. These are properly documented. Citations must be clear and, where possible, third parties should be granted access to this information.

Researchers securely store research data or research outcomes that are publicly accessible, as well as the core materials and (when relevant) research software on which they are based, in a manner consistent with the standards of the relevant research area and for an appropriate length of time. If there are justifiable reasons not to store certain data, these are explained by researchers.

10. **Development of research software:**

The source code is documented when developing research software. Even self-coded software (including its source code) is to be made publicly available, to the extent that this is possible and reasonable.

If self-developed research software is to be shared with third parties, it should be licensed appropriately.

The source code for publicly available software should be persistent, citable, and documented. Ensuring that other researchers can replicate or validate the findings (for example, through detailed descriptions of materials and methods) is an essential component of quality assurance, depending on the specific subject area.

11. **Archiving of research data**

For the sake of transparency and to ensure both the continuity and future usability of research, researchers store research data and key materials related to their publications in recognized archives and repositories whenever possible, in accordance with the FAIR principles (**F**indable,

Accessible, **I**nteroperable, **R**e-Usable). Public access restrictions might apply in cases involving patent applications. At EUF, the use of such archives and repositories is supported by appropriate structural conditions. These conditions ensure that researchers can archive and document publicly available research data, core materials and, when relevant, the research software used, in line with the standards of the research area affected. In general, the research data (typically raw data) that underlies published research findings is retained and archived for ten years at the institution where the data was generated, or in cross-venue repositories. In certain justified cases, shorter retention periods might be deemed appropriate; the corresponding reasons must be clearly laid out. The retention period commences from the date when public access begins.

12. Publication medium

Authors choose their publication medium with care, taking into account its quality and visibility within that field of discourse. Researchers who take on editorial roles carefully consider for which publications they choose to serve in that capacity. The academic quality of an article does not depend on the medium in which it is published. In addition to publications in books and journals, researchers may also consider specialized repositories, data and software repositories, and blogs. A new or unfamiliar publishing medium should be checked for its integrity and credibility. A crucial criterion in selecting a publishing medium is whether it has established its own guidelines for good research practice.

13. Reviewing and advising/discussion

Ethical behavior is the foundation of the legitimacy of any judgement-forming process. Researchers, especially those who assess submitted manuscripts, grant proposals, or the qualifications of individuals, are bound to strict confidentiality. They disclose all facts that could give rise to concerns about bias or conflict of interest. This obligation to maintain confidentiality and to disclose any potentially biasing facts also applies to members of academic or scientific advisory boards and to decision-making bodies. The confidentiality of third-party content to which reviewers or committee members gain access precludes its sharing with third parties or personal use. Researchers immediately report to the responsible body or unit any potential or apparent conflicts of interest or biases that could be related to the research project reviewed, or to the person or matter under discussion.