Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development

Rules to safeguard good scientific practice at the Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development, Dresden

Preamble

The Leibniz Institute of Ecological Urban and Regional Development (IOER) as a whole, as well as all persons entrusted with personnel management and project management in the field of scientific research, are required to comply with and communicate the principles of good scientific practice as set out in the respective current versions of the Code of Conduct of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG – German Research Foundation)[1] and the Guidelines of the Leibniz Association[2]. Every scientist is responsible for ensuring that their own conduct complies with the standards of good scientific practice. The basis of scientific work at the IOER is the honesty of scientists towards themselves and others. Scientists at all career levels must regularly update their knowledge of the standards of good scientific practice as well as the current state of research.

Rule 1: Good scientific practice

(1) Good scientific practice includes in particular:

a) to scrupulously maintain current professional standards and those related to specific disciplines;
b) to fully document all steps and results of a study or experiment and to securely store protocols and research data. Experimental protocols must record the objective of an experiment, the experimental conditions, the procedure and results in a comprehensible manner and in a form that cannot be subsequently amended;
c) to critically and consistently examine the validity and reproducibility of all experimental results and other research projects;
d) to be stringently honest in identifying the contributions of all collaborators and disclosing external funding providers;
e) to respect the intellectual authorship of others in all publications and properly identify all quotations and appropriations;
f) authors of scientific publications must accept responsibility for the content and presentation of results and their discussion as a whole, as well as explicitly identify and justify instances in which responsibility extends only to part of the publication;
g) the appropriate supervision of young scientists in training, including the adequate transfer of expertise, continuous individual supervision as well as an appropriate and comprehensible assessment of theses/dissertations for the purpose of obtaining an academic qualification;

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[1] Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice. Kodex, August 2019, Bonn.

[2] Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association, as adopted by the General Assembly of the Leibniz Association on 28 November 2019.

h) responsible cooperation in performing scientific management tasks in the Institute as a whole as well as in its respective departments; this means ensuring transparent forms of organisation, a sufficiently clear division of responsibilities and tasks as well as consistently avoiding any misuse of power and the exploitation of interpersonal dependencies;
i) to always give precedent to originality and quality over quantity as performance and assessment criteria for promotions, appointments, the hiring of staff and funding allocations.

(2) Scientific publications should describe scientific results and how they were obtained in an exhaustive and comprehensible manner. Previously published results can only be incorporated into later publications if they are essential for understanding the context of the publication and clear reference is made to their earlier publication.

(3) Only those who have made a genuine, substantial and comprehensible contribution to the content of an original scientific manuscript and who have agreed to its publication, i.e. have assumed responsibility for it, should be named as an author. Whether a manuscript is genuine, substantial and comprehensible can only be determined for each particular case, and will depend on the applicable standards of the relevant research field. So-called honorary authorships are not permitted. A management or supervisory function does not in itself justify co-authorship. If necessary, the authorship regulations should be specified by a cooperation agreement.

(4) All research data must be stored in an accessible format for at least ten years. Data for which there are publicly accessible repositories should be made available to the same. Information on work processes as well as on the materials, methods and software used must be made available as far as possible and reasonable. This will depend on the relevant standards of each field of research.

Rule 2: Scientific misconduct

(1) Scientific misconduct encompasses false statements and misrepresentations in a scientifically relevant context, in particular:

a) the fabrication of data;
b) the falsification of data (e.g. by selecting desired results or rejecting unwanted results or evaluation procedures without making this public, or by manipulating figures or diagrams);
c) false information in lists of publications or on a funding application (including misrepresentations regarding the publishing body and forthcoming publications);
d) multiple publication of data or texts without disclosing this fact.

(2) Scientific misconduct includes the infringement of intellectual property rights, in particular:

a) with regard to a legally protected work created by another party, or to another party's substantial scientific findings, hypotheses, models or research approaches:

- the unauthorised reproduction or other usage of text passages without appropriately crediting the author (plagiarism);
- the exploitation of research approaches and ideas without consent, in particular as a reviewer;
- the untruthful claim to or unjustified acceptance of scientific authorship or co-authorship, as well as the rejection of a justified co-authorship;
- the falsification of content, or
- the unauthorised publication of a work, finding, hypothesis, model or research approach that has not yet been lawfully published or making these available to third parties;

b) claiming the (co-)authorship of another person without their consent.

(3) Scientific misconduct encompasses the improper obstruction of the research activities of others, including damaging, destroying or tampering with documents, hardware, software, experimental set-ups, equipment or any materials required by another party to conduct research.

(4) The destruction of primary data, when this represents a violation of legal requirements or recognised principles of scientific work, as well as the unlawful failure to destroy data, in particular personal data, are regarded as forms of scientific misconduct.

(5) The neglect of responsibilities in scientific management as well as supervisory duties in a way that encourages breaches of good scientific practice are also forms of scientific misconduct.

(6) Claiming co-authorship of a forged publication is to be regarded as scientific misconduct.

(7) Deliberately pretending to have implemented or made use of quality assurance measures and procedures (such as peer review) when this is not the case is a form of scientific misconduct.

Rule 3: Organisational responsibility of the management and ombudspersons

(1) The Director is charged with implementing these guidelines at the IOER. All persons of responsibility, in particular the heads of the research areas, must ensure through appropriate organisation of their working areas that the tasks of management, supervision, dispute resolution and quality assurance are clearly assigned and that these are actually performed. It is also the special task of management to ensure the appropriate individual supervision of young researchers (embedded in the overall concept of the Institute) as well as the professional advancement of scientific and ancillary staff.

(2) To resolve questions of scientific misconduct at the IOER, the scientific staff shall elect one senior female and one senior male scientist as ombudspersons for a period of four years. Re-election is permitted once. The right of nomination rests with the Director. The nominated persons may not be managerial staff members of the Institute.

(3) An ombudsperson shall be elected if s/he receives at least 30 % of the votes of the scientific staff.

(4) The ombudspersons advise IOER scientists and mediate conflicts related to good scientific practice. They can offer independent advice and opinions to the Institute management and thereby contribute to anchoring a culture of good scientific practice and scientific integrity at the Institute. They also investigate allegations of scientific misconduct on the basis of the presented guidelines for safeguarding good scientific practice at the IOER. The IOER ombudspersons are entitled to seek advice from the Central Ombuds Committee of the Leibniz Association or the DFG committee “Ombudsman for Science”.

(5) The scientific staff can vote ombudspersons out of office by a two-thirds majority if they no longer appear able to fulfil their duties reliably in the long term or if there is no longer confidence in the proper fulfilment of these duties. The ombudspersons concerned must be granted a hearing before such a decision is taken.

Rule 4: General procedure in cases of suspected scientific misconduct

(1) The procedure for dealing with scientific misconduct in accordance with Rule 5 comes into force if a suspicion or allegation of scientific misconduct in accordance with Rule 2 arises against a member of the IOER which cannot be clarified through dialogue or by applying the usual instruments of personnel management.

(2) The person concerned shall be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation of misconduct and provide evidence at each stage of the procedure.

(3) All persons to be heard in the course of the procedure shall be entitled to call in a supporter of their choice, who must be a staff member of the IOER.

(4) An ombudsperson may be rejected due to a concern of bias if there is some reason to suspect a lack of impartiality.

(5) The investigation of allegations of scientific misconduct shall be conducted with strict regard for confidentiality and under the basic principle of the presumption of innocence.

(6) The identity of the person alleging scientific misconduct shall not be disclosed to the accused during the entire proceedings. An exception exists if the suspect cannot otherwise defend herself/himself properly, in particular because the credibility of the informant is significant to determining the truth or falsity of the allegation.

(7) If the suspicion of scientific misconduct falls on the Director of the IOER, the notification of scientific misconduct shall be submitted to the Central Ombuds Committee of the Leibniz Association.

(8) If the suspicion is directed against a person outside the IOER, Rule 6 shall apply.

(9) All protocols and documents relating to a suspected case or to a proceeding must be:

a) kept under lock and key, insofar as these are printed copies or handwritten notes;
b) securely stored in a password-protected part of the IOER network, accessible only to the ombudspersons, insofar as these are digital documents.

(10) If the suspicion of scientific misconduct proves to be unjustified, appropriate measures shall be taken where necessary for the professional rehabilitation of the person accused. Any decision in this regard shall be made by the Director in consultation with the person concerned and the ombudspersons.

Rule 5: Proceedings for suspected scientific misconduct by persons within the IOER

(1) In the event of concrete suspicions of scientific misconduct, at least one of the two ombudspersons of the IOER shall be informed. The information must be provided in writing.

(2) The ombudspersons shall examine the facts of the case at their own discretion. As part of a preliminary investigation, the person accused of misconduct shall be informed that such an allegation has been made. The incriminating facts shall be communicated to this person by the ombudsperson(s).

(3) The person accused of misconduct shall be given the opportunity to respond no later than one week after the allegation has been made. The ombudspersons may interview additional persons in order to gain information needed to resolve the case. These persons must be sworn to secrecy.

(4) If the initial allegation has not been sufficiently confirmed or if suspicious behaviour has been satisfactorily explained or if mediation has proved successful, the preliminary investigation shall be closed without formal proceedings being opened. The person raising the allegation, the person accused of misconduct and, if applicable, other persons consulted in accordance with paragraph 3 sentence 2 shall be informed of this.

(5) If the suspicion has strengthened and mediation is not feasible, the ombudspersons shall inform the Director of the allegation of misconduct and the findings of the preliminary investigation. The Director shall:

a) review the allegation and the result of the preliminary investigation by the ombudspersons; to this end the Director will interview the person accused and (if essential for clarifying the case) the person raising the allegation;
b) determine whether the ombudspersons need to conduct further investigations;
c) decide, if necessary, on consequences for the person accused of misconduct in accordance with Rule 7.

(6) In urgent cases, especially in order to prevent *faits accomplis* or irreversible damage, the ombudspersons may inform the Director without first informing or hearing the person accused of misconduct. The procedural steps according to paragraphs 2 and 3 must be subsequently taken.

(7) If further investigation is required to fully clarify the issue of misconduct, the Director may set up a committee of enquiry. The selection of the members shall be made in agreement with the ombudspersons. The committee of enquiry shall consist of at least three members with voting rights, including (i) the chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board of the IOER or the spokesperson of Section B of the Leibniz Association, (ii) a person with sufficient professional expertise to understand the scientific facts of the case and who is not an employee of the IOER, and (iii) a fully qualified lawyer. At least one of the two ombudspersons shall be a non-voting member of the committee of enquiry. Section 6 of the Guidelines of the Leibniz Association shall govern the activities of the committee of enquiry. Drawing on the report of the committee of enquiry, the Director will either confirm the alleged scientific misconduct or choose to dismiss the proceedings. Section 7, Paragraph 1, Sentences 2 and 3 of the Leibniz Association's Guidelines shall apply here.

(8) If, during an investigation, it becomes clear that the allegations cannot be suitably clarified within IOER or that the proceedings are hindered by exceptional circumstances, the IOER ombudspersons shall submit the matter to the Central Ombuds Committee of the Leibniz Association. This does not preclude the option of involving the DFG committee "Ombudsman for Science".

Rule 6: Proceedings for suspected scientific misconduct by persons outside the IOER

(1) If the allegation of scientific misconduct is directed against a person not employed at the IOER, the staff member of the IOER whose believes his/her rights to have been violated shall call on the IOER ombudspersons to investigate; in particular, the ombudspersons shall support the staff member in evaluating the details of the case and, if necessary, in further steps.

(2) If the suspicion of scientific misconduct strengthens, the Director of the IOER shall be informed of the matter. The IOER ombudspersons shall decide whether the accused be informed directly of the allegation or whether the case be passed on to the Central Ombuds Committee of the Leibniz Association or the DFG committee "Ombudsman for Science".

Rule 7: Consequences of scientific misconduct

(1) Depending on the circumstances of each case, scientific misconduct can have the following consequences:

a) a written reprimand;
b) a demand that scientific publications be withdrawn;
c) details of misconduct made public or passed on to partner institutions;
d) measures under employment law, such as a warning letter or dismissal;
e) measures under civil and criminal law, such as a ban on entering the premises or claims for restitution/damages.

(2) If the proceedings show that the scientific misconduct could result in the revocation of academic qualifications, the relevant findings shall be passed on to the awarding university.

Coming into force

These “Rules to safeguard good scientific practice at the IOER” come into force with their internal announcement at the Institute. They replace the previous rules of 24 October 2017.

Dresden, 28 April 2021

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Director of the IOER