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RIoE  
Rights of Internet of Everything

# Code of Ethics in Academic Research



**This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie ITN EJD grant agreement No 8141**

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## INTRODUCTION

The leading principle of our research, at all levels, is the notion of academic freedom, a core value to be safeguarded and sustained. LAST-JD-RIoE is committed to promoting and maintaining high standards of integrity and accountability in the conduct of academic research, endorsing a culture of rectitude and transparency in all its institutional activities.

LAST-JD-RIoE programme aims to guarantee a free academic environment to conduct research, to teach, to speak and to publish, subject to the norms and standards of scholarly inquiry, without interference or penalty, wherever the search for truth, knowledge, scholarship and/or understanding may lead.

LAST-JD-RIoE invites its members (teaching staff, fellows, research students, visiting students as well as administrative and support staff) to abide by the highest standards of integrity in their conduct of academic research and/or support to academic research activities.

The *LAST-JD-RIoE Code of Ethics in Academic Research* has been designed to encourage good conduct in research and help prevent misconduct, in order to assist organizations and researchers to conduct research of the highest quality. It provides general principles and standards for good practice in research, applicable to both individual researchers and to organizations that carry out, fund, host or are otherwise involved in research. Recognizing that many forms of guidance already exist, the intention is that research organizations may use the principles and standards outlined in this Code as benchmarks when drafting or revising their own, more detailed, codes of practice. No single publication can expect to cover the nuances of all types of research in all disciplines; therefore, the Code should not be seen as prescriptive but as a set of guiding principles and standards to inform the management and conduct of research.

The Code complements existing and forthcoming guidance on research conduct, which are intended to be fully referred to here, such as that provided by the University of Bologna (see the Code of Ethic of Bologna University at [http://www.normateneo.unibo.it/NormAteneo/codice\\_etico.htm](http://www.normateneo.unibo.it/NormAteneo/codice_etico.htm)) and from the European charter for researchers (see [https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/am509774cee\\_en\\_e4.pdf](https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/am509774cee_en_e4.pdf)). Similarly, the Code complements organizational policies, such as those for health and safety, raising concerns at work, or management of finances or of intellectual property, and does not seek to replace them. Use of the benchmarks contained in this Code can assist research organizations in fulfilling the requirements of regulatory, funding and other relevant bodies, and ensure that important issues have not been overlooked.

## 1. GOOD PRACTICE IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

### 1.1. ACADEMIC FREEDOM, INTEGRITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

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Academic freedom is the freedom to teach study and pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction from law, institutional regulations or public pressure. Its basic elements include the freedom of scholars to inquire into any subject that evokes intellectual concern, to present findings, to publish data and conclusions without control or censorship and to teach in the manner they consider professionally appropriate.

At the same time, integrity, accountability and responsibility in conducting academic research form the cornerstone of any academic enterprise and violations of widely-recognized academic research standards represent serious offences to the entire academic community at the Institute and are considered injurious for its credibility and authority as an institution that promotes excellence in academic research in Europe.

Researchers must observe and promote the principles of integrity in scientific and scholarly research. Academic integrity is defined in terms of the commitment to various principles like honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, legality and dissemination. In particular, these principles include:

- honesty in communication;
- reliability in performing research;
- objectivity;
- impartiality and independence;
- openness and accessibility;
- duty of care;
- fairness in providing references and giving credit;
- responsibility for the scientists and researchers of the future.

## **1.2. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

LAST-JD-RIoE (academic, administrative and support staff) is responsible for promoting and endorsing a transparent academic environment conducive to the application of the high professional and ethical criteria of good practice for academic research.

Professors are expected to create and sustain a climate of mutual co-operation that facilitates the open exchange of ideas and the development of academic research skills. They are also expected to ensure the provision of appropriate supervision and direction for researchers, in accordance with the nature of the individual academic discipline and associated mode of research.

Supervisors are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct of LAST-JD-RIoE, which delineates the supervisory relationship, the assessment of research progress, and the procedures to resolve problems in the supervisory relationship.

### 1.3. TRAINING (DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF)

The LAST-JD-RIoE Academic committee should ensure that all researchers undertake appropriate training in research design, methodology, regulatory and ethics approvals and consents, equipment use, confidentiality, data management, record keeping, data protection and publication, the appropriate use of licensed research resources and respect for the intellectual property rights of third parties.

The administrative and support staff involved in record keeping fully respect the principles and rules of the Code of Ethics in Academic Research.

### 1.4. PUBLICATION PRACTICE AND AUTHORSHIP

LAST-JD-RIoE encourages the publication and dissemination of results of high quality research. It also expects that researchers will engage in the process of publishing and dissemination of their work responsibly and with an awareness of the consequences of any such dissemination in the wider media.

Results should be published in a form appropriate to the academic discipline. The Institute requires that all individuals listed as authors accept responsibility for the contents of the publication and can identify their contribution to it. Authors should have participated sufficiently in the research to take public responsibility for the content.

## 2. MISCONDUCT IN ACADEMIC RESEARCH

### 2.1. DEFINITION OF RESEARCH MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in academic research implies (and is not limited to) fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research and deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practice in carrying out research. It includes failure to follow an agreed protocol if and when this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to persons, the environment, and when it facilitates misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others. Misconduct also includes any plan or attempt to do any of these things. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretation or judgment in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to research processes.

Misconduct includes (and is not limited to) the following acts:

- **Plagiarism**

The deliberate copying of ideas, text, data or other work (or any combination thereof) without due permission and acknowledgement.

- **Piracy**

The deliberate exploitation of ideas from others without proper Acknowledgement

- **Abuse of intellectual property rights**

Failure to observe legal norms regarding copyright and the moral rights of authors.

- **Abuse of Research Resources**

Failure to observe the terms and conditions of institutionally licensed research resources.

- **Defamation**

Failure to observe relevant legal norms governing libel and slander.

- **Misinterpretation**

The deliberate attempt to represent falsely or unfairly the ideas or work of others, whether or not for personal gain or enhancement.

- **Personation**

The situation where someone other than the person who has submitted any academic work has prepared (parts of) the work;

- **Fabrication and fraud**

The falsification or invention of qualifications, data, information or citations in any formal academic exercise.

- **Sabotage**

Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes stealing or cutting pages out of library books or otherwise damaging them; or willfully disrupting the experiments of others; or endangering institutional access to licensed research resources by willfully failing to observe their terms and conditions.

- **Professorial misconduct**

Professorial acts that are arbitrary, biased or exploitative.

- **Denying access to information or material**

To deny others access arbitrarily to scholarly resources or to deliberately and groundlessly impede their progress.

- **Misconduct in formal examinations**

Includes having access, or attempting to gain access during an examination, to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorized electronic devices or any other material, except such as may have been supplied by the invigilator or authorised by the Academic Department. It also includes aiding or attempting to aid another candidate or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another candidate or any other communication and conversations that could have an impact on the examination results.

## 2.2. IDENTIFYING LEVELS OF VIOLATIONS OF GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE

Two levels of violations of good academic practice can be distinguished.

- **Minor violations**

Minor violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of the principles of academic integrity and are often characterized by the absence of dishonest intent on the part of the person committing the violation. They may result from:

- a. Weak procedures and methods which may jeopardize the integrity of the research but are not undertaken deliberately or recklessly;

b. Weaknesses which present no major risks to either subjects or policies which they may influence.

On the whole, these minor violations can be seen as failings which may reflect only poor, rather than unacceptable practices and therefore mainly require further training and development rather than any formal disciplinary action.

Examples of minor violations include:

- Minor plagiarism defined as a small amount of paraphrasing, quotation or use of diagrams, charts etc. without adequate citation. Minor plagiarism may result from poor scholarship (i.e. when a student, through inexperience or carelessness, fails to reference appropriately or adequately identify the source of the material which they use);
- Inaccurate claims to experience, qualifications or contributions in a context where the person committing the violation cannot expect major benefits (such as winning a competition for a prize or job);
- Inaccurate representation of findings without deliberate distortion;
- Lack of diligence in declaring relevant conflicts of interest.

Such violations may present no risks to subjects, the wider community or the environment, but they may warrant some penalty or sanction at institutional level.

- ***Major violations***

Major violations are breaches of academic integrity that are more serious in nature or that affect a more significant aspect or portion of the academic work compared with minor violations.

Key examples are:

- Deliberate, reckless or grossly negligent conduct which would clearly pose a significant risk in one form or another to the integrity of the research.
- Conduct that may pose risks to subjects, the wider community, the environment, or to the research reputation of the institution and research in general.
- Major plagiarism defined as:
  - Extensive paraphrasing or quoting without proper citation of the source;
  - Lifting directly from a text or other academic source without reference;
  - The use of papers (or parts thereof) from essay banks, either downloaded from the internet or obtained from other sources;
  - Presenting another's designs or concepts as one's own;
  - Continued instances of what was initially regarded as minor plagiarism despite warnings having been given.
- The willful destruction of data (except where required by the legitimate data provider or where norms of privacy might otherwise be endangered);
- Fabrication or falsification of data;
- Falsification of ownership;
- Defamation;
- Systematic abuse of the terms and conditions of licensed research resources;

- Other systematic violation of the intellectual property rights of third parties.

LAST-JD-RIoE is committed to fully investigate serious violations of academic misconduct by any academic member of the LAST-JD-RIoE community.

### **3. RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN PARTICIPANTS, HUMAN MATERIAL OR PERSONAL DATA**

*Organisations and researchers* should make sure that any research involving human participants, human material or personal data complies with all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines. The dignity, rights, safety and wellbeing of participants must be the primary consideration in any research study. Research should be initiated and continued only if the anticipated benefits justify the risks involved.

When conducting, or collaborating in, research in other countries, organisations and researchers should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in Italy and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in LAST-JD-RIoE research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in Italy as well as those of their own country.

Organisations and researchers should ensure the confidentiality and security of: personal data relating to human participants in research; and human material involved in research projects.

*Researchers* should submit research projects involving human participants, human material or personal data for review by all relevant ethics committees and abide by the outcome of those reviews. They should also ensure that such research projects have been approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

Researchers on projects involving human subjects must satisfy themselves that participants are enabled, by the provision of adequate accurate information in an appropriate form through suitable procedures, to give informed consent, having particular regard to the needs and capacities of vulnerable groups, such as the very old, children and those with mental illness.

Researchers should inform research participants that data gathered during the course of research may be disseminated not only in a report but also in different forms for academic or other subsequent publications and meetings, albeit not in an identifiable form, unless previously agreed to, and subject to limitations imposed by legislation or any applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.



## 4. RESEARCH INVOLVING ANIMALS

*Organisations and researchers* should make sure that research involving animals adheres to all legal and ethical requirements and other applicable guidelines. They should consider the opportunities for reduction, replacement and refinement of involving animals in research projects and should refer to the relevant guidance.

When conducting, or collaborating in, research in other countries, organisations and researchers should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in Italy and in the countries where the research is conducted. Similarly, organisations and researchers based abroad who participate in LAST-JD-RIoE research projects should comply with the legal and ethical requirements existing in Italy as well as those of their own country.

*Researchers* should submit research projects involving animals for review by all relevant ethics committees and abide by the outcome of that review. They should also ensure that such research projects have been approved by all applicable bodies, ethical, regulatory or otherwise.

If researchers consider that animals involved in research are subject to unreasonable risk or harm, they must report their concerns to their manager or other appropriate person as identified by their organisation, and, where required, to the appropriate regulatory authority.

## 5. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Organisations and researchers should ensure that all research carried out under their auspices, or for which they are responsible, fulfils all requirements of health and safety legislation and good practice. They should bear in mind that certain types of research, for example social research in a conflict zone, can present particular issues of health and safety. They should ensure that all research which involves potentially hazardous or harmful material, or which might cause harm to the environment complies with all legal requirements and other applicable guidelines.

Researchers should submit such research for all forms of appropriate review and abide by the outcome of that review.