Code of Conduct for Responsible Research

University of Copenhagen

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1. Introduction

Driven by intellectual creativity and critical thinking since 1479, researchers and students at the University of Copenhagen have expanded horizons and contributed to moving the world forward. Principles such as honesty, transparency, and responsibility must always be an integral aspect of conducting research at the University of Copenhagen and must apply to all scientific activities.

The University of Copenhagen's Code of Conduct for Responsible Research is based on the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and means that the University of Copenhagen:

1. Has clear standards for responsible conduct of research
2. Offers instruction and guidance in responsible conduct of research
3. Has clear rules and procedures for the University's handling of claims of research misconduct or breaches of responsible conduct of research

The general division of responsibility entails that the individual researcher is responsible for ensuring that published results are accurate, reliable, and in adherence to all relevant regulations. The university leadership is responsible for fostering and maintaining a culture of research integrity through teaching, training, and supervision, and for taking appropriate measures when dealing with breaches of responsible conduct of research.

Additionally, other relevant legislation and reporting obligations must be complied with, and it is the responsibility of anyone conducting research at the University to familiarise themselves with the current legislation or regulations in their field of research.

The University of Copenhagen has a number of policies and guidelines related to specific scientific activities. These can be found in the Research Portal on KUnet.

2. Responsible Conduct of Research

According to the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, the research process encompasses the following aspects:

1) Research planning and conduct

2) Data management

3) Publication and communication

4) Authorship

5) Collaborative research

6) Conflicts of interest

In the following sections, each of the six aspects, and the standards pertaining to them, are explained as they are managed at the University of Copenhagen. It is the responsibility of the individual researcher and research group at the University of Copenhagen to follow these standards and to document them in accordance with the traditions of the discipline.

2.1 Research Planning and Conduct

According to the [Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#), the responsibilities regarding research planning and conduct are guided by the following four principles:

i. Researchers are responsible for planning and conducting their research.

ii. Throughout the research process, researchers should conduct assessments to determine if there are particular issues requiring permits, approvals, etc. (e.g., approval from an ethics committee or an institutional review board) regarding, for example, the use of animals, human patients, and concerning data protection.

iii. Researchers should not enter into agreements (e.g., with funders or others) that limit their access to their own data and their ability to analyse and publish these data independently, unless such access limitations can be justified by the specific circumstances.

iv. Institutions should maintain relevant policies for the proper management of research planning and conduct, and for the procedures regarding the securing of necessary approvals and permits.

To ensure the integrity of research originating in collaborative projects, it is important that planning is undertaken prior to the beginning of a research project. All plans should be made in a way that can be subsequently documented.

The level of formal measures to be taken in the planning and conducting of research may differ considerably according to the scale of a research project, or due to differences in common practices within scientific disciplines. In some cases, it will be relevant to readdress the project plan from time to time, and, potentially, to adjust the mutual agreements and participant composition.

2.2 Data Management

Responsible handling and storage of research data contributes to transparent and credible research within all fields of inquiry. The University of Copenhagen is dedicated to a data management policy that respects the principles of [FAIR data management](#) (FAIR: findable, accessible, interoperable, and reproducible data).

All individual researchers and research groups must ensure that research data is managed in line with the best practice in their field. The University of Copenhagen has established an organisation to support data management, including an Advisory Group for Data Management, a Head of Information Security, and a Data Protection Officer.

For more information, see UCPH's Policy for Research Data. Staff can find the Data Management Planner, *DMPonline,* and other tools and guidelines on KUnet.

2.2.1 Protection of personal data

The University of Copenhagen has articulated a set of rules regarding the protection of personal data, in order to ensure that such data is not abused and that the data subjects are informed of who is processing their data and to what end. To promote knowledge and offer advice on the protection of personal data, the University of Copenhagen has appointed a Data Protection Officer.

The University of Copenhagen has volunteered to maintain a system whereby the processing of personal data in research projects and biobanks is subject to approval, even when statutory requirements expire when the Personal Data Act terminates on May 25, 2018. The approval scheme, although not required by law, is an internal quality assurance procedure that helps ensure compliance

with the law and that all projects receive the necessary approvals to satisfy any funders, data suppliers, and research ethics committees.

Find the current rules regulating the use of personal data in research on the Research Portal on KUnet.

2.3 Publication and Communication

The University Act stipulates that universities must communicate their research and share their knowledge with the surrounding community. Publication and other forms of communication are a prerequisite for enabling research results to be reviewed, evaluated, and discussed worldwide. Such communication must be honest, transparent, and accurate.

Researchers at the University of Copenhagen are expected to:

1. Publish their research in recognized and relevant scientific media, e.g. journals, monographs or book series

2. Ensure relevant quality control (peer review or critical discussion with colleagues)

3. Communicate their research to the public, when relevant, and support public debate and democratic decision-making

4. Be explicit on the scientific grounds behind their public statements

The University of Copenhagen supports researchers in these endeavours by promoting a culture of critical and open debate through communications training and by sharing knowledge about open access and publishing tools. Staff can find more information in the Research Portal on KUnet.

2.4 Authorship

The number of publications, impact factors and H-Indexes are some of the key parameters for measuring measure a researcher's quality. It is important that the authorship reflects on who conducted the research and deserves the recognition, because the publications are a factor in the competition for funding and positions.

Transparency regarding authorship is also crucial because it makes it possible to place the responsibility for scientific misconduct or poor research practice. As the publications have become more important, the guidelines for real authorship have been developed.

An understanding of the guidelines for authorship is essential both for research integrity, but also to navigate in the often complicated collaborations on articles which researchers are involved in.

The University of Copenhagen has drawn up a "Code for Authorship" that follows the Vancouver Rules, which states, "all persons that satisfy these criteria should be acknowledged as an author:

- Substantial contributions to the conception or design of the work; or the acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data for the work; AND
- Drafting the work or revising it critically for important intellectual content; AND
- Final approval of the version to be published; AND
- Agreement to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved."

Readers can learn more about the Vancouver Rules here.

2.5 Collaborative Research

The University of Copenhagen carries out research collaboration with private and public organisations. The University's ambition is to remain an attractive collaborative partner for external partners.

Researchers employed at the University of Copenhagen cannot enter binding agreements or collaborations with external parties on behalf of the University. An agreement is only valid if an authorised signatory has signed it. The Tech Transfer Office (TTO) of the University of Copenhagen negotiates all IP agreements, be they research collaboration agreements or commercial agreements (license agreements). The TTO ensures that the agreements adhere to laws and regulations for public research institutions and observe standards for responsible research conduct. In all agreements, it is a prerequisite that researchers at the University of Copenhagen are able to publish research results and use them for research purposes.

Elaboration can be found in: "The University of Copenhagen's code of good scientific practice in research collaborations with external partners", "The University of Copenhagen's code for public sector services"(Danish only), "UCPH's practical guide to researchers regarding cooperation with external parties" and "The University of Copenhagen Policy Paper on Academic Freedom".

2.6 Conflicts of Interest

The University of Copenhagen collaborates with private companies, public institutions, and agencies. The University wants to maintain and strengthen such research collaborations with external partners, in order to enhance the relevance of the research and extend its impact outside of the University.

According to the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, a conflict of interest is defined as "a situation in which financial or other interests have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgment." In a worst-case scenario, conflicts of interest can not only lead to research misconduct that threatens the public's trust in science, they can also influence the direction and interpretation of research in more subtle ways.

Official monitoring and disclosure play a key role in managing conflicts of interest; thus, all researchers at the University of Copenhagen must disclose possible conflicts of interest on their online researcher profile. To ensure transparency about possible conflicts of interest, the University of Copenhagen's rules about external activities are clear. The aim of these rules is to give researchers the best possible conditions for collaboration and interaction with the surrounding community, and to avoid conflicts of interest when engaging in external collaborations.

The rules ensure that:

- Research results are not affected by external parties' special interests
- Researchers are free to publish and present their research results
- There is transparency about potential conflicts of interests
- The duty of confidentiality is respected

Staff can find more information regarding the rules about external activities and subsidiary occupation in the Employee Guide. A short guide for handling conflicts of interest can be found in the TTO's "Conflicts of Interest",and staff can read more on the subject in the Research Portal on KUnet.

3. Responsible Research Teaching, Training, and Supervision

It is the University's responsibility to stimulate and develop critical scientific and scholarly discussion, as discussions are vital for preserving and developing the principles of responsible conduct of research and preventing research misconduct. To promote the necessary awareness and organisational readiness to handle possible breaches of the code of conduct, the University of Copenhagen continuously works to promote a culture of honesty, transparency, and responsibility.

This is done through training and supervision, and via institutions providing advice and handling claims regarding scientific misconduct or breaches of the code of conduct for responsible research.

3.1 Teaching, training, and supervision

All persons involved in research at the University of Copenhagen (at the BA, MA, PhD, postdoc, associate and full professor levels, and permanent and visiting staff) must familiarise themselves with The University of Copenhagen's Code of Conduct for Responsible Research. To promote and support this endeavour, the University has introduced a number of initiatives:

- All new employees must declare themselves familiar and in agreement with the University of Copenhagen Code of Conduct for Responsible Research when signing their employment contract.
- The principles behind responsible conduct of research will be an academic learning objective for all BA and MA introductions beginning no later than the beginning of the 2020 academic year.
- All PhD students and new principal PhD supervisors must complete a course on responsible conduct of research.
- Existing principal PhD supervisors must complete a course on responsible conduct of research.
- All staff and students at the University can access the online course in research integrity, Epigeum.

3.2 Advice and guidance on responsible research

The University of Copenhagen has established institutions for advice on questions regarding responsible research on multiple levels. Each Faculty has appointed a *Named Person* who can offer advice regarding possible misconduct or breaches of the principles of responsible research.

Furthermore, research ethics committees can be assembled in all faculties as needed. Finally, the University has appointed a Practice Committee responsible for articulating norms for responsible research, considering cases of questionable research practices and processing cases of scientific misconduct to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

3.2.1 Named Persons

The Named Persons are assigned a number of responsibilities in the faculties:

- To focus on responsible research in general in the Faculty
- To advise on how to conduct responsible research
- To advise regarding suspicions of breaches of the code of conduct for responsible research

The Named Person is an independent entity. All employees and students can contact the Named Person at their Faculty with questions regarding responsible conduct of research.

If a case of a suspected breach of the code of conduct for responsible research needs to be processed further, the plaintiff can submit their claim to the Practice Committee, who will then decide if the

case should be forwarded to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct (cf., [Act on research misconduct etc](). §10 and §11).

3.2.2 Faculty research ethics committees

The University of Copenhagen is committed to ensuring that all research activities that necessitate ethical consideration are conducted in a way that respects the dignity, rights, and welfare of, for example, human or animal participants, and which minimises risk to any participants, researchers, third parties, and to the University itself. In accordance with international policies on research involving human participants, as well as national and EU regulations on personal data, the University will ensure that an appropriate ethical review is applied to all research projects at the University.

Research ethics committees can be assembled as needed in all faculties. The research ethics committees assess research practices with sensitivity to ethical considerations within their relevant fields.

Specifically, research ethics committees offer, for example, ethical assessments of research projects and, for some committees, publications required by funders or journals that fall outside the area of regional scientific ethics committees or other national institutions.

3.2.3 The Practice Committee

The Committee on Good Scientific Practice (the Practice Committee) is established by the Rector and is an internal committee composed of representatives appointed by the Academic Councils of the six faculties. The committee deals with questions of responsible research in accordance with the [Act on research misconduct etc.]().

The Practice Committee contributes to clarify the existing norms for responsible research and considers cases of suspected breaches of responsible research. If the Committee finds that a case is serious enough to be labelled as actual misconduct, it passes the case to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct. The Committee considers cases submitted as written complaints, cases submitted by members of staff seeking to clear their names in the wake of rumours of misconduct, cases referred by the Rector, and cases the Committee itself deems of "special significance." The Practice Committee also hosts conferences on various topics related to responsible conduct of research.

Staff can find more info about *Named Persons*, Research Ethics Committees, and the Practice Committee on the Research Portal.

4. Research Misconduct and Breaches of Responsible Conduct of Research

Everyone – employees, former employees, both academic and administrative, and students and persons not affiliated with the University – and the University leadership especially, is obligated to react to suspicions of breaches of responsible conduct of research at the University of Copenhagen.

Advice regarding how to proceed can be obtained from the Named Person at the relevant Faculty, and suspicions can be shared with University management or with the Practice Committee, who will process the claim.

At the University of Copenhagen, the Practice Committee processes claims of questionable conduct of research or research misconduct. The committee may choose to reject a case, investigate it, or to refer it to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

In specific cases of suspicion, The University of Copenhagen's Code of Conduct for Responsible Research should be applied. Following the [Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) this means that:

- The persons involved in addressing the suspicion and handling the investigation should be impartial.
- The investigators should possess professional competences within the specific fields of research and thorough knowledge of responsible conduct of research. Preferably, one or more investigators should have prior experience with cases concerning research misconduct and/or breaches of responsible conduct of research.
- The parties to the case should be highly involved in processing the case by being allowed to comment on the investigational material and by being continually informed of the status of the case.
- The parties to the case should be protected to the extent possible so that:
  o persons bringing forward suspicions in good faith ('whistle-blowers') are protected from reprisals
  o complaints strictly brought forward in bad faith (as harassment) should in themselves be considered a breach of responsible conduct of research
  o the identities of the parties are kept confidential to the extent possible.
- Similar cases/situations should be treated similarly.
- Investigation procedures should be made public.
- Cases should be concluded efficiently, so that no person is part of an investigation longer than strictly necessary.

The University of Copenhagen subscribes to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct's definition of research misconduct and other violations of responsible conduct of research:

[The Act on research misconduct etc](#). defines research misconduct as fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism committed willfully, or gross negligence in the planning, performing, or reporting of research.

- Fabrication: Undisclosed construction of data or substitution with fictitious data
- Falsification: Manipulation of research material, equipment or process as well as changing or omitting data or results making the research misleading
- Plagiarism: Appropriation of others' ideas, processes, results, texts or specific terms without rightful crediting

[The Act on research misconduct etc](#). defines questionable research practice as:

"Breaches of current standards on responsible conduct of research, including those of the Danish code of conduct, and other applicable institutional, national and international practices and guidelines on research integrity."

More information can be found on the Practice Committee's website.

5. Links

Act on research misconduct etc. (Danish only)

Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

Data Management Planner, *DMPonline*

Epigeum

Practice Committee website

Researcher Portal

Subsidiary occupation in the Employee Guide

Tech Transfer Office's pixiguide "Conflicts of Interest"

The University of Copenhagen's Code for Public Sector Services (Danish only)

UCPH Code for Authorship

UCPH Policy for Research Data

UCPH Policy Paper on Academic Freedom

UCPH Practical Guide for Researchers Regarding Cooperation with External Parties

UCPH Code of Good Scientific Practice in Research Collaborations with External Partners

Vancouver Rules