



UNIVERSITÀ
DI TRENTO

GUIDELINES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY



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PREAMBLE

Safeguarding and promoting integrity and quality in research constitute one of the fundamental duties of the University and represent an essential condition for the cultural and civil growth of society.

In light of this assumption of responsibility, the University of Trento (from now on UniTrento) adopts these Guidelines for Research integrity to support the aforementioned commitment. The document outlines the principles of **ethical and professional responsibility, honesty, and correctness** that must be observed in all phases of research, whether conducted individually or in a group.

These Guidelines for Research integrity are intended to complement the UniTrento Code of Ethics by specifying and contextualising its principles with respect to research activities. Accordingly, these Guidelines shall be interpreted and applied in accordance with the principles set out in the Code of Ethics of the University of Trento.

The Guidelines are set within a perspective of **promoting good conduct and preventing behaviour** that does not conform to the principles of integrity indicated by the "European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity", developed by the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA).

PART I – APPLICABILITY AND PRINCIPLES

Art. 1 – Scope of Application

Whoever performs research activities within the University of Trento is obliged to respect the values and ethical rules and behaviours expressed in these guidelines.

This provision applies to all **persons who are temporarily or permanently affiliated with the University of Trento, or are conducting research activities** voluntarily, under a contract, or without formal affiliation. The same provision applies also to **external persons** who access and use the University's core facilities and infrastructures, and to **technical and administrative staff**.



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The principles of research integrity and the conduct outlined in the guidelines are set as **general principles of behaviour** for tenured and fixed-term professors and researchers, and in general for personnel under the public law regime referred to in Article 3, paragraph 2, Legislative Decree no. 165 of March 30, 2001, insofar as they are compatible with the provisions of their respective regulations.

Where research activities are funded, in whole or in part, by the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS), any allegation falling within the definition of Research Misconduct under 42 CFR Part 93, as well as any matter concerning Financial Conflicts of Interest under 42 CFR Part 50, Subpart F, and 45 CFR Part 94, shall be handled in accordance with the relevant policies of UniTrento, namely the “Research Misconduct Policy for Public Health Service (PHS) Funding” and the “Financial Conflict of Interest (FCOI) Policy for Public Health Service (PHS) Funding”. Such application shall be without prejudice to the continued applicability of the Code of Ethics and the Guidelines for Research Integrity of the University of Trento.

Art. 2 – Fundamental Principles

Research integrity refers to the principles of **ethical and professional responsibility** that must be respected throughout all phases of research, from its conception up to the dissemination, valorisation, and exploitation of the results. These principles apply to all involved actors: funding bodies, research institutions, researchers, and those who promote and evaluate research.

The fundamental principles and values are:

- a. **Protection of fundamental human rights**, ensuring that research activities prioritize human rights and well-being, while respecting applicable ethical standards including the right to the protection of personal data, and in full compliance with national, international and European law.
- b. **Reliability and Awareness** in guaranteeing the quality of research, in rigorous planning, in the chosen methodology, in the impartial analysis of results, and in the use of resources.
- c. **Awareness** of the ethical implications that research activity entails, which necessitates knowing and implementing, in every phase of research, all actions aimed at preventing and mitigating any ethical risks.



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- d. **Honesty** in the promotion, development, conduct, review, reporting, and communication of results in a transparent, fair, complete, and impartial manner, avoiding, in any phase of the research and as far as possible, any form of conflict of interest and abuse of one's institutional role.
- e. **Independence** in design, conduct and communication of research activities.
- f. **Responsibility** for the research from its conception to the publication of results, for its management and organisation, supervision, and the analysis of its impact in a broad sense.
- g. **Accountability** to all parties affected by its decisions. It involves justifying actions, reporting on performance, and engaging stakeholders to align activities with ethical standards and long-term sustainability goals.
- h. **Respect** for all colleagues involved in the research, for the society within which one operates, its cultural heritage, ecosystems, and the environment.
- i. **Correctness** in agreeing with all investigators on the objectives of the research, its different phases, the equitable and non-discriminatory division of roles, and the methods for disseminating the results.
- j. **Diligence** in ensuring that research results are made available to the scientific community in a timely and accurate manner with respect to both the chosen methodology and the completeness of the data and results.
- k. **Open science**, intended as an approach to the scientific process based on the principles and values of democratic societies, in particular collaboration, open and timely sharing of results, methods of knowledge dissemination based on online digital technologies (using recognized standards and protocols), and transparency of validation and evaluation of research products to promote their integrity and reproducibility.
- l. **Cybersecurity**, intended as the obligation to safeguard the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of information, communication systems and research data, in full compliance with UniTrento internal policies and current cybersecurity regulations.

PART II – CONDUCT DETRIMENTAL TO RESEARCH INTEGRITY

Art. 3 – Research Activity

In carrying out their activities, researchers **must not behave in a manner contrary to the Fundamental Principles listed in art. 2 of these Guidelines.**



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Furthermore, research activities involving **personal or sensitive data** must be conducted responsibly and in compliance with applicable ethical and legal standards.

All behaviours that **hinder the activity of other researchers, lead to discrimination or abuse, damage the reputation of the institution, or undermine the credibility of the scientific activity** are to be considered detrimental to research integrity.

Art. 4 – Funding and Assignments

Researchers **must not accept funding or assignments for research activities** whose purposes are in conflict with the fundamental principles of UniTrento, as established in documents such as the Code of Ethics, the Code of Conduct, the Statute, and Article 2 of these Guidelines.

Researchers must conduct their activity in a manner that **avoids financial conflicts of interest**; UniTrento manages such situations in accordance with its agreements with funding bodies.

Art. 5 – Conflicts of Interest

Researchers must **avoid and must not conceal**, even partially, actual or potential conflicts of interest that emerge in any phase of the research.

Researchers **must acknowledge and mention any contributions received from research funders**, whether public or private, in any document that is made public.

In carrying out the activity of **peer reviewer, editorial manager, or evaluator of third-party projects or scientific activities**, researchers must **refrain from making decisions, providing opinions, or intervening** in any way in situations that could give rise to a conflict of interest of a personal or professional nature.

Art. 6 – Relationships with Other Researchers

Researchers **must not intentionally compromise, slow down, or otherwise hinder the activity of other researchers**.

Any action in defence of one's legitimate interests must, in any case, be exercised in compliance with the general principles of research integrity.



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Researchers **must not submit unfounded reports or accusations** of misconduct, nor shall they confuse or mislead investigations, in order to obtain a personal or professional advantage, or to harm the honour or reputation of other researchers.

Art. 7 – Coordination of Projects or Collaborative Research Groups

Researchers acting as **principal investigator** or holding similar roles **must not abuse their position**.

Abusive conduct includes, in particular:

- a. **Imposing tasks that are inconsistent with the roles** defined within a project or research group.
- b. **Submitting funding requests** not approved in accordance with the procedures established within a project or research group.
- c. **Making spending decisions** that are not shared or are inconsistent with project budgets.
- d. **Using the results of collective research for personal purposes**.
- e. **Imposing prohibitions or limits on the use of research data and results** where not justified by confidentiality constraints or other rules relating to the use and dissemination of results.

Art. 8 – Environment, Health, Dignity of Persons, and Respect for Animals

Research that is likely to compromise human health, safety, and environmental integrity, or is contrary to the dignity of persons or respect for other living species, or is in any case in contrast with good bioethical practices, must not be conducted.

This prohibition is observed with maximum attention and caution to research involving minors.

To ensure adherence to ethical standards and comply with legal obligations, UniTrento adopts a **Child Protection Policy** that applies to research involving children, particularly those activities that entail direct interaction between research staff and minors. This policy is founded upon the principles of human dignity, respect, and responsibility, aiming to protect children's rights — as outlined in documents such as the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** and the **Keeping Children Safe International Child Safeguarding Standards** — and upholding the principle of 'do no harm.'



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Art. 9 – Misconduct in research

Misconduct in research for the purpose of these guidelines includes, but is not limited to, doing, planning, or attempting any of the following while proposing, performing, reviewing research, or reporting the results of research activities:

- a. **Fabrication:** making up data or results and recording or reporting them as if they are real.
- b. **Falsification:** manipulating research materials, equipment, images, or processes, or changing, omitting, or suppressing data or results without justification, such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.
- c. **Plagiarism:** using someone else's work or ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit to the original source.
- d. **Further violations of good research practice:** any conduct that distorts the research record or damages the integrity of the research process or of researchers.

Researchers shall exercise due diligence to avoid, in addition to the conduct listed above, any inappropriate use of the intellectual work of others.

In accordance with the principles set out above, and without limiting the scope of misconduct in research, the following behaviours constitute violations of good research practice:

- a. publishing data or results that are deceptive, incomplete, or not obtained using the methods described in the publication;
- b. using, in whole or in part, their own or others' publications without correctly citing the source;
- c. publishing translations of works already published in another language without acknowledging the original contribution;
- d. using or imposing the citation of non-essential works solely for the purpose of artificially increasing the impact of scientific production, the prestige of a journal or scientific series, or that of a research group.

Research misconduct does not encompass honest mistakes or differences in opinion.



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Art. 10 – Co-authorship

It is **not permitted to list as a co-author** of a scientific publication someone who has **not effectively and significantly contributed** to the realisation of the research, even if they perform structural coordination functions.

It is likewise forbidden to **omit the mention as an author of someone who has played an active role** in the preparation of the scientific publication.

It is not permitted to **create authorial hierarchies that suggest individual contributions different from those actually made** to the research.

Art. 11 – Alteration of Data

Researchers **must not alter their scientific or professional credentials** in any form of communication or document of public dissemination or relevance.

Researchers **must not falsify the names of authors or some of them in a publication** to maliciously prevent their identification or for boastfulness.

Researchers **must not submit manuscripts for possible publication in any way that makes their origin untraceable**.

Art. 12 – Preservation of and Access to Research Data

It is **not permitted to selectively collect** in an artful manner **or destroy** materials, data, records, and information essential for verifying research results.

Researchers **must not use or grant access to unpublished data, materials, methods, and results without the consent of those who developed or produced them**.

Researchers **must not prevent or obstruct access to the data used in research whose results have already been made public**. Exceptions are granted in situations governed by copyright, intellectual property, or data protection law, or by specific agreements that impose confidentiality constraints, which must, in any case, be previously authorised by the University.



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The preservation and access to data must take place in **compliance with the required cybersecurity standards**, in order to guarantee their integrity, confidentiality, and availability throughout the entire research lifecycle and in full compliance with the University's information security policies.

Art. 13 – Declarations of Affiliation

In scientific publications, researchers **must indicate their affiliation with UniTrento** even in cases where they derive from activities carried out at or on behalf of other institutions or from activities carried out within research groups involving a plurality of subjects.

Art. 14 – Evaluation of Persons, Projects, or Publications

Researchers **must not deliberately formulate misleading judgments** on projects, people, or research products.

Researchers **must not violate confidentiality obligations** or disclose confidential data or information related to projects or research products.

Researchers **must not intentionally hinder or delay the publication of scientific works**.

Art. 15 – Patents

In the event that the product of the research carried out by several researchers is **patentable, the undue appropriation of the invention rights is prohibited**.

PART III – PROCEDURE FOR INTERVENTION AGAINST VIOLATIONS

Art. 16 – Reporting Conduct Detrimental to Research Integrity

Researchers, regardless of their role and rank, are expected to have adequate knowledge of these guidelines, to implement them appropriately and to **promptly report any conduct detrimental to research integrity** and contrary to good practices carried out by researchers belonging to the same organisation or with whom they have or have had a scientific collaboration relationship.



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Reports relating to alleged violations of principles and behaviours contemplated in these guidelines must be signed and submitted to the Rector, in accordance with the procedure provided by art. 18 of the UniTrento Code of Ethics.

Art. 17 – Procedure for Evaluating Violations

The **Senate Commission for the Implementation of the Code of Ethics**, provided for in Article 17 of the UniTrento Code of Ethics, oversees the application and interpretation of these guidelines. It is responsible for assessing any conduct that may be detrimental to the integrity and quality of scientific and academic research.

The Commission has an advisory and investigative role and proceeds according to the forms, methods, and timing specified in Article 18 of the UniTrento Code of Ethics.

Once the preliminary investigation phase is completed, the Commission adopts a written opinion, which is forwarded to the Rector and by him to the Academic Senate, which adopts the final decision and imposes sanctions.

Art. 18 – Sanctions

In the event of violation of these guidelines and related policies, the **sanctions specified in Article 18 of the University Code of Ethics** will be applied, in compliance with the principles of proportionality and precision.



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ANNEXES

1. CHILD PROTECTION POLICY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO
2. FINANCIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST (FCOI) POLICY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS) FUNDING
3. RESEARCH MISCONDUCT POLICY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (PHS) FUNDING