

gesis

Leibniz Institute
for the Social Sciences

Rules for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice

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1. June 2022

Content

- Introduction4
- 1 Principles5
 - 1.1 Guideline 1: Commitment to the general principles5
 - 1.2 Guideline 2: Professional ethics5
 - 1.3 Guideline 3: Organisational responsibility of the head of GESIS5
 - 1.4 Guideline 4: Responsibility for the management of departments and teams.....6
 - 1.5 Guideline 5: Dimensions of performance and assessment criteria.....7
 - 1.6 Guideline 6: Ombudspersons7
- 2 Research Process.....9
 - 2.1 Guideline 7: Cross-phase quality assurance9
 - 2.2 Guideline 8: Stakeholders, responsibilities and roles9
 - 2.3 Guideline 9: Research design10
 - 2.4 Guideline 10: Legal and ethical frameworks, usage rights10
 - 2.5 Guideline 11: Methods and standards.....11
 - 2.6 Guideline 12: Documentation.....12
 - 2.7 Guideline 13: Providing public access to research results12
 - 2.8 Guideline 14: Authorship13
 - 2.9 Guideline 15: Publication medium14
 - 2.10 Guideline 16: Confidentiality and neutrality of review processes and discussions.....14
 - 2.11 Guideline 17: Archiving.....14
- 3 Non-Compliance with Good Research Practice, Procedures.....16
 - 3.1 Guideline 18: Complainants and respondents16
 - 3.2 Guideline 19: Procedures in cases of alleged research misconduct17
 - 3.3 Conclusion of the procedure18
- 4 Ethical evaluation of research projects20
- 5 Final passage21
- 6 Appendices22
 - 6.1 Research Data Guideline22
 - 6.2 Recommendation on authorship22

Introduction¹

Science serves to increase knowledge and is committed to the well-being of people and the protection of the environment. To this end, scientists must not be content with complying with legal rules, but must also observe ethical principles. All GESIS scientists are committed to the rules of good scientific practice.

The present guideline of GESIS for ensuring good scientific practice implements levels one and two of guidelines 1 to 19 of the DFG code "Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Research Practice" of August 2019 – adopted in the Leibniz Association in the version "Leibniz Code of Good Scientific Practice" in November 2021 – as well as the "Guideline for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association" of 28. 11.2019. It also draws on the "Code of Ethics" of the German Sociological Association of 10.6.2017 as well as on the "Model Statutes for Committees on Ethics in Security-Relevant Research" (no date) of the DFG and Leopoldina.

In the first part, the rules formulate the principles of good scientific practice and the role and tasks of responsible actors. The second part specifies requirements for the research process. The third chapter defines the procedure for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct as well as the possibilities for sanctions in the event of scientific misconduct. The last chapter regulates the ethical evaluation of research projects. Appendices supplement the rules with the research data guideline and the recommendation for determining authorship.

GESIS is aware of its responsibility to convey the norms and rules of good scientific practice to all scientists, especially in qualification phases. Compliance with these rules is expressly stipulated by GESIS as a contractual obligation.

¹ This is a translation of the German text.

1 Principles

1.1 Guideline 1: Commitment to the general principles

Guideline:

Individual researchers are responsible for ensuring that their own conduct complies with the standards of good research practice.

Explanations:

In particular, the principles include working *lege artis*, maintaining strict honesty in attributing one's own contributions and those of others, rigorously questioning all findings, and permitting and promoting critical discourse within the research community. The principles of good research practice are set out in the following guidelines.

1.2 Guideline 2: Professional ethics

Guideline:

Researchers are responsible for putting the fundamental values and norms of research into practice and advocating for them. Education in the principles of good research begins at the earliest possible stage in academic teaching and research training. Researchers at all career levels regularly update their knowledge about the standards of good research practice and the current state of the art.

Explanations:

Experienced and early career researchers support each other in a process of continuous mutual learning and ongoing training and maintain a regular dialogue.

1.3 Guideline 3: Organisational responsibility of heads of GESIS

Guideline

The Executive Board of GESIS creates the basic framework for research. It is responsible for ensuring adherence to and the promotion of good scientific practice, and for appropriate career support for all researchers. The Executive Board of GESIS guarantees the necessary conditions to enable researchers to comply with legal and ethical standards. The basic framework includes clear written policies and procedures for staff selection and development as well as for early career support and equal opportunity.

Explanations:

The Executive Board of GESIS is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate organisational structure is in place at the institution. He or she makes certain that the tasks of leadership, supervision, quality assurance and conflict management are clearly allocated in accordance with the size of individual research work units and suitably communicated to members and employees.

Regulations on personnel selection are contained in the documents "[Job advertisements at GESIS](#)" and "[Gender-equitable personnel selection](#)". For personnel development, there are regulations for the "[Scientific Career at GESIS](#)" and for continuing education. With regard to staff selection and development, due consideration is given to gender equality and diversity. The relevant processes are transparent and avoid implicit bias as much as possible. For equal opportunities as a whole, see the documents on [equality](#) and [work and family](#). Suitable supervisory structures and policies are established for early career researchers, see "[Doctoral Funding at GESIS](#)" and "[Postdoc Phase at GESIS](#)". Career advice, training opportunities and mentoring are offered to researchers and research support staff e.g. in the context of the annual employee appraisals.

1.4 Guideline 4: Responsibility of the heads of departments and teams

Guideline:

The head of a scientific department or team – Guideline 4 applies accordingly to the management of other work units – is responsible for the entire organizational unit. Collaboration within the unit is designed such that the group as a whole can perform its tasks, the necessary cooperation and coordination can be achieved, and all members understand their roles, rights and duties. The leadership role includes ensuring adequate individual supervision of early career researchers, integrated in the overall institutional policy, as well as career development for researchers and research support staff. Suitable organisational measures are in place at the level of the individual unit and of the leadership of the institution to prevent the abuse of power and exploitation of dependent relationships.

Explanations:

The size and the organisation of the scientific organization unit are designed to allow leadership tasks, particularly skills training, research support and supervisory duties, to be performed appropriately. The performance of leadership tasks is associated with a corresponding responsibility. GESIS has adopted a [leadership mission statement](#) for management personnel, and formal role descriptions are to follow. Researchers and research support staff benefit from a balance of support and personal responsibility appropriate to their career level. They are given adequate status with corresponding rights of participation. Through gradually increasing autonomy, they are empowered to shape their career. Abuse of power with regard to career is curbed by defined processes and criteria in the paper "Scientific Career at GESIS". In addition to the ombudsperson and the

person of trust, there are other contact persons in the form of the employee representatives on the Board of Trustees and the Institute Council, the spokespersons for doctoral students and post-docs, the equal opportunity officers, women of trust and the complaints office in accordance with the General Equal Treatment Act, and last but not least, the works councils. The regular, externally supervised survey on occupational health management is also a monitoring tool.

1.5 Guideline 5: Dimensions of performance and assessment criteria

Guideline:

To assess the performance of researchers, a multidimensional approach is called for; in addition to academic and scientific achievements, other aspects may be taken into consideration. Performance is assessed primarily on the basis of qualitative measures, while quantitative indicators may be incorporated into the overall assessment only with appropriate differentiation and reflection. Where provided voluntarily, individual circumstances stated in curricula vitae – as well as the categories specified in the German General Equal Treatment Act (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz) – are taken into account when forming a judgement.

Explanations:

High-quality research is oriented towards criteria specific to individual disciplines. In addition to the generation of and critical reflection on findings, other aspects of performance are taken into consideration in the evaluation process. Criteria for the four areas of scientific excellence, third-party funding, scientific service and soft skills are listed in the paper "Scientific career at GESIS" and there are further regulations for performance bonuses. Appropriate allowance is made for periods of absence due to personal, family or health reasons or for prolonged training or qualification phases resulting from such periods, and for alternative career paths or similar circumstances.

1.6 Guideline 6: Ombudspersons

Guideline:

GESIS has one independent external ombudsperson and an internal person of trust to whom their employees can turn with questions relating to good research practice and in cases of suspected misconduct. Employees can also turn to the DFG's nationally active "Ombudsman for Science" committee.

Explanations:

The chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall appoint an ombudsperson after agreement with the Executive Board. Researchers who are persons of integrity and who have

management experience are eligible to be selected as ombudspersons. The term of office is four years; a further term is possible. The ombudsperson is neither employed by GESIS nor a member of a supervisory body.

In order to have a low-threshold offer, the institute council appoints by secret vote an internal person of trust for the same period as the ombudsperson, who also represents the ombudsperson. The person of trust shall be independent of the scientific departments. In cases where third parties could be harmed, or upon request, the person of trust shall establish contact with the ombudsperson.

As neutral and qualified contact persons, the ombudsperson and the person of trust advise on issues relating to good research practice and in suspected cases of scientific misconduct and, where possible, contribute to solution-oriented conflict mediation. Moreover, only the ombudsperson, not the person of trust, investigates allegations of scientific misconduct in a formal procedure. Both maintain confidentiality in dealing with queries and, exercise their office independently and free of instructions, the ombudsperson on an honorary basis. They receive the required content support and acceptance they need to carry out their duties. The ombudsperson reports annually to the board of trustees, and the person of trust reports annually to the ombudsperson.

If the long-term reliable fulfillment of tasks no longer appears possible or if there is no longer confidence in the proper fulfillment of tasks, the GESIS scientists can request the chairperson of the Board of Trustees to remove the ombudsperson by at least two-thirds of the votes, and the Institute Council can vote the person of trust out of office by at least two-thirds of the votes. The persons concerned must be given the opportunity to be heard before such a decision is made.

2 Research Process

The handling of research data is regulated in detail in the appendix "Research Data Guideline".

2.1 Guideline 7: Cross-phase quality assurance

Guideline:

Researchers carry out each step of the research process *lege artis*. When research findings are made publicly available (in the narrower sense of publication, but also in a broader sense through other communication channels), the quality assurance mechanisms used are always explained. This applies especially when new methods are developed.

Explanations:

Continuous quality assurance during the research process includes, in particular, compliance with subject-specific standards and established methods, processes such as the collection, processing and analysis of research data, the selection and use of research software, software development and programming.

If researchers have made their findings publicly available and subsequently become aware of inconsistencies or errors in them, they make the necessary corrections. If the inconsistencies or errors constitute grounds for retracting a publication, the researchers will promptly request the publisher, infrastructure provider, etc. to correct or retract the publication and make a corresponding announcement. The same applies if researchers are made aware of such inconsistencies or errors by third parties.

The origin of the data, materials and software used in the research process is disclosed and the reuse of data is clearly indicated; original sources are cited. The nature and the scope of research data generated during the research process are described. Research data are handled in accordance with the requirements of the relevant subject area. The source code of publicly available software must be persistent, citable and documented. Depending on the particular subject area, it is an essential part of quality assurance that results or findings can be replicated or confirmed by other researchers (for example with the aid of a detailed description of materials and methods).

2.2 Guideline 8: Stakeholders, responsibilities and roles

Guideline:

The roles and responsibilities of the researchers and research support staff participating in a research project must be clear at each stage of the project.

Explanations:

The participants in a research project engage in regular dialogue. They define their roles and responsibilities in a suitable way and adapt them where necessary. Adaptations are likely to be needed if the focus of a participant's work changes.

2.3 Guideline 9: Research design

Guideline:

Researchers take into account and acknowledge the current state of research when planning a project. To identify relevant and suitable research questions, they familiarise themselves with existing research in the public domain. Methods to avoid (unconscious) distortions in the interpretation of findings, e.g. the use of blinding in experiments, are used where possible. GESIS ensures that the necessary basic framework for this is in place.

Explanations:

GESIS supports the research of the current state of research by maintaining a library supplemented by the offers of the cooperating universities. Researchers examine whether and to what extent gender and diversity dimensions may be of significance to the research project (with regard to methods, work programme, objectives, etc.). The context in which the research was conducted is taken into consideration when interpreting findings. GESIS offers further education on research designs.

2.4 Guideline 10: Legal and ethical frameworks, usage rights

Guideline:

Researchers adopt a responsible approach to the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of research. They comply with rights and obligations, particularly those arising from legal requirements and contracts with third parties, and where necessary seek approvals. With regard to research projects, the potential consequences of the research should be evaluated in detail and the ethical aspects should be assessed (see chapter 4). The legal framework of a research project includes documented agreements on usage rights relating to data and results generated by the project.

Explanations:

Researchers maintain a continual awareness of the risks associated with the misuse of research results. Their responsibility is not limited to compliance with legal requirements but also includes an obligation to use their knowledge, experience and skills such that risks can be recognised, assessed and evaluated. They pay particular attention to the aspects associated with security-relevant research (dual use). These exist in particular in the case of scientific work that can be assumed to produce knowledge, products or technologies that can be directly misused by third parties.

Where possible and practicable, researchers conclude documented agreements on usage rights at the earliest possible point in a research project. Documented agreements are especially useful when multiple academic and/or non-academic institutions are involved in a research project or when it is likely that a researcher will move to a different institution and continue using the data he or she generated for his or her own research purposes. In particular, the researcher who collected the data is entitled to use them. During a research project, those entitled to use the data decide whether third parties should have access to them (subject to data protection regulations).

Ethical standards and legal norms must be adhered when collecting personal data and dealing with persons under investigation, whether in surveys, experiments or observations. In particular, the personal rights and autonomy of persons involved in investigations must be respected. In general, participation in social science research is voluntary and based on the most detailed information possible about the aims and methods of the research project in question. As a rule, consent to participation must be obtained in advance and documented. If this jeopardizes the goal of the research, appropriate alternative measures must be taken. Persons who are involved in investigations as observers or respondents or in other ways, for example in connection with the evaluation of personal documents, must not be exposed to any disadvantages or risks as a result of the research. The persons concerned must be informed of any risks that exceed the level of what is normal in everyday life. In general, a reasonable ratio of risks to probable returns must be maintained. The right to anonymity of persons under investigation must be guaranteed. Confidential information obtained from persons under investigation must be treated accordingly and protected by careful precautions. Provisions of data protection must be complied with.

2.5 Guideline 11: Methods and standards

Guideline:

To answer research questions, researchers use scientifically sound and appropriate methods. When developing and applying new methods, they attach particular importance to quality assurance and the establishment of standards.

Explanations:

The application of a method normally requires specific expertise that is ensured, where necessary, by suitable cooperative arrangements. The establishment of standards for methods, the use of software, the collection of research data and the description of research results is essential for the comparability and transferability of research outcomes.

2.6 Guideline 12: Documentation

Guideline:

Researchers document all information relevant to the production of a research result as clearly as is required by and is appropriate for the relevant subject area to allow the result to be reviewed and assessed. In general, this also includes documenting individual results that do not support the research hypothesis. The selection of results must be avoided. Where subject-specific recommendations exist for review and assessment, researchers create documentation in accordance with these guidelines. If the documentation does not satisfy these requirements, the constraints and the reasons for them are clearly explained. Documentation and research results must not be manipulated; they are protected as effectively as possible against manipulation.

Explanations:

An important basis for enabling replication is to make available the information necessary to understand the research (including the research data used or generated, the methodological, evaluation and analytical steps taken, and, if relevant, the development of the hypothesis), to ensure that citations are clear, and, as far as possible, to enable third parties to access this information. Where research software is being developed, the source code is documented.

2.7 Guideline 13: Providing public access to research results

Guideline:

As a rule, researchers make all results available as part of scientific/academic discourse. In specific cases, however, there may be reasons not to make results publicly available (in the narrower sense of publication, but also in a broader sense through other communication channels); this decision must not depend on the influence of third parties. Researchers decide autonomously – with due regard for the conventions of the relevant subject area – whether, how and where to disseminate their results. If it has been decided to make results available in the public domain, researchers describe them clearly and in full. Where possible and reasonable, this includes making the research data, materials and information on which the results are based, as well as the methods and software used, available and fully explaining the work processes. Software programmed by researchers themselves is made publicly available along with the source code. Researchers provide full and correct information about their own preliminary work and that of others.

Explanations:

GESIS has adopted an Open Science Strategy that embeds and elaborates on this guideline and regulates the handling of research data in the appendix below. If research software developed in-house is to be made available to third parties, it will be provided with an appropriate license.

In line with the principle of “quality over quantity”, researchers avoid splitting research into inappropriately small publications. They limit the repetition of content from publications of which they were (co-)authors to that which is necessary to enable the reader to understand the context. They cite results previously made publicly available unless, in exceptional cases, this is deemed unnecessary by the general conventions of the discipline.

2.8 Guideline 14: Authorship

Guideline:

An author is an individual who has made a genuine, identifiable contribution to the content of a research publication of text, data or software. All authors agree on the final version of the work to be published. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, they share responsibility for the publication. Authors seek to ensure that, as far as possible, their contributions are identified by publishers or infrastructure providers such that they can be correctly cited by users.

Explanations:

The contribution must add to the research content of the publication. What constitutes a genuine and identifiable contribution must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and depends on the subject area in question. An identifiable, genuine contribution is deemed to exist particularly in instances in which a researcher – in a research-relevant way – takes part in

- the development and conceptual design of the research project, or
- the analysis/evaluation or interpretation of data, sources and conclusions drawn from them, or
- the drafting of the manuscript.

If a contribution is not sufficient to justify authorship, the individual’s support may be properly acknowledged in footnotes, a foreword or an acknowledgement. Honorary authorship where no such contribution made is not permissible. A leadership or supervisory function does not itself constitute co-authorship.

Collaborating researchers agree on authorship of a publication. The decision as to the order in which authors are named is made in good time, normally no later than when the manuscript is drafted, and in accordance with clear criteria that reflect the practices within the relevant subject areas. As support, GESIS provides an authorship statement document in the appendix. Researchers may not refuse to give their consent to publication of the results without sufficient grounds. Refusal of consent must be justified with verifiable criticism of data, methods or results.

2.9 Guideline 15: Publication medium

Guideline:

Authors select the publication medium carefully, with due regard for its quality and visibility in the relevant field of discourse. Researchers who assume the role of editor carefully select where they will carry out this activity. The scientific/academic quality of a contribution does not depend on the medium in which it is published.

Explanations:

In addition to publication in books and journals, authors may also consider academic repositories, data and software repositories, and blogs. A new or unknown publication medium is evaluated to assess its seriousness. A key criterion to selecting a publication medium is whether it has established guidelines on good research practice. The Leibniz Association provides a [handout](#) on how to avoid predatory publishing.

2.10 Guideline 16: Confidentiality and neutrality of review processes and discussions

Guideline:

Fair behaviour is the basis for the legitimacy of any judgement-forming process. Researchers who evaluate submitted manuscripts, funding proposals or personal qualifications are obliged to maintain strict confidentiality with regard to this process. They disclose all facts that could give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest. The duty of confidentiality and disclosure of facts that could give rise to the appearance of a conflict of interest also applies to members of research advisory and decision-making bodies.

Explanations:

The confidentiality of third-party material to which a reviewer or committee member gains access precludes sharing the material with third parties or making personal use of it. Researchers immediately disclose to the responsible body any potential or apparent conflicts of interest, bias or favouritism relating to the research project being reviewed or the person or matter being discussed.

2.11 Guideline 17: Archiving

Guideline:

Researchers back up research data and results made publicly available, as well as the central materials on which they are based and the research software used, by adequate means according to the standards of the relevant subject area, and retain them for an

appropriate period of time. Where justifiable reasons exist for not archiving particular data, researchers explain these reasons. GESIS provides the necessary infrastructure.

Explanations:

When scientific and academic findings are made publicly available, the research data (generally raw data) on which they are based are generally archived in an accessible and identifiable manner for a period of ten years at the institution where the data were produced or in cross-location repositories. This practice may differ depending on the subject area. In justified cases, shorter archiving periods may be appropriate; the reasons for this are described clearly and comprehensibly. The archiving period begins on the date when the results are made publicly available.

3 Non-Compliance with Good Research Practice, Procedures

3.1 Guideline 18: Complainants and respondents

Guideline:

The ombudsperson of GESIS examining allegations of misconduct takes appropriate measures to protect both the complainant and the respondent. The investigation of allegations of research misconduct must be carried out in strict confidentiality and adhere to the presumption of innocence. The information disclosed by the complainant must be provided in good faith. Knowingly false or malicious allegations may themselves constitute misconduct. The disclosure should not disadvantage the research or professional career prospects of either the complainant or the respondent.

Explanations:

Particularly in the case of early career researchers, the disclosure should not lead to delays in the complainant's own qualification phase and no disadvantage should arise to the writing of final dissertations or doctoral theses; the same applies to working conditions and possible contract extensions.

The ombudsperson of GESIS will respect the presumption of innocence vis-à-vis the respondent at each stage of the process when considering each case. The respondent should not experience any disadvantage resulting from the investigation of the allegation until such time as research misconduct has been formally established. The complainant must have objective reasons for suspecting that an infringement of the standards of good research practice may have occurred.

The ombudsperson of GESIS or the DFG committee "Ombudsman for Science" should be contacted by anyone who suspects scientific misconduct against a (former) GESIS employee or who is exposed to such suspicion.

The review of disclosures where the complainant does not give his/her name (anonymous report) is decided on a case-by-case basis. Disclosures made anonymously can only be investigated if the complainant provides the party investigating the allegation with solid and sufficiently concrete facts. If the complainant's identity is known, the ombudsperson of GESIS will keep the individual's name confidential and will not share it with third parties without the individual's consent. Different requirements apply only if there is a legal obligation or if the respondent cannot otherwise properly defend himself or herself because, as an exception, the case concerns the identity of the complainant. Before the name of the complainant is disclosed, he/she shall be informed thereof; the complainant may decide whether to withdraw the report - if the name is likely to be disclosed. The confidentiality of the process is limited if the complainant makes his or her suspicion public. The ombudsperson will decide on a case-by-case basis how to handle the breach of confidentiality on the part of the complainant. Should research misconduct not be proven,

the complainant must continue to be protected, assuming that the allegations cannot be shown to have been made against his or her better knowledge.

3.2 Guideline 19: Procedures in cases of alleged research misconduct

Guideline:

If the ombudsperson receives an allegation of scientific misconduct, he/she will conduct an investigation if the allegations are sufficiently concrete and the initial suspicion of misconduct is well-founded. In order to carry out this examination, the ombudsperson usually hears at least the accused and the complainant in oral or written form. In order to clarify the facts, he/she may question further persons and obtain expert opinions. The chairperson of the board of trustees decides whether the ombudsperson appears to be biased.

If it becomes apparent in the course of such an investigation that a conclusive clarification of the allegations is not possible at GESIS level or that the conduct of the proceedings is prevented by extraordinary circumstances, the ombudsperson may submit the matter to the Leibniz Ombudsman Board in accordance with the Leibniz Association's guideline.

The ombudsperson shall draw up a written report in which she/he assesses the existence of scientific misconduct. If the ombudsperson concludes that scientific misconduct has occurred, the report shall in particular

- describe and evaluate the extent of such scientific misconduct and
- determine and justify whether such conduct was negligent, grossly negligent, or intentional.

The report may also state what further action or measures the ombudsperson recommends.

The ombudsperson informs the accused, the complainant, the Executive Board and the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the outcome of the review.

GESIS ensures that the entire procedure is carried out as promptly as possible and takes the necessary steps to complete each stage of the procedure within a reasonable timeframe.

At each stage of the procedure, attention shall be paid to compliance with and requirements of legal rules and regulations. The Procedure does not come first or replace statutory rules and procedures.

Explanations:

Not every breach of good research practice constitutes misconduct. Only deliberate or grossly negligent infringements defined in a set of regulations are considered scientific misconduct.

Scientific misconduct includes misrepresentation and misstatement in a scientifically relevant context by, in particular:

- the fabrication of data,
- falsifying data (for example, by selecting desirable or rejecting undesirable results or evaluation procedures without disclosing this, or by manipulating a representation or figure),
- incorrect information in publication lists or a grant application (including misrepresentation of the publication organ and publications in print),
- multiple publication of data or text without appropriate disclosure.

Scientific misconduct includes infringement of intellectual property rights, in particular:

- concerning a legally protected work created by others or essential scientific knowledge, hypotheses, doctrines or research approaches originating from others:
 - the unauthorized adoption or other use of passages without adequate proof of authorship (plagiarism),
 - the exploitation of research approaches and ideas without consent, especially as a reviewer,
 - the presumption or unfounded assumption of scientific authorship or co-authorship as well as the denial of such authorship,
 - the falsification of the content or
 - the unauthorized publication and making available to third parties as long as the work, finding, hypothesis, teaching or research approach has not yet been legally published;
- claiming the authorship or co-authorship of another person without that person's consent.

Scientific misconduct includes unfair obstruction of the research activities of others – including damaging, destroying, or tampering with experimental setups, equipment, records, hardware, software, or other property needed by others to conduct their research.

The disposal of research data, if this violates legal regulations or recognized principles of scientific work, as well as the unlawful non-disposal of (especially personal) data is considered scientific misconduct.

Neglect of scientific leadership responsibilities and supervisory duties by any person with staff responsibilities in a manner that encourages violations of good scientific practice is scientific misconduct.

Co-authorship with the acceptance of participation in a publication tainted by falsification is scientific misconduct.

Deliberately faking the implementation or use of quality assurance measures and procedures (such as peer review) is scientific misconduct.

3.3 Conclusion of the procedure

On the basis of the ombudsperson's report, the Executive Board determines the existence of scientific misconduct or decides to discontinue the proceedings. If it deviates from the vote of the ombudsperson's report, this must be sufficiently justified.

The Executive Board may decide on the following measures (not conclusive) against the person concerned:

- Written reprimand,
- Request to withdraw incriminated publications or – in less serious cases – to correct false data by publishing an erratum,
- forwarding the matter to the third parties concerned, such as the university awarding the academic degrees, if the academic misconduct may result in their withdrawal,
- initiation of any disciplinary, employment, civil or criminal proceedings,
- in the case of intent or gross negligence, exclusion of the person(s) concerned from leading applications for third-party funding for GESIS for one to five years (depending on the severity of the scientific misconduct).

The main reasons that led to the discontinuation of the proceedings or to decisions by the Executive Board on measures to be implemented shall be communicated to the person concerned as well as to any complainants, the ombudsperson and the chairperson of the Board of Trustees.

The Executive Board decides on the disclosure and publication of its decisions and the reports of the ombudsperson on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the existence of a legitimate interest of third parties.

The decisions made by the Executive Board are final for the procedure within GESIS.

4 Ethical evaluation of research projects

In order to ensure compliance with the mentioned guidelines, employees can voluntarily seek ethical advice and have their project assessed ethically. If employees have the impression that ethical standards could be violated in a project, they should seek advice and assessment. Projects for secondary analysis of personal data provided by the data holder in compliance with the relevant legal regulations for secondary analysis are not affected by this. Employees should also seek advice before carrying out a research project if they believe that the research project involves significant safety-related risks, as described in guideline 10.

GESIS has its own Ethics Committee. In these cases, the GESIS Ethics Committee provides advice and assessments, unless this is done externally.

The Ethics Committee consists of five members: the external ombudsperson and the internal person of trust for good scientific practice, an employee with knowledge of the relevant legal regulations and a scientific employee with experience in assessing questions of scientific ethics and, case by case, a member with disciplinary relevance. Both employees and a deputy are appointed by the President for a period of four years. The disciplinary member is appointed by the chairperson on a case by case basis. Re-appointment is possible. The chairperson is the ombudsperson, the deputy chairperson the person of trust. The Committee shall be assisted by an assistant.

The Ethics Committee works independently. The Chairperson shall convene the Ethics Committee as often as necessary and chair the meetings. The meetings are not public, the contents are confidential, the results are recorded. Written resolutions may be passed by circulation. A quorum exists if the majority of the members participate. Biased members are to be excluded from the affected points. Decisions are taken by a majority of the participants. Abstentions and a tie shall be deemed to be rejection.

Ethical assessment takes place in two stages: self-disclosure and assessment by the Ethics Committee. Both levels are based on a questionnaire. The self-disclosure must be submitted to the Ethics Committee in good time before the start of the project or before submission of the project application. The self-disclosure is sufficient if the answers to the questions do not provide any indication for a further examination. The assessment usually takes place within four weeks in the first stage and within eight weeks in the second stage. The results of the ethical assessment will be communicated to the project managers in writing. Further details are regulated by the rules of procedure of the Ethics Committee.

Regardless of the advice provided by the Ethics Committee, the responsibility for the legally and ethically sound execution of projects remains with those responsible for the project.

5 Final passage

The rules for ensuring good scientific practice are adopted by the President and countersigned by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Mannheim, 24.4.2022

signed

signed

Prof. Dr. Christof Wolf
President

Prof. Dr. Marianne Kneuer
Chairwoman of the Board of Trustees

6 Appendices

6.1 Research Data Guideline

6.2 Recommendation on authorship

Research Data Guideline

Annex to the "Rules for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice"

1 Preamble¹

GESIS is committed to the Open Science idea and the long tradition of sharing data in empirical social research. The focus of our offerings is on collecting and making available research data and related activities and information. Research data are the basis and result of scientific work and therefore have a special significance in the scientific process. This guideline defines the principles of responsible handling of research data by researchers at GESIS. It is part of the rules for safeguarding good scientific practice and promotes the implementation of the [Open Science Strategy](#).

GESIS pursues the implementation of this guideline together with researchers in an effort to promote an open research culture characterized by recognition and a willingness to learn.

2 Definitions

Researchers: Researchers encompasses all research-active members of GESIS including employees and doctoral candidates. Visiting researchers or collaborators are also expected to comply with the policy.

Research data: Research data includes all data that are the subject or the result of research processes and individual work steps in the course of research and/or document these processes and work steps. Typical examples of research data are:

- data from surveys, interviews, experiments, or statistical analyses, including unstructured data such as texts or audiovisual information,
- official statistics data, process-generated data, and digital behavioral data,
- laboratory values or results of instrumental measurements,
- simulations as well as
- source code and protocols, e.g., program code for data preparation and statistical analysis,
- test procedures, survey instruments, instructions, process descriptions, and materials such as questionnaires, stimulus materials, and show cards.

¹ With the adoption of the Research Data Guideline, GESIS follows the recommendations of the "Guideline for Handling Research Data in the Leibniz Association". It uses parts of the model guideline of the state initiative NFDI and the guideline for handling research data at the Social Science Research Center Berlin.

The range of data types reflects the diversity and methodological development of scientific disciplines and research procedures. Research data can take different forms during the lifetime of research projects (different variants of primary data, processed data including negative and ambiguous results, shared data, published data).

Research data management: The management of research data includes its planning, acquisition, processing, documentation and storage. It ensures access, re-use, reproducibility and quality assurance of all research data on which scientific results are based.

3 Scope

This policy for the management of research data applies to all researchers active at GESIS and applies to all research data within the meaning of the definitions, unless there are important reasons to the contrary.

4 Legal aspects

In accordance with intellectual property rights and provided that no third party rights, legal provisions or other property rights prohibit it, research data shall be permanently provided with a free license.

For data protection, see Guideline 10 of the "Rules for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice".

5 Handling Research Data

Access: Researchers publish research data and make them available as openly as possible and as closed as necessary. At the same time, GESIS accepts the interest of researchers in the initial exploitation of the research data they create, so that the timing of publication is determined in a manner according to disciplinary standards.

Storage location: Researchers should use repositories and infrastructures for their data that meet current standards for publication and long-term security of research data (e.g. FAIR Data principles, CoreTrustSeal certification), in particular GESIS's own repositories. This includes that the chosen platform supports the description of the data through rich metadata and vocabularies and assigns persistent identifiers (for example DOI, EPIC handle, URN).

Research data that cannot be published for ethical or legal reasons should be stored in a suitable location within the GESIS infrastructure with clearly documented access rules, in compliance with legal requirements.

Storage time: Storage is for an appropriate period of time, at least ten years.

Deletion: If research data and related documents are to be deleted or destroyed after the storage period has expired or for legal or ethical reasons, this may only be done in consideration of relevant legal and ethical aspects. The deletion must be traceable and documented. When deciding whether to retain or delete data, the interests and contractual provisions of third-party funders and other parties involved, in particular contributors and collaboration partners, must be taken into account. Aspects of security and confidentiality must be considered.

6 Responsibilities

In order to support researchers in the implementation of the measures described in this guideline for handling research data, GESIS provides

- appropriate means and resources to advise and qualify its researchers, e.g. on issues of research data management and data publication, and
- services and mechanisms to store, securely retain, and publish research data to ensure access to research data during and after completion of research projects according to disciplinary standards.

The handling of research data in the sense of this guideline is the responsibility of the researchers. This includes that researchers

- take the initiative themselves for better research data management in their own projects and make use of appropriate support and consulting services.
- already during the planning of research phases or when applying for third-party funding projects or preparing cooperation agreements, check whether and how the research data generated there can be processed for the best possible subsequent use and made available in the long term, and whether resources need to be considered for this.
- manage, document, store, and ensure archiving of research data according to accepted standards and practices. This includes defining appropriate responsibilities in the project and documenting them in a suitable data management plan.

Recommendation for Authorship

Annex to the "Rules for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice"

1 Introduction

The communication of scientific work and the resulting findings is an essential prerequisite for the functioning of science. Authorship is therefore a central functional element of science. It stands for the generation of research ideas and projects, for the responsibility for research findings and the publication of the results and thus for scientific progress. This also makes authorship the leading currency of scientific careers. Accordingly, there are many questions: Which rules on authorship should I adhere to, how can I document my authorship and how can I clarify claims to authorship? This guideline helps to answer these questions. It is not obligatory, but an internal recommendation and assistance. If you have any questions, please contact the ombudsperson or the internal person of trust for good scientific practice (see [Intranet](#)).

2 Publications

The "Rules for Good Scientific Practice" of GESIS contain in guideline 14 the binding statements on authorship. Guideline 19 lists as scientific misconduct with respect to authorship in particular "the presumption or unfounded assumption of scientific authorship or co-authorship as well as the denial of such authorship."

This rule is often not sufficient to clarify questions about authorship and its presentation in concrete cases, especially since it is always a question of discretion what is a "genuine" contribution. If there are questions about authorship, the relevant regulations in the respective individual case should be applied. These can be regulations of the publication organ in which the publication is to be made or, for example, relevant professional standards as formulated by professional societies.

If no solution can be found this way (e.g., because authors from different disciplines are involved and the professional standards therefore vary), then the recommendations of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences are suitable for clarifying concrete questions that GESIS agrees with. These should be applied in such cases by employees.

The recommendations can be found in chapter 3: Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences: Authorship in Scientific Publications. Analyses and recommendations. Bern 2013, url: http://intranet.gesis.intra/Qualitaetsmanagement/INTERN/Freigegebene%20Dokumente/Ethik/Akademien_Autorschaft-wiss-Publ.pdf

Above all, it is important to address the issue of authorship at an early stage and to revisit it when changes occur. In particular, the following rules are suitable for eliminating ambiguities (all

quotations are from the above mentioned recommendations of the Swiss Academy, where further references can be found):

- „All persons fulfilling the criteria for authorship must be listed as authors of a scientific publication.“
- „An author is someone who, through his/her own scientific work, has made a substantial contribution to a publication. Authorship is justified by work, not position.“ „A managerial position does not in itself justify authorship.“ This also includes the supervision of young scientists.
- „The question of who is to be designated as an author, and the order of listing, should be discussed – with all parties being consulted – as early as possible, but at the latest when the group of collaborators making substantial contributions is foreseeable. The scientific project leader – or, if no leader is appointed, the author with overall responsibility [...] – has the task of determining and if necessary revising the list of authors and bears the primary responsibility for authorship decisions.“
- „Subject to the rules of first and last authorship, two or more authors are to be listed in the order of importance of their contributions.“ „If a different criterion is applied, this should be disclosed (e. g. by a note such as «authors’ names listed in alphabetical order»).“

„To avoid misunderstandings, the contributions of all the authors involved can be specified or described.“ The template in the appendix is intended to support this approach and thus help to establish a common understanding and to be able to provide clear documentation to third parties as well.

In 2019, team leaders agreed that simply generating ideas, advising senior to junior, proofreading, providing data, or, in the case of external funding, organizational responsibility was not sufficient for authorship.

3 Third-Party Funding Applications

In the case of applications for third-party funding, there is also authorship, although in a slightly different sense; in principle, the recommendations mentioned for publications could therefore be applied analogously. However, application procedures often provide for special information provided by forms which do not permit the appropriate representation of the authors of an application. In addition, other regulations, such as eligibility, funding, tactical considerations regarding the prospects of success, etc., may result in the officially named applicants not reflecting the authorship of the application. In such cases, there is a need to record the actual circumstances internally. Since third-party funds involve slightly different roles than publications, there is a special template with adapted vocabulary for this purpose (see appendix).

Declaration on Authorship of the Publication:

[Publication title]

The authors are named in the order of importance of their contributions. [If another criterion is used, name it here and give the reason for the variance.]

Author 1: [Name]

Author 1: Specific contributions [please state]

Author 2: [Name]

Author 2: Specific contributions [please state]

[Add the required number of authors]

All Authors: Joint contributions [please state]

Corresponding author: [Name]

Further achievements: „Anyone who – without qualifying for authorship – has made a notable personal contribution to a publication can be mentioned in the Acknowledgements; the same applies to anyone who has made a publication possible through other significant contributions.“ This may include other persons (e.g. colleagues, secretaries, student assistants or lecturers) as well as institutions (e.g. third-party donors).

[Name 1, Description of the contribution, Acknowledgement: yes/no]

[Name 2, Description of the contribution, Acknowledgement: yes/no]

[Add the required number of other contributors]

Place, date and signatures of all authors [if not practicable, at least author with overall responsibility and affected author]

Declaration on Authorship of the Third-Party Funding Application:

[Application title]

The authors are named in alphabetical order. [If another criterion is used, name it here.]

Author A: [Name]

Author A: Role [please specify: officially responsible applicant AND/OR official project manager OR official co-applicant OR official cooperation partner OR officially not mentioned co-responsible]

Author A: Specific contributions [please state]

Author B: [Name]

Author B: Role [please specify: officially responsible applicant AND/OR official project manager OR official co-applicant OR official cooperation partner OR officially not mentioned co-responsible]

Author B: Specific contributions [please state]

[Add the required number of authors]

All Authors: Joint contributions [please state]

Place, date and signatures of all authors [if not practicable, at least author with overall responsibility and affected author]