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Leibniz Institute
for the Social Sciences

Rules for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice

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Introduction*

Science serves the propagation of knowledge and is committed to the well-being of human beings as well as the protection of the environment and other - above all constitutionally protected - goods. Scientists must avoid as far as possible any direct or indirect damage to these goods. In doing so, they must not be content with complying with legal rules, but must also observe ethical principles. The rules of good scientific practice help here. It is the task of science to ensure the formulation, validity and application of these rules in practice.

GESIS - Leibniz Institute for Social Sciences therefore adopts the following rules to ensure good scientific practice. These are based on the DFG's "Proposals for Securing Good Scientific Practice", the guidelines of the Leibniz Association, the "Ethics Code" of the DGS and the "Model Statutes for Ethics Committees for Safety-Related Research" of the DFG and Leopoldina.

GESIS is aware of its responsibility to convey the standards and rules of good scientific practice to all scientists, especially during qualification phases. GESIS expressly stipulates compliance with these rules as an obligation in contracts of employment.

1 Rules of good scientific practice

1.1 General rules

The rules of good scientific practice include:

- to work lege artis – in particular:
  - to fully document all stages and results of an experiment or study, and to securely store the records and primary data;
  - to critically and consistently examine the validity and reproducibility of all experimental results and research projects;
  - to be stringently honest with regard to the contributions of collaborators as well as toward external funding providers;
  - to respect the intellectual property of others and appropriately highlight all citations and appropriations in all publications;
- the appropriate supervision of scientists during the creation of theses/dissertations;
- responsible collaboration within working groups and the responsible fulfillment of managerial tasks within these groups, including the appropriate supervision of the groups' members;
- the responsibility of authors of scientific publications regarding the content, including the representation of results and their discussion;
- to always give precedent to originality and quality over quantity as performance and assessment criteria for promotions, appointments, hiring staff, and the allocation of funding.

Scientific publications should describe scientific results and how they were derived in a comprehensive and comprehensible manner. Results and texts published previously can be made a part of later publi-

* This text is a translation. Only the German text is binding.

cations only when clearly identified as such (duplicate publication) and only when absolutely required for the purposes of comprehending the context of the publication.

Only those who themselves substantially contributed to the design of the study or experiments, to the generation, analysis, and interpretation of data, and to the formulation of the manuscript, and who have agreed to its publication – that is, assumed responsibility for it – should be named as the authors. So-called honorary authorship is not permitted. In the case of major collaborative research projects, for example, these provisions should be the subject of a collaboration agreement.

Safety-relevant risks must be minimized. These exist in particular in scientific work in which it can be assumed that they produce knowledge, products or technologies that can be directly abused by third parties.

1.2 Research data

Primary data, setups, and program routines must be stored in an accessible format for a minimum of 10 years, if possible in a central, public repository such as Datorium.

Ethical standards and legal norms must be observed when collecting personal data and in dealing with investigated persons, whether in surveys, experiments or observations. In particular, the personal rights and autonomy of persons involved in investigations must be protected. In general, participation in social science studies is voluntary and is based on the most detailed information possible about the objectives and methods of the corresponding research project. As a rule, permission to participate must be obtained and documented in advance. If this jeopardises the objective of the investigation, appropriate replacement measures must be taken. Persons involved in investigations as observers or respondents or in any other way, for example in connection with the evaluation of personal documents, may not be exposed to any disadvantages or risks by the research. Those affected must be informed about all risks that exceed the level of what is usual in everyday life. In general, a justifiable ratio of risks to probable returns must be maintained. The right to anonymity of the persons examined must be guaranteed. Confidential information obtained from persons under investigation must be treated accordingly and protected by careful precautions. Data protection regulations must be observed.

2 Ethical evaluation

In order to ensure compliance with the standards mentioned under 1.2, 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 under 1.1.

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 trusted third party 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, in some cases,

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 Commission 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.

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.

3 Scientific misconduct

Scientific misconduct has occurred when deliberate or grossly negligent misrepresentations are made, intellectual property rights are violated, or the research activities of others are impaired.

Besides violations of scientific ethics, in particular through misleading practices, scientific misconduct includes, above all, the following:

- Misrepresentation – in particular:
  - the fabrication of data;
  - the falsification of data (e.g., by selecting desired results or rejecting undesired results or evaluation procedures without disclosing this, or by manipulating figures or diagrams);
  - false information in publications lists or a funding application (including misrepresentations regarding the publication medium and manuscripts in press);
  - multiple publication of data or texts without disclosing this.
- Violating intellectual property rights – in particular:
  - with regard to a legally protected work created by another party, or to another party's substantial scientific findings, hypotheses, models, or research approaches:
    - the unauthorized appropriation or other utilization of passages of text without appropriately crediting the author (plagiarism);
    - the exploitation of research approaches and ideas without consent, in particular as a reviewer;
    - the untruthful claim to, or unjustified acceptance of, scientific authorship or co-authorship, and the refusal of a justified co-authorship;
    - the falsification of content, or

    - the unauthorized publication of, and provision to third parties of access to, a work, finding, hypothesis, model, or research approach that has not yet been lawfully published;
    - claiming the (co-)authorship of another person without their consent.
- Impairing the research activities of others (including damaging, destroying, or manipulating research setups, devices, documents, hardware, software or any other materials required by another party for the conduct of an experiment).
- The destruction of primary data when this represents a violation of legal requirements or recognized principles of scientific work. This applies also to the unlawful failure to destroy data (in particular personal data).

Joint responsibility for scientific misconduct can result from participating in the misconduct of others, gross negligence with regard to supervisory duties, or the co-authorship of forged publications.

4 Ombudsperson and internal Person of Trust

After reaching agreement with the President, the Chair of the Board of Trustees shall appoint an Ombudsperson for a four-year term. The Ombudsperson shall neither be a GESIS employee nor a member of a supervisory body.

The Ombudsperson shall advise on and investigate discrepancies, suspicion(s) and disputes relating to good scientific practice.

The Ombudsperson shall carry out his or her duties in a voluntary capacity, independently, and without being subject to instructions. He or she shall be supported in carrying out these duties by all parties involved and shall report to the Board of Trustees on an annual basis.

In order to provide a low-threshold service, the Institute Council shall appoint an internal Person of Trust for the same term as the Ombudsperson. The Person of Trust should be independent of the scientific departments. He or she shall provide information and advice on good scientific practice, but does not examine it. In cases where third parties may be injured, or if requested, the trusted third party will establish contact with the ombudsperson. The Person of Trust is obliged to maintain confidentiality. It reports annually to the Ombudsperson.

5 Procedure for determining scientific misconduct

Anyone suspected of or exposed to scientific misconduct against a (former) GESIS employee should contact the GESIS ombudsperson.

If the Ombudsperson receives an allegation of scientific misconduct, he or she shall conduct a preliminary inquiry independently and without delay and shall inform the person who made the allegation (referred to in what follows as "the Complainant"), the President, and the Chair of the Board of Trustees of the results of this preliminary inquiry.

In the case of concrete suspicions, the facts on which the suspicions are based shall be determined immediately. The investigation shall be conducted or initiated by the Ombudsperson. A conflict of interest on the part of an investigator may be claimed both by the investigator him- or herself and by

the person against whom the allegation is directed (referred to in what follows as "the Respondent"). Whether a conflict of interest exists shall be decided by the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

One week at the latest after the suspicion becomes known, the Respondent shall be informed of the incriminating facts and evidence and shall be given the opportunity to respond. The time limit for the response shall not exceed one week.

After receipt of the Respondent's statement, or after expiry of the time limit, the GESIS Ombudsperson shall decide within one week whether the current findings rebut or reinforce the suspicion of misconduct. In the latter case, the Ombudsperson shall endeavor to clarify the suspicion him- or herself or shall enlist the help of the central Ombudsperson of the Leibniz Association. In each case, the internal investigation procedures shall conclude with a written report by the Ombudsperson to the President and to the Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Strict confidentiality and protection of all parties shall be observed when conducting all investigations. Personal information shall be anonymized as far as possible. A Complainant's name should be disclosed only if he or she will not suffer disadvantage in his or her own scientific and career progress as a result.

At each stage of the procedures, attention shall be paid to statutory regulations and provisions and to compliance therewith. The procedures shall neither take precedence over statutory provisions and proceedings nor shall they replace them.

6 Closure of the Procedure

The President decides, on the basis of the Ombudsperson's report on the existence of scientific misconduct, on the necessary measures to be taken or the closure of the procedure. The necessary measures may include the following:

- written complaint,
- Request to withdraw (an) incriminated publication(s) in whole or in part and to correct false data (in particular by publishing an erratum),
- Forwarding of the process to affected third parties, for example to the university awarding the academic degree, if scientific misconduct can lead to their withdrawal,
- Introduction of any disciplinary, labour, civil or criminal law consequences.

The Ombudsperson must inform the person concerned, any person providing information as well as the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the main reasons which led to the closure of the proceedings or to a decision on measures to be implemented.

The President decides on the publication of his or her decisions and the report of the Ombudsperson on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the existence of a legitimate public interest.

Entry into force

The "Rules for safeguarding good scientific practice" shall enter into force upon internal, intra-institute, publication.

Cologne, 22. June 2018
signed
Prof. Dr. Paul Hill
Vorsitzender des Kuratoriums

Cologne, 22. June 2018
signed
Prof. Dr. Christof Wolf
Präsident