

ETHICAL CODE OF RESEARCH AT THE UNIVERSITY OF A CORUÑA [UDC Ethical Code of Research]

(version approved by CEID-UDC on 15/11/2018 and by the Governing Council
of the UDC on 27/02/2019)

Preamble

Research is the attempt to discover and understand reality through the explanation and comprehension of natural and social phenomena. Research is also a socially established cooperative activity that pursues knowledge, which is the asset that gives it meaning and legitimacy, and which is accompanied by other specific assets in each branch or area of research: health, justice, efficiency.

Along with this primary good, researchers can and often legitimately pursue other external or secondary goods that are a consequence of seeking or obtaining knowledge: decent income, recognition, prestige, and professional advancement.

Research is a distinctive feature of the university's work, which forms part of the basic functions of the UDC: to create, develop, transmit and critically evaluate science, technology and culture; to prepare students for professional activities that require the application of scientific knowledge and methods; and to disseminate and transfer knowledge in the service of culture, quality of life and economic development.

Consequently, the UDC must promote research, establish the personal, material and institutional conditions that ensure its quality and contribute to consolidating an ethical culture in all aspects of research activity.

Scientific integrity could be the value, principle or virtue that summarises the behaviour of a responsible researcher. However, its meaning should be developed through a series of values and principles that make up the UDC's Code of Ethics for Research.

1. Professionalism

Professionalism is the personal quality of those who carry out their activity with skill, rigour, diligence and responsibility in order to achieve their own goals.

It combines technical competence, i.e. having the knowledge and skills of the discipline or branch of knowledge, and ethical competence, which consists of the correct use of this knowledge and skills to achieve the goals of the research activity and not harm other assets.

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Professionalism implies striving for excellence; that is, the ambition to improve and not be satisfied with mediocrity.

2. Freedom

Freedom is the ability to choose and act voluntarily according to one's decisions (positive freedom), and independence and freedom from undue pressure of a personal, institutional, economic, social, or political nature (negative freedom).

Freedom (of thought, research, expression, communication, conscience) allows and supports the necessary critical evaluation of the context and state of science for the design of research, the formulation of hypotheses, the definition of methodology and objectives, the selection of equipment, etc.

3. Accountability

The researcher's freedom is not absolute and coexists with a set of obligations, including respect for the freedoms of others. Furthermore, it does not equate to a voluntaristic and indiscriminate exercise of research. The responsible exercise of research freedom takes place in areas in which the researcher is competent and requires that they have the aforementioned competence before undertaking the research.

Responsibility means taking charge of and answering for one's own decisions and actions before the scientific community, the institution, the research group or team, the entities participating in or financing the research, society and oneself.

It requires the diligent use of one's own and others' resources and taking into account the consequences of the research.

4. Creativity (*Inventiveness*)

Research involves challenging what is already known in search of new knowledge. Creativity is the ability to generate ideas, concepts, meanings or applications that do not yet exist and that question, revise or expand knowledge. It requires competence, curiosity, imagination and audacity to discover the new.

5. Honesty

Honesty expresses the researcher's commitment to truth and sincerity.

Every researcher can and should formulate proposals and theses that question the state of knowledge, accompanied by the pursuit of objectivity, in the sense of aspiring to generalisable knowledge that avoids bias and declares any conflicts of interest that may compromise said proposals.

Honesty is directly related to openness and is more than just transparency: it is not only a matter of ensuring visibility and allowing access to research, but also of extending it to everything related to it.

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6. Respect

Respect means treating the people, things and institutions with which we interact with consideration.

It implies, first and foremost, respecting people: the participants, other researchers and collaborators, members of the scientific community and the general public. It also extends to other living beings, through the appropriate use of animals in experimentation.

Thus, the primacy of respect for people must lead to the interruption of research or modification of its design to avoid harm and ensure the protection of those potentially affected.

It also means managing material resources responsibly, using appropriate materials proportionately as necessary, and rejecting abuse or misuse, as well as contributing to the conservation, improvement and sustainability of the natural and social environment in which the research is carried out.

Finally, respect requires compliance with the rules: legal provisions, principles and values, institutional rules and criteria for calls for proposals, without such compliance preventing their questioning when there are reasons to suggest a different interpretation or a modification that improves the regulation of research.

7. Fairness

Fairness consists of giving each person their due. As such, it goes beyond respect and requires equality combined with different and non-discriminatory treatment of differences.

Fairness must be present in the relationships between the researcher and the participants, other researchers, research institutions, funding entities, society, etc., and must be understood in at least two ways: as recognition of the contribution that corresponds to each person and as the equitable distribution or sharing of goods and burdens, preferably based on merit.

8. Loyalty

Loyalty here equates to institutional awareness, that is, due recognition of the role that institutions play in research activity.

It requires recognition of the framework in which research is carried out as a cooperative and team activity, both with regard to the university institution and other entities that support it personally or financially, and the people who participate in it, as well as the commitment of those involved in all phases of research to contribute to the common good and not only to their own or individual good.

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9. Common good

Research activity should be geared towards the benefit of society and the common good rather than the individual benefit of the researcher.

Ensuring the public good goes beyond social responsibility, as it means pursuing a good that improves society. Research should minimise harm and maximise public benefits and promote individual attitudes and institutional practices that improve the well-being of society as a whole.

10. Trustworthiness

Science and research, like any cooperative activity, require trust. Trust is not categorically guaranteed by our social or professional position, but must be earned and revalidated through our decisions and actions. Therefore, professionalism, rigour and honesty in the conduct of research will lead to the researcher being trustworthy.

11. Security

Security is a situation of protection against possible risks or harm that provides stability, peace of mind and allows for the planning of research tasks.

It must be guaranteed at a personal level (eliminating or reducing risks in the course of the research), professional level (providing adequate resources for the research) and occupational level (guaranteeing stable working conditions: duration, remuneration).

DILIGENCE to note that this document was approved by the Governing
Council on **27 February 2019**
The Secretary General

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