

# A new code of conduct for researchers

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A new European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity will be presented by the European Science Foundation at the World Conference on Research Integrity. The code addresses good practice and bad conduct in science, offering a basis for trust and integrity across national borders.

This Europe-wide code offers a reference point for all researchers, complementing existing codes of ethics and complying with national and European legislative frameworks. It is not intended to replace existing national or academic guidelines, but represents agreement across 30 countries on a set of principles and priorities for self-regulation of the research community. It provides a possible model for a global code of conduct for all research.

"Science is an international enterprise with researchers continually working with colleagues in other countries. The scientists involved need to understand that they share a common set of standards. There can be no first-class research without integrity," said Marja Makarow, Chief Executive of the European Science Foundation. "[Researchers](#) build on each other's results so they must be honest with themselves, and with each other, and share the same standards of fairness, which makes the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity a vital document."

The code describes the proper conduct and principled practice of systematic research in the natural and social sciences and the humanities. Research misconduct is quite rare, but just one extraordinary case can endanger the reputation of a university, a research community or even

the reputation of science itself. One well-publicised allegation of research dishonesty or malpractice can call to question the efforts of thousands of scientists and decades of research effort. Europe has experienced several well publicised cases recently at, for example, the University of East Anglia in the UK, and at the Karolinska Institute in Sweden.

The term 'research misconduct' embraces many things, including insufficient care for the people, animals or objects that are the subject of or participants in research; breaches of confidentiality, violation of protocols, carelessness of the kind that leads to gross error and improprieties of publication involving conflict of interest or appropriation of ideas. Many of these unacceptable research practices are addressed in the European [Code of Conduct](#) for Research Integrity.

The code was developed from meetings and workshops involving the European Science Foundation (ESF) Member Organisations who are 79 national funding bodies, research-performing agencies, academies and learned societies from 30 countries. They worked with the All European Academies (ALLEA). The next steps in implementing the code will be discussed in the autumn by ESF Member Organisations.

**More information:** The code is published in the report *Fostering Research Integrity in Europe* which is available online [www.esf.org/publications](http://www.esf.org/publications)

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