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At its meeting on 26.01.2022, the senate of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover approved the following regulations of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover for safeguarding good scientific practice. These regulations shall take effect the day after publication in the official bulletin of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover.

Regulations of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice

Preamble

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover is committed to upholding good scientific practice; the regulations below were adopted in accordance with the resolutions of the DFG general assembly on 3 July 2019.

In addition to these regulations, reference is made to further guidelines and policy papers, which regulate certain sub-areas of academic activity at Leibniz University Hannover and thus also contribute to establishing good scientific practice. This includes the equal opportunities strategy, the tenure track regulations, the personnel development concept for research staff (LEAP), the guidelines for handling research data at Leibniz University Hannover, the open access resolution, as well as the guidelines for good supervision of doctoral candidates at Leibniz University Hannover.

At Leibniz University Hannover, scholars exercise their constitutional right to freedom of research responsibly. Assessment of research outcomes in an ethically sound manner as well as appropriate ethical consideration to protect research subjects is regulated through corresponding documents and institutions at Leibniz University Hannover. This includes the “Guidelines for responsible research at Leibniz University Hannover” as well as the work of the Central Ethics Committee at Leibniz University Hannover.

Part One: Principles and Parameters of Good Scientific Practice for Members and Associates of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover

Section 1 – Rules of Good Scientific Practice

- (1) Members and associates of Leibniz University Hannover shall observe the rules of good scientific practice. Scholars shall ensure that their own conduct complies with the rules for good scientific practice. In particular, this includes:
 - observing professional standards;
 - consistently questioning and carefully examining the findings of one’s own academic work;
 - documenting the processes and results of one’s own academic work;
 - maintaining absolute honesty with respect to one’s contributions and that of others, such as colleagues, students, partners and competitors;
 - accommodating and stimulating critical discourse within the academic community;
 - observing the guidelines set out below and taking the utmost care to avoid the forms of scientific misconduct listed in the following.
- (2) Through sound prerequisites for scientific practice, the university management is creating a framework for compliance with the rules for good scientific practice. Procedures and principles that have been laid down in writing regulate various specific fields of scientific activity.
- (3) Members of Leibniz University Hannover are expected to maintain up-to-date knowledge of the rules for good scientific practice and the implementation of these rules in the research process, to observe these rules and communicate them within their academic environment.

Section 2 – Cooperation and Leadership Responsibility in Research Work Units

- (1) The group leader is responsible for the entire research work unit.
- (2) Collaboration within the unit should be arranged in a manner that the group as a whole can perform its tasks, the necessary cooperation and coordination can take place, and all members understand their roles, rights and duties at all times. Tasks relating to management, supervision, conflict resolution and quality assurance are clearly assigned and regulated.
- (3) Abuse of power and exploitation of dependent relationships should be prevented. For this purpose, an ombuds office and arbitration board exist both centrally and within the faculties to take preventative measures as well as subsequent action.
- (4) University management safeguards the necessary framework for good career support and development at Leibniz University Hannover. Specifically, this includes measures that have been put in place through the guidelines for good supervision of doctoral candidates, through the personnel development concept for research staff (Leibniz Academic Pathways – LEAP), through the equal opportunities strategy, as well as through the guidelines on diversity at Leibniz University Hannover.

Section 3 – Supervision of Junior Researchers

- (1) Leibniz University Hannover is committed to ensuring that junior researchers have access to appropriate support concerning all matters relating to advancement in a career in research. It is especially important that junior researchers are educated in the principles for good scientific practice (see the guidelines for good supervision of doctoral candidates).
- (2) Teaching staff shall impart the basic principles of academic research from the earliest possible stage in academic teaching and education.

Section 4 – Performance Evaluation and Criteria

- (1) Criteria for assessing performance apply for appointments, employment, career advancement, certificates, examinations, award of academic degrees, allocation of resources and assignment of academic tasks. Depending on the context, other aspects can be incorporated into the performance evaluation in addition to academic and scientific achievements.
- (2) Academic and scientific achievements should primarily be assessed according to qualitative criteria such as originality, soundness of work, thoroughness, profundity of perception, productivity and applicability. Quantitative indicators such as the number of publications or publication indices should only contribute to the overall assessment with the appropriate differentiation and reflection.
- (3) Further evaluation includes performance in relation to teaching, involvement in academic self-governance, in knowledge and technology transfer, in science communication and public relations, as well as scholarly contributions to the advancement of society as a whole. Individual factors – such as family or health-related circumstances – resulting in periods of absence, prolonged time for training or qualifications, or reduced output in terms of quantity shall be taken into account in the overall assessment as appropriate.

Section 5 – Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

- (1) Researchers who evaluate manuscripts, funding proposals or personal qualifications must maintain strict confidentiality.
- (2) During assessment and review processes, researchers disclose all facts that could justify concerns regarding conflict of interest.
- (3) The personal use of third-party content, to which reviewers and committee members have access, as well as the disclosure of such content to third parties is not permitted.
- (4) Paragraphs (1), (2) and (3) shall also apply for members of research advisory and decision-making bodies.

Section 6 – Ombuds Office and the Commission of Inquiry

At Leibniz University Hannover, an ombuds office and commission of inquiry investigate and monitor scientific misconduct (see sections 12 and 13). The university management supports these bodies and ensures that their work is carried out objectively and independently.

Part Two: Good Scientific Practice in the Research Process

Section 7 – Research Processes and Methods

- (1) When planning a project, researchers take into account the latest state of research in a comprehensive manner. Careful investigation into existing publicly available research findings and, where applicable, reusable research data is required to identify relevant and suitable research questions.
- (2) Researchers use well-established, plausible methods to answer research questions. Throughout the process, researchers observe professional standards and take particular care to avoid (unconscious) distortions in research results. Quality assurance through developing, establishing and maintaining appropriate (subject-specific) standards plays an important role in the entire process. These are outlined in publications.
- (3) Researchers conclude and document agreements at an early stage, establishing the usage rights concerning research data, developed software and research findings, ensuring that these agreements are taken into account. Persons who have collected research data should continue to be granted access to this data if they change their location or institution.
- (4) Requirements defined by contract or established by law must be observed throughout all phases of the research process.

Section 8 – Documenting and Archiving Research, Publishing Findings and Managing Research Data

- (1) Researchers document all circumstances, conditions, activities and individual steps relevant to achieving their findings thoroughly, so that procedures and results can be tracked, reviewed, assessed and, if necessary, replicated. The relevant framework for this is set out in the research data guidelines of Leibniz University Hannover.
- (2) Researchers provide complete and correct references of their own preliminary work and that of others.
- (3) In principle, researchers contribute all results to scientific discourse by making them publicly available. However, they avoid inappropriately small and repetitive publications as well as unnecessary self-citation.
- (4) If researchers subsequently become aware of inconsistencies or errors in a publication, they correct these and, if necessary, see that these are retracted or indicated as such by the publishing body.
- (5) In individual cases, there may be good cause not to make findings publicly available. This decision may not be influenced by third parties and must be explained clearly upon request.
- (6) Researchers ensure that research results and data – including relevant materials and, if applicable, research software used – are adequately secured according to the standards applicable in the field and – as a rule – stored for ten years. Leibniz University Hannover has its own research data repository for this purpose. If there is plausible reason not to store certain data or to do so for a shorter period of time, researchers must explain this clearly. This decision may not be dependent on third parties. The storage period commences on the date upon which research results and data are made publicly available.
- (7) Where possible, researchers store the research data relating to the publications in recognised repositories according to the FAIR principles.

Section 9 – Authorship

- (1) An author is an individual who has made a genuine, identifiable contribution

to the content of a research publication of text, data or software. Authors of publications are collectively responsible for their content unless explicitly indicated otherwise in the publication. All authors must agree on the final version of the work. Agreement to publication of research results may not be withheld without valid reason. The order in which authors are named should reflect their contribution to the work and must take into account the conventions of the respective field. It is recommended that the order of authorship be agreed upon at an early stage.

- (2) What constitutes a genuine, identifiable contribution to a scholarly publication should be assessed on an individual basis and depends on the standards that apply in the respective field. In general, contribution may be deemed genuine and identifiable if a researcher has contributed scientifically in one or more of the following ways:
- design and development of the research activities described and evaluated in the publication (*not*: mere application for or acquisition of funding for overarching projects, institutional units or equipment, mere performance of a managing or superior function in the research facility in question, or similar);
 - independent collection and preparation of data, identifying sources or programming software (*not*: mere execution of technical routine tasks, mere implementation of predefined data collection formats, or similar);
 - independent analysis, evaluation or interpretation of data, sources or results (*not*: mere listing of data, mere compilation of sources, or similar);
 - development of conceptual approaches or argumentative structures (*not*: mere provision of advice concerning the work of others, mere introduction of unspecific suggestions, or similar);
 - drafting the manuscript (*not*: mere editorial amendments, mere verbal correction, or similar).
- (3) Support that is not considered sufficient to constitute authorship according to paragraph (2) can be appropriately credited in the footnotes, a foreword or in the acknowledgements of the publication. Honorary authorship, in which no genuine, identifiable contribution was made as defined above, is not permitted.

Section 10 – Publishing Media and Conference Formats

- (1) When publishing scholarly work, authors select the publication medium carefully, with due regard for its general quality and visibility in the relevant field of discourse.
- (2) Researchers who assume the role of editor carefully consider for which publishing organisations they carry out such activity.
- (3) Paragraphs (1) and (2) also apply with respect to participating in and organising academic conferences.

Part Three: Procedures in Cases of Alleged Scientific Misconduct

Section 11 – Scientific Misconduct

Scientific misconduct is considered to be deliberate or grossly negligent behaviour, specifically in the following cases:

1. Creating, using and spreading false information, in particular through
 - inventing data or producing fictitious representations or inauthentic images (fabrication);
 - falsifying data or manipulating representations or images (manipulation);
 - incomplete use of data or disregard of undesirable results (omission);
 - incorrect information in a job application, a funding proposal or a publication – including falsifying academic qualifications or titles, existing collaborations or funding, past publications or publications in print, etc.
2. Violation of intellectual property rights concerning copyright-protected work produced by another person or significant scientific findings, interpretations, theories, hypotheses, teachings, or research approaches originating from others, and in particular through
 - unauthorised use by assuming authorship, reproducing literal quotations without appropriate acknowledgement or using false or incomplete references (plagiarism);
 - exploiting the research approaches and ideas of others, in particular when acting as a reviewer or supervisor (theft of ideas)
 - assuming scholarly (co-)authorship or claiming the (co-)authorship of another person without their consent;

- unauthorised publication or disclosure to third parties whilst the work, finding, interpretation, theory, hypothesis, teaching or research approach has not yet been published,
3. Encroaching on the scientific activities of others, in particular by
 - sabotaging research work – including damaging, destroying or manipulating literature, data, archive and source material, experimental configurations, equipment, documents, hardware, software, materials, etc.;
 - suppressing research results, for example through abuse of a position as a reviewer or superior;
 - ending collaboration in research projects without sufficient reason;
 - preventing the publication of research findings as a co-author without significant reason.
 4. Elimination of primary data, wherever this violates legal regulations or principles of scientific work specific to the particular discipline.
 5. Deliberately false or unfounded allegations of scientific misconduct contrary to the principle that scientific misconduct must be reported in good faith.

Section 12 – Ombudspersons

- (1) Based on the recommendation of the university management, the senate will appoint an experienced person from the pool of professors for a period of four years to assume the role of ombudsperson in questions concerning good scientific practice and suspected scientific misconduct. Two deputy ombudspersons will be appointed for the same period, one of whom should be part of the university's research staff. At least one ombudsperson should be female; at least one ombudsperson should be male. Re-appointment may only occur once. The duties of the ombudsperson and deputies may not be carried out by members of the Presidential Board or of the Deans' Offices. The appointed ombudspersons will be announced within the university.
- (2) Where there is a suspected case of scientific misconduct, university members and associates should contact the ombudsperson or their deputies who, of their own accord, will also act upon relevant evidence, which may have been provided by third parties or anonymously. The ombudsperson informed will assess the plausibility of the allegations with respect to tangibility and significance, possible motives, as well as the possibility to dispel allegations, whilst maintaining confidentiality. If the suspicion is substantiated, the ombudsperson informed will, after consulting the two other ombudspersons, notify the commission of inquiry as set out in section 13, whilst maintaining strict confidentiality in order to protect the informant and the person accused of misconduct. In the case of possible conflict of interest of the ombudspersons, section 16 paragraph 3 shall also apply.
- (3) If one of the ombudspersons has been informed of suspected scientific misconduct by an associate or member of the university or by a third party, the informant shall be notified of the transfer of the case to the commission of inquiry by its chairperson (as per section 13 paragraph 2), or of the dismissal of the case by the ombudsperson. If the case is dismissed, the informant shall be at liberty to contact a member of the university management, who in turn may involve the commission of inquiry.
- (4) Alternatively, members and associates of Leibniz University Hannover may contact the German Research Ombudsman.

Section 13 – Commission of Inquiry

- (1) Based on the recommendation of the university management, the senate will appoint the members of the commission of inquiry. The commission of inquiry is made up of three members from the pool of professors and one member from the pool of research staff. At least one of member of the commission should be female; at least one member should be male. A deputy will be appointed for each member. The members shall complete a term of office of four years, with the possibility of re-appointment.
- (2) The members of the commission of inquiry shall select a chairperson and a deputy chairperson from its members. The chairperson shall represent the commission of inquiry publicly. The deputy chairperson shall undertake the corresponding duties.

- (3) The ombudsperson dealing with the case shall act as an advisory member of the commission in cases of scientific misconduct.
- (4) According to section 16 paragraph 3, members of the commission of inquiry affected by conflict of interest shall not participate in the discussions and decisions of the commission, and shall be substituted completely by their respective deputy. The commission shall decide whether there is a conflict of interest or concern for conflict of interest without the member affected.
- (5) The commission may call in further persons with expert knowledge in the field of the scientific issue under investigation, or persons with experience in dealing with relevant procedures, as members with an advisory vote.

Section 14 – Investigating and Dealing with Scientific Misconduct

- (1) Leibniz University Hannover will pursue each and every concrete suspicion of scientific misconduct at the institution and investigate the matter swiftly, in compliance with the principles of free consideration of evidence. If an investigation of the matter confirms the suspicion of misconduct, appropriate measures using all available resources shall be taken (e.g. reprimand, bonus cuts, (temporary) revocation of leadership duties).

If removal of an awarded academic degree is considered a possible measure, the relevant departments shall be involved. Once investigations have been concluded, the research organisations concerned and, if applicable, third parties with a justified interest in the decision will be notified of the outcome.

- (2) Under these regulations, the Presidential Board can also instruct the commission of inquiry to conduct these procedures if they entail examining the withdrawal or revocation of honorary titles in compliance with regulations governing the award of such titles, the constitution, or the doctoral and habilitation regulations of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover.
- (3) Other measures for dealing with scientific misconduct governed by legal or statutory provisions are not excluded by those implemented under these regulations.

Section 15 – Complainants and Respondents

- (1) The investigation of allegations of scientific misconduct shall be carried out explicitly in observance of confidentiality and follow the principle of the presumption of innocence. The information provided by the complainant must be given in good faith. Knowingly false or malicious allegations may themselves constitute scientific misconduct. Neither the complainant nor the respondent should experience disadvantage with respect to their research or career prospects as a result of the disclosure.
- (2) The ombudsperson, as well as members of the commission of inquiry and the institutions investigating the allegations must take the appropriate steps to protect both the complainant and the respondent.

Section 16 – General Procedural Regulations

- (1) Meetings of the commission of inquiry shall not be open to the public.
- (2) Decisions of the commission of inquiry shall be passed by a simple majority.
- (3) Conflict of interest on the part of a member of the commission of inquiry may occur in and beyond the circumstances stated in sections 20 and 21 of the German Administrative Procedures Act (VwVfG), in particular if the commission member and the person accused of scientific misconduct belong to the same faculty or work together on joint research projects.
- (4) The commission of inquiry is entitled to take all steps necessary to resolve the issue. For this, the commission may gather all relevant information and statements and, in individual cases, may also involve the equal opportunities officer, as well as experts from the scientific field in question.
- (5) The person concerned must be informed of incriminating facts and – if applicable – any evidence, unless the preliminary examination is to be terminated on the basis of the records, as set out in section 17 paragraph 1 sentence 3.

- (6) Both the respondent and the complainant must be given the opportunity to give oral statements. Both may call in a trusted person for support. The commission of inquiry may allow a written statement in lieu of a personal hearing of the complainant.
- (7) If the respondent does not know the identity of the complainant, this shall be disclosed to them, should this information be considered necessary for the proper defence of the respondent. This shall be decided by the commission. The complainant shall promptly be informed prior to disclosure of their name. The complainant may decide whether they wish to withdraw their statement in the event of disclosure of their name.
- (8) The commission of inquiry shall make decisions at its discretion, in due consideration of the facts ascertained and the evidence collected.
- (9) The investigation procedure consists of a preliminary examination and a formal investigation.

Section 17 – Preliminary Examination Procedure

- (1) Once the ombudsperson contacted has informed the commission of inquiry of a concrete case of suspected scientific misconduct, the respondent is given the opportunity to be heard. The period for submitting a statement is usually two weeks. The opportunity to be heard can be waived if the commission of inquiry deems that, on the basis of the records, no formal investigation is to be initiated. Incriminating and exonerating facts and evidence must be recorded in written form.
- (2) Upon receipt of the statement from the respondent or expiration of the deadline, the commission of inquiry shall decide within a reasonable period of time whether the preliminary examination should be dismissed – either due to lack of sufficient evidence or due to other reasons (e.g. insignificance) – or whether a formal investigation should be initiated. The respondent and the complainant shall be informed of the main reasons for this decision by the chairperson of the commission of inquiry.
- (3) The commission of inquiry shall notify university management of the outcome of the preliminary examination.

Section 18 – Formal Investigation Procedure

- (1) If misconduct is not found to be proven on the basis of the investigation by the commission of inquiry, proceedings shall be dismissed. Proceedings may also be dismissed for other reasons (e.g. insignificance). If misconduct is found to be proven by the commission of inquiry, the result of its investigations shall be submitted to university management with a recommendation for further proceedings – also in view of the protection of the rights of others – concerning the decision and further action. If the respondent has not already been heard during the preliminary examination, they shall be granted the opportunity to give a statement before a decision is made on whether misconduct occurred or not. The period for submitting a statement is usually two weeks.
- (2) University management shall decide on the consequences arising from scientific misconduct ascertained by the commission of inquiry and shall take the necessary measures for their implementation. University management shall inform the chairperson of the commission of inquiry within a reasonable period with respect to the implemented measures.
- (3) The commission of inquiry must inform the respondent and the complainant in writing of the main reasons for dismissing proceedings or forwarding the matter to university management.
- (4) At the end of a formal investigation, the ombudsperson informed shall identify all persons who are or have been affected by the case. The ombudsperson shall counsel those persons who have become involved in proceedings concerning scientific misconduct through no fault of their own, with respect to protecting their personal and scientific integrity.

Part Four: Final Provisions

Section 19 – Entry into Force

These regulations shall come into force on the day subsequent to publication in the official bulletin of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover.