

## **Code of Conduct for Research**

### **Scope of Application**

The present code applies to all research activities, whether funded or not, conducted on or off the University premises under the responsibility or with the participation of Academic Staff and Special Teaching Staff (S.T.S.) members, as well as of other Teaching Staff members (e.g. Visiting Academics, Special Scientists), Research Staff members, Administrative Staff members, and Academic Community members such as undergraduate and postgraduate students. The provisions of this code also apply to the provision of expertise, specialised services, training programmes or other scientific applications. The main purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure the unhindered conduct of fundamental and/or applied research at the University of Cyprus (UCY) for the benefit of the society.

The present Code of Conduct complies with the Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus, the European Convention on Human Rights, the European Union law and the applicable national and international legislation. It also complies with the codes of good practice, the ethical principles and the procedures required by the National Bioethics Committee, which complement it.

This Code shall be further combined with the following:

- UCY Intellectual Property Policy
- UCY General Data Protection Policy (GDPR)
- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

## **1. Principles**

### **1.1. General Principles**

Good research practices are based on fundamental principles of research integrity. Research must be conducted with respect for scientific truth, academic freedom, life, nature and the environment, as well as for the biological and spiritual integrity of human beings, dignity, intellectual property and personal data. Discrimination against participants, related but not limited to ethnicity, race, origin, language, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, physical ability or socioeconomic status must not be tolerated during research. In conducting research, researchers should consider any potential impact the research might have on vulnerable populations.

### **1.2. Reliable and Responsible Conduct of Research**

All research should be carried out in a way that guarantees its reliability and ensures its quality, which is reflected in its design, methodology, analysis, use of resources and dissemination of results. All University community members participating in the conduct of research should be aware of, respect and comply with the codes of conduct for research in their respective scientific and/or professional fields. This respect should apply to all stages of the research, from the design and sample selection, the methodology or obtainment of consent from the research participants, to the analysis, publication and dissemination of results. Researchers should not repeat any previous research by others unless there is a scientific justification for doing so. Plagiarism and misappropriation of other people's achievements are prohibited.

### **1.3. Responsibility and Accountability**

Personal and collective responsibility are linked to the ethical conduct that UCY members should demonstrate. In particular, every researcher and every research team are expected to demonstrate due responsibility in every action they take or decision they make and assume responsibility for it. At the same time, they should all, either individually or collectively, be able to justify in a clear and ethically sound manner their choices and actions or omissions in the conduct of the research and the dissemination of its results. Misconduct in the field of research has traditionally included fabrication and/or falsification of research results, and/or plagiarism (the so-called FFP categorisation – Fabrication, Falsification, Plagiarism) when submitting a proposal, conducting or controlling research activities, or communicating research results.

### **1.4. Social Responsibility**

Researchers should conduct their research in a respectful manner towards the environment, the sustainable policy and the wider society, disseminate the results of their research to the community in a comprehensible way and contribute to the cultural and economic improvement of the wider society. They should also carry out their research activity with the primary aim of promoting scientific knowledge for the benefit of society as a whole and should comply with the provisions of the legislation relating to the research subjects, the ethical principles, the rules of good research practice, and the ethical rules of both their profession and this Code.

### **1.5. Responsible Use of University Resources**

UCY resources do not belong to any individual or group, but to the entire academic community. The material and technical infrastructure of the University is available, in its entirety, for use by researchers, provided this is done responsibly, that is, with care to avoid any waste or destruction and respecting the principles and regulations on correct management.

## **2. Good Research Practices**

### **2.1. Transparency and Informed Consent**

All research participants should, in principle, give their written consent without any form of coercion and with full knowledge and awareness of any consequences resulting from their participation. In case minors participate in research, the written consent of the parent or guardian must be obtained. The researcher should ensure, to the extent possible, that participants will not be adversely affected by their participation in research, and should closely monitor cases where participants are affected by said participation. These effects may vary depending on the research subject and the scientific field of each researcher. More specifically, it is deemed that informed consent has taken place when the individuals involved in the research have been clearly informed of the research purposes by the person(s) responsible for carrying it out, as well as of the research methods and any possible consequences that may result from the research or from the publication of its results. Cases where such information would alter the research findings and where, according to the nature of the research, the participants should not be aware of it so that their behaviour is not affected, are excepted. Free consent implies that the research participants have not been subjected to any pressure to participate in the research and that they can withdraw their consent at any time and without justification.

## **2.2. Privacy Protection**

Researchers undertake not to disclose information related to the private lives of research participants, unless the latter have given their consent. It is understood that if the researcher considers that the information provided might endanger the participant's or other people's safety or life, he/she must inform the competent University authorities of this risk, in accordance with the procedure established by law. When the research involves a small number of individuals or organisations easy to identify, the researcher should refrain from disclosing information that would lead to their identification. Research data that may lead to the identification of individuals, and especially data related to private life, should be destroyed after a reasonable period of time, unless it is necessary to preserve them. When preserving such data, their confidentiality should be preserved as well by taking the appropriate measures and forbidding access to unauthorised individuals.

## **2.3. Responsible Processing and Management of Personal Data**

UCY researchers undertake to meticulously comply with the legislation and good practices provided for the collection, processing and retention of personal data. UCY is committed, in every way, to safeguarding the rights and freedoms of all individuals whose personal data are used in any way in research. Researchers should be constantly concerned with maintaining the confidentiality and safe keeping of personal data and should fully comply with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and the University Policy on the Protection of Personal Data.

## **2.4. Practices and Data Management**

Researchers must ensure that all data and research materials, including unpublished data, are properly managed and revised, and kept safe for a reasonable period of time. They must also ensure that access to data is transparent, as open as possible and as restricted as necessary, and, where appropriate, in line with the FAIR principles – Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable; i.e. that data are interoperable and can be easily found, accessed and reused.

## **2.5. Confidentiality**

Researchers, as well as all authorised persons, must not disclose to unauthorised persons confidential information obtained during the negotiation of a new research collaboration, or the elaboration of a research project. This restriction applies to all UCY employees who may come into contact with such confidential information without being expressly authorised. For research purposes, the term “confidential information” shall mean information provided orally, in writing, electronically or by any other means, including, but not limited to, technical and non-technical information regarding patents, intellectual property issues, trademarks and designs, analyses, studies, data, proprietary information, know-how, procedures and software.

It does not include information (a) which is already widely available to the public at the time it is disclosed, except when disclosure is made by the Recipient, or (b) which the Recipient has obtained from independent sources, free from any obligation or confidentiality, or (c) which must be disclosed in the public interest, in accordance with the law and/or the legal procedure.

## **2.6. Intellectual Property Protection**

Both UCY and researchers must comply with the legislation on the protection of intellectual property. In particular, the rights related to the attribution and management of intellectual property, as well as any other relevant rights regarding research results must be clearly defined in

advance so that it becomes clear who the beneficiary(ies) are. In this regard, researchers should be guided by the Intellectual Property Policy of the University and should ensure that any contracts or agreements related to research findings include fair and equitable provisions for managing the use, ownership and/or protection of such findings, in accordance with the intellectual property rights.

### **2.7. Dissemination of Knowledge**

Researchers should ensure that their work is made available to their colleagues in a timely, open, transparent and accurate manner, unless otherwise agreed, and should be honest when communicating it to the wider public, as well as to traditional and social media. They should also appropriately acknowledge the University and the significant work and intellectual contribution of third parties who have influenced the research disclosed, including collaborators, participants, assistants and funders.

### **2.8. Avoiding Conflicts of Interest**

In conducting their research, University members, and researchers in particular, should identify and avoid situations and actions that constitute a conflict of interest. Furthermore, researchers should make every effort to identify and appropriately handle relationships and choices that could result in a conflict of interest.

### **2.9. Collective Research**

Researchers have an obligation to mutually respect one another and are entitled to equal treatment. All partners in collaborative research shall take responsibility for the integrity of the research and shall agree, at the outset of their collaboration, on the research objectives and on the process for communicating the research findings as transparently and openly as possible. They shall also agree, at the outset of their collaboration, on their expectations and standards of research integrity, the applicable laws and regulations, the protection of intellectual property rights of collaborators, and the potential cases of misconduct.

### **2.10. Compliance with Safety Rules**

UCY researchers must apply all safety rules recognised in the relevant scientific field, as well as those specifically defined by UCY (see UCY website [«Health and Safety at Work»](#)). In case proper compliance with safety regulations depends on infrastructure/equipment issues, they shall inform the responsible persons so that necessary measures can be taken immediately. Researchers should note, when deemed necessary, any problems they encounter or believe they are about to encounter in relation to safety and inform in writing the appropriate UCY services for any timely treatment and/or prevention measures taken.

## **3. Special Categories of Research**

### **3.1. Research on Human Subjects – Bioethics**

Anyone conducting research on human subjects should be aware of the ethical principles and the specific ethical rules that govern their field. In particular, any research involving human subjects must be conducted in accordance with the fundamental principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice. For any such research, the responsible researcher must receive a formal approval by the Cyprus National Bioethics Committee.

### 3.2. Research on Human Corpses

Anyone conducting research on human corpses must do so in accordance with the principles set out in 3.1 and after obtaining the written consent of their immediate family and the legally responsible persons.

### 3.3. Research on Animals

Laboratory animal research should be carried out only when no alternative means of research is available, involving no more than the strictly necessary number of animals and with particular care by researchers to avoid causing unnecessary suffering and pain to animals. The treatment of animals shall be subject to the rules of good research practice and the provisions of the applicable legislation.

### 3.3. Research related to the Natural, Residential and Cultural Environment

No research can justify any infringement of the natural environment in violation of the moral/ethical regulations and applicable laws for its protection, as well as for waste management. All research must be carried out in accordance with the principle of environmental responsibility and should support the development of environmentally friendly technologies. No research can justify any infringement of the cultural environment, as it is protected by ethical rules and the applicable legislation.

## References

- [Ευρωπαϊκός Κώδικας Δεοντολογίας](#) for Research Integrity
- [Εθνική Επιτροπή Βιοηθικής](#)- Legislation
- [Κώδικας Δεοντολογίας στην Έρευνα](#)- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
- [Κώδικας Ηθικής και Δεοντολογίας της Έρευνας](#)- University of Crete
- [Δήλωση εμπιστευτικότητας](#)- Greek Parliament
- [Research Ethics Policy](#)-Faculty of Law, University of Cambridge
- [Policy on the ethics of research involving Human Participants and Personal Data](#)- University of Cambridge
- [Academic integrity in research. Code of Practice and Procedure](#) - University of Oxford
- [Ethical Code of Behaviour](#)-University of Bologna
- [Cornel code of academic integrity](#)- Cornel University
- [General Principles on the ethical conduct of research and scholarship](#)- University of Illinois
- [Research ethics policy](#)- University of Tasmania
- [Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Ethics](#)-American Psychological Association

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