

Internal Regulation no. 11/2018/GACR

Code of Ethics for Principal Investigators of The Czech Science Foundation grant projects

Preamble

The aim of this Code of Ethics is to establish basic rules of conduct for principal investigators in the performance of their activities related to public tenders in research, development and innovations supported by The Czech Science Foundation, in accordance with the Act No. 130/2002 Coll., on the support of research and development from public funds and on the amendment to some related acts (the Act on the Support of Research and Development), as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Act"), and define, and simultaneously support, the required standards of behaviour in relation to the public, collaborators and evaluators of grant projects.

Scientific work is grounded in the basic principles, which are common among all scientific fields in all countries. Above all stands fairness, honesty to oneself and to others. At the same time, it is an ethical norm and the basis of the rules of scientific professionalism, i.e. correct scientific activity, which differ from field to field.

The fundamental ethical principles of research, that each investigator shall honour and thereby create the basis for building and maintaining confidence in science and research, are freedom of research and responsibility, respect for plurality of opinions and tolerance, respect for human dignity and autonomy of research, transparency, solidarity and cooperation in research, usefulness.

The investigator performs the activities at high level, with the highest degree of decency and understanding to the best of own knowledge and conscience. It is indisputable that nothing can replace each own's inner motivation and responsibility of each principal investigator, and that this Code of Ethics represents only the minimum standards of ethically responsible behaviour.

Definition of terms:

The principal investigator is according to the provisions of § 9 para. 1 letter e) of the Act the person who accounts for the professional level of the project to the recipient of the subsidy.

1. Basic principles

Principal investigator:

- a) in own work abides by the fundamental ethical principles, the principles stipulated in this Code and the legislation in force;
- b) accepts the responsibility for accuracy and objectivity of the project he/she carries out (including the study and the research of literature, designing and conducting experiments, observing and publishing the results obtained) based on their expertise;
- c) engages in research with full professional and personal commitment;
- d) requires his/her collaborators to behave in accordance to the principles stipulated in this Code;
- e) does not defend and cover such behaviour, that is in non-compliant to the principles stipulated in this Code;

- f) considers science and research an integral part of culture and basis of innovation and defends them against possible questioning;
- g) opposes unethical and inappropriate use of scientific findings;
- h) expands and deepens own knowledge and strives to improve own professional skills;
- i) maintains critical approach to own findings and outcomes, even to collaborators' outcomes, and is open to discussion and substantive arguments;
- j) advocates freedom of scientific thinking, expression, exchange of opinions and information;
- k) rejects the use of unscientific approaches and racist, discriminatory, nationalistic and political standpoints in science;
- l) abides by the principles of impartiality and independence from ideological and political pressures and the interests of pressure groups, is not involved in corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery;
- m) respects and disseminates the principles of reliable and credible scientific work in the scientific community and rejects any scientific dishonesty and violation of the principles stipulated in this Code;
- n) does not use scientific and scientific-pedagogical titles, obtained by a submission or usage of documents that were demonstrably acquired in violation of ethical principles;
- o) does not hesitate to report to the respective authorities the violation of ethics in scientific and research work if aware of it;
- p) uses entrusted data, research and development outcomes, personal data and other confidential information always in such a way as to minimize the possibility of their misuse, ensures their protection in accordance with the laws of the Czech Republic and maintains the confidentiality of all these facts, and does not misuse or exploit the knowledge for oneself or on behalf of others.

2. Principles of research work

Principal investigator:

- a) focuses own research on expanding the limits of scientific knowledge and ensures that his/her practically useful results serve to the benefit of society;
- b) conducts the research in such a way as not to endanger society, environment or cultural values;
- c) collects, selects and evaluates the data based on the general principles stipulated in Article 1 of this Code, while respecting the specifics of own discipline;
- d) accounts for the accuracy and objectivity of own research, is not biased in the research and is aware of the limits of the methods of investigation used, for choice of which he/she is responsible;
- e) shares the research outcomes with other members of the investigation team;
- f) endeavours to fulfil the parameters of the project proposals during project investigation, especially the number of students involved, the international cooperation declared, the project outcomes declared etc.;
- g) accounts for the completeness and verifiability when publishing the findings and the outcomes on a particular problem, interprets them without distortion and does not conceal inappropriate data;

- h) retains the primary data and the documentation of all relevant results after publication for the period customary in the relevant discipline, unless other obligations or generally binding legislation prevent it;
- i) accounts for the efficient and effective use of research funds, financial and human resources, and does not duplicate the research conducted elsewhere, unless it is necessary for verification, completion or comparison of results;
- j) transmits the research outcomes that are not subject to confidentiality to the professional public and prudently informs the general public only after the publication in the professional press, does not publish interim conclusions or unfounded considerations, misleading information, assumptions etc.

3. Principles of behaviour towards collaborators and students

Principal investigator:

- a) selects students and collaborators in research based on an objective evaluation of their intellectual, professional, ethical and personal characteristics;
- b) if leads a research team, ensures correctness and openness in mutual communication and avoids unjustifiably autocratic management methods;
- c) assesses his/her students and collaborators based on achieved results and treats them fairly, non-discriminatorily and with no sign of bullying; does not require them to do activities that are part of his/her own duties and does not impose requirements that are disproportionate to their abilities and possibilities;
- d) demonstrates, in discourse and by setting himself/herself as an example, own knowledge, skills and principles of good behaviour in science to his/her students and collaborators;
- e) engages in his/her students' education, develops their independent, critical thinking and responsible approach to work and respects their right to freely express their views on research;
- f) supports the qualification growth of students and subordinate researchers as well as their research and publication activities and international contacts and puts them on the list of authors of publications, if they have contributed creatively to its creation;
- g) does not support, does not conceal and deduces consequences from potential unethical behaviour of his/her students and collaborators.

4. Principal investigator as author or co-author of publication

Principal investigator:

- a) might be mentioned as author or co-author of publication, if he/she has contributed creatively to its creation, e.g. in the proposal of studies and experiments to be realized, analysis, interpretation, theoretical data processing or modelling, or writing of the publication, and if they agree with co-authorship;
- b) abides by ethical principles relating to respect for the intellectual property of other authors, especially rejects fraud, forgery, plagiarism, auto-plagiarism (re-publishing

substantial parts of own earlier publication, including translations, without proper citation of the original), falsification, misrepresentation, misuse and theft of results, retention of research results, withholding results in the case of research and development, at any stage of the process from planning to publishing results;

- c) when citing other authors, includes every reference to a respective source of information, and when summarizing the findings of another author, expresses the original ideas in good faith and without conscious distortion;
- d) if drawing on own previous work, refers to it as to a respective source of information and cites it duly, avoiding excessive purposive reference to own work;
- e) also cites relevant works, which do not confirm his/her assumptions and interpretations of results;
- f) if discovers a significant error in own published data, takes appropriate steps to correct errors in publication, such as printing errata or other corrections, withdrawing the publication or other appropriate steps;
- g) does not unnecessarily create excessive publications and does not divide research outcomes into multiple publications at the expense of their quality, writes clearly and concisely and in a well-arranged way, does not use vulgarisms and does not offend other persons;
- h) does not publish in an ethically questionable way and does not use ethically questionable publication platforms;
- i) publish with the aim of distributing the results and findings to the scientific public, not only with a view of reporting works as scientific outputs;
- j) does not acquire citations of own work through agreement of several authors on mutually purposeful citations of their works.

5. Final provisions

Every principal investigator is obliged to become acquainted with this Code of Ethics and is obliged to strictly follow it.

Principal investigator is aware that breaking the Code of Ethics has an impact on The Czech Science Foundation as a whole, more precisely the reputation of The Czech Science Foundation is damaged. At the same time, the whole project might become a subject of questioning, which might result in jeopardizing the reputation of The Czech Science Foundation and causing a damage of significant scale.

This Code of Ethics was approved by The Czech Science Foundation's Presidium on 17 October 2018 and comes in force on 1 January 2019 and is binding for all investigators of The Czech Science Foundation's projects.

In Prague on 28 November 2018

RNDR. Alice Valkárová, DrSc.

President of The Czech Science Foundation