

## SDU's regulations for dealing with scientific misconduct and questionable research practices

Adopted pursuant to § 20 of the Act on Scientific Misconduct etc., cf. Act no. 383 of 26 April 2017. The regulations below supersede SDU's regulations of 12 April 2018 to ensure good scientific practice.

### Aim

§ 1. The aim of these regulations is to create the formal framework for scientific integrity at SDU, thereby enhancing the credibility and integrity of research at the university. The regulations also create a framework for dealing with suspected scientific misconduct and questionable research practices at SDU.

Para. 2. The regulations apply to cases that concern research carried out at SDU, cases that form the basis for a scientific degree awarded at SDU, and cases that concern research carried out by an employee of SDU, regardless of where the research took place.

§ 2. Scientific work at SDU must be carried out with due respect for the generally accepted methods or codes of ethics and other professional requirements of the research area(s) in question.

Para. 2. When conducting scientific work at SDU, conduct that could be characterised as "scientific misconduct" or "questionable research practice" must be avoided.

### Definitions

§ 3. In line with § 3 of the Act on Scientific Misconduct etc., cf. Act no. 383 of 26 April 2017, the following definitions shall apply:

- 1) *Scientific misconduct*: Fabrication, falsification and plagiarism committed deliberately or through gross negligence when planning, conducting or reporting research.
- 2) *Fabrication*: Uninformed construction of data or substitution with fictitious data.
- 3) *Falsification*: Manipulation of research materials, equipment or processes and alteration or deletion of data or results, thereby producing misleading research.
- 4) *Plagiarism*: Acquiring the ideas, processes, results, texts or specific concepts of others without providing legitimate credit.
- 5) *Questionable research practice*: Violation of generally accepted standards of responsible research practice, including the standards in the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and other institutional, national and international practices and guidelines for research.

For example, this could be

- An act of negligence that cannot be designated as gross negligence, but if the consequences for the research are regarded as serious
  - A deliberate misrepresentation of the results or misrepresentation of your own or others' involvement in the research, even if the extent and consequences of the action cannot in themselves be regarded as serious
  - Conduct that does not comply with the guidelines of good scientific practice that may have been issued by official and/or professionally recognised bodies (such as concerning trial protocols, data processing, documentation, authoring, private financing support etc.)
  - Participation in scientific work where personal or financial interests in the course of the work and results can give rise to justified doubt regarding the person's impartiality.
- 6) *Scientific product*: A product produced by using scientific methods as part of the research, including applications for research funds.
  - 7) *Researcher*: A person who is a PhD student, holds a PhD or comparable qualifications.
  - 8) *Research institution*: A public Danish institution that carries out research.

§ 4 *Scientific dishonesty does not include*:

- 1) Cases of fabrication, falsification or plagiarism that have little impact on the planning, implementation or reporting of the research,
- 2) Questions regarding the validity of scientific theories and
- 3) Questions regarding the research quality of a scientific product.

## **Basis**

§ 5. The assessment of whether a certain practice is in line with responsible scientific practice, undertaken against the background of the "Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity" and the international recommendations that this is based on.

## **Research freedom**

§ 6. The requirement for responsible research practice does not limit the right to freedom of research, as there is no requirement for a specific method. Nor is there a requirement for "political correctness" or a requirement for restraint with professional and expert criticism of the scientific work of others.

Para. 2. It is a shared responsibility for SDU and the researchers to stimulate and develop the critical scientific discussion in the research environments.

Para. 3. If the researchers feel that their research freedom is being compromised, they can contact the Vice-Chancellor's Practice Committee.

## **Committee for Responsible Research Practice (Practice Committee)**

**§ 7.** The Vice-Chancellor appoints a Committee for Responsible Research Practice (Practice Committee).

Para. 2. At the recommendation of the Dean of each faculty, the Vice-Chancellor appoints one member and a deputy. The members shall be recognised researchers who possess extensive research experience and a high degree of professional integrity.

Para. 3. Associate professors and professors at SDU can be appointed as members. The members and deputies are appointed for a period of 3 years. Re-appointment is possible. If needed for a particular purpose, the committee can appoint an additional 1-2 persons who possess special knowledge in a specific professional or research area.

Para. 4 The Vice-Chancellor appoints a chairman, who must be a professor or associate professor and a trained lawyer.

Para. 5. The Vice-Chancellor provides administrative support to the committee.

### **The committee's tasks**

**§ 8.** The tasks of the committee are to:

1. Handle cases regarding suspected questionable research practice
2. Refer cases regarding suspected fabrication, falsification or plagiarism covered by the jurisdiction of the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct for handling by the committee
3. Assist the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct to the extent necessary
4. Prepare an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor and the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct regarding those cases that are being investigated
5. Make proposals for new regulations and guidelines concerning responsible research practice.

Para. 2. The committee itself decides on the organisation of the committee's work.

### **Case handling**

**§ 9.** When a case is submitted to the committee, the latter decides whether the case shall be investigated, rejected or referred to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

Para. 2. Cases are normally investigated in writing, but the committee can decide to allow oral submissions. In the event of the latter, the party involved is entitled to be accompanied by an expert witness.

Para. 3. The committee can decide in special cases to reopen a previously rejected or concluded case. This applies in the event of new and critical information coming to light.

Para. 4. The committee does not investigate reports that have been submitted anonymously.

**§ 10.** Cases regarding questionable research practice and scientific misconduct can be raised by anyone by way of a report and are investigated confidentially. "Anyone" includes technical and administrative staff, academic staff, students and persons outside the university. A report can concern the notifier himself/herself wanting to be cleared of claims of doubtful scientific practice or scientific misconduct. The Practice Committee can also take up cases on its own behalf or at the request of the Vice-Chancellor.

Para. 2. Only in special cases can the committee investigate a case that has not been submitted to the committee within a reasonable period of time after the complainant has had, or should have had, the necessary prerequisites to submit it.

Para. 3. Cases of suspected scientific misconduct must be submitted to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct within 3 months of receipt of the report. The committee shall not check whether scientific misconduct has actually been committed, but should merely indicate that the case fulfils the formal conditions for referral to the committee.

**§ 11.** The committee can refuse to investigate a case of doubtful research practice if the report is obviously groundless, or if the case is found not to be of significance for the purposes that the committee must fulfil, cf. § 1.

Para. 2. The committee shall refuse to refer a case of suspected scientific dishonesty to the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct if the report does not contain the information mentioned in § 11 of the Act on Scientific Misconduct. All cases that fulfil the formal requirements of § 11 of the Act shall be referred.

### **Principles for case handling**

**§ 12.** The committee investigates and deals with a given case taking into account the provisions of the Danish Administrative Code, and ensures that the case is properly disclosed.

**§ 13.** When the processing of a case has been completed, the committee prepares a written report, taking a reasoned stance on the case and recommending possible sanctions. The report is submitted to the Vice-Chancellor and to the parties involved in the case. If the committee does not recommend a sanction, the case is brought to a close. If the committee recommends a sanction, the report shall be sent for consultation with the parties involved before being sent to the Vice-Chancellor.

Para. 2. In general, the Practice Committee shall aim to conclude its handling of a case within 6 months after receipt of a report.

**§ 14.** The committee's recommendation must state whether this was unanimously agreed. If this was not the case, the recommendation must also include the assessment of the minority.

### **Sanctions**

**§ 15.** If, during the investigation of a case, the committee finds there is conduct that may be characterised as constituting doubtful research practice, the committee can recommend the following, taking into account the severity and clarity of the circumstances:

- a. That the circumstances open to criticism are pointed out to the individual concerned (action/warning)
- b. That consequences under employment law are considered for the individual concerned
- c. That the application for the scientific work in question is withdrawn
- d. That any individuals whose rights may have been violated are informed
- e. That any private or public collaboration partners are informed
- f. That any other relevant public authority in the field is informed
- g. That a police report is submitted if a criminal offence is deemed to have been committed.

### **Confidentiality**

**§ 16.** The committee's members are subject to the same duty of confidentiality as members of public offices with regard to the knowledge they are privy to in their capacity as members of the committee.

Approved by the Executive Board, 19 September 2019.