

Guidelines for Ensuring Good Research Practice and for Handling Research Misconduct

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These joint guidelines of the Foundation Ithaka Institute and the Ithaka Institut gGmbH (“Ithaka”) were developed with the involvement of all scientific staff and signed by the respective directors. These guidelines implement the recommendations of the DFG Memorandum “Safeguarding Good Research Practice” (2013) and also follow the recommendations of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences “Research Integrity: Principles and Rules of Procedure” (2008). Upon appointment, all employees engaged in scientific work receive these guidelines for their observance.

The freedom of research is guaranteed by the constitutions of both Germany and Switzerland. This freedom is inseparable from the responsibility of researchers. Ithaka and its staff are committed to responsible research with respect for the dignity of humans, animals, and the environment. To guarantee good research practice, the following regulations must be observed.

§ 1 Documentation

Accurate recording and documentation of the scientific approach and the results is mandatory for experimental work, since the reproducibility of investigations is a defining characteristic of such research. Primary data must be reliably stored and retained for a period of ten years.

§ 2 Remuneration

Scientific staff are entitled to appropriate remuneration, which in Germany is guided by the public collective agreements and in Switzerland by the regulations of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF).

§ 3 Project Management

The management of projects is clearly assigned to individual persons. Externally funded projects are led by the person who acquired the funding, unless that person actively steps down. The project leader is responsible for successful project implementation and reporting to the funder. A mentor is assigned to every project leader in an exclusively advisory capacity for the purposes of quality assurance and conflict resolution.

§ 4 Early-Career Researchers

Ithaka cannot independently supervise and qualify early-career researchers, in particular for academic theses. Students and early-career researchers are supervised in cooperation with universities and are entitled to regular scientific supervision, guidance, and support. It is ensured that theses can be completed within an appropriate timeframe; the requirements of the respective university are authoritative. In cooperations with universities, particular attention is paid to the integration of early-career researchers.

§ 5 Publications

Where several persons are involved in a research project or in the preparation of a scientific report, anyone who has made a substantial contribution to the development of the research question, the research plan, the execution of the research, the analysis or interpretation of the results, or to drafting or critically revising the manuscript shall be named as an author.

Authors of a scientific publication bear joint responsibility for its content. Exceptions should be made explicit. All researchers who have made significant contributions to the idea, planning, execution, or analysis of the research should have the opportunity to be co-authors. Persons with minor contributions are acknowledged in the acknowledgements section. Honorary authorships are excluded.

§ 6 Misconduct

Research misconduct occurs when these guidelines are violated intentionally or through gross negligence, in particular:

- (i) by fabricating data;
- (ii) by falsifying data through the removal of data that contradict the research thesis, or through misleading interpretation of data with the aim of obtaining a desired result;
- (iii) when the intellectual property of others is violated, in particular through theft of ideas, unauthorised disclosure of data and findings, or unauthorised publication as long as the work has not been published;
- (iv) when persons not involved are unjustifiably named as authors of a work, or when co-authors of a work are not named; or
- (v) when the work of others is recommended for publication without having been reviewed.

Research misconduct also occurs when someone intentionally enables or participates in the misconduct of others. Depending on the nature and severity of the established misconduct, it may be sanctioned by the following measures:

- Written warning

- Obligation to correct incriminated publications or false data by publishing an erratum and/or retracting the publication
- Removal from project leadership or exclusion from the project
- Temporary or permanent withdrawal of the mandate to submit proposals on behalf of Ithaka

§ 7 Ombudspersons and Procedures for Ensuring Good Research Practice

The Ithaka Advisory Board appoints an ombudsperson and a deputy, to whom scientific staff of Ithaka should turn on matters of good research practice. The ombudspersons are publicly named on the Ithaka website. Every employee has the right to contact these ombudspersons. Suspicions of misconduct and the ensuing proceedings must be handled confidentially. Whistleblowers must not suffer any disadvantages to their own scientific or professional development as a result. The ombudsperson and the commission must take appropriate steps to ensure their protection. However, the raising of knowingly false accusations may itself constitute a form of research misconduct.

The ombudsperson examines the specific suspicion of research misconduct for plausibility and decides whether the suspicion is substantiated or proves to be unfounded. The ombudsperson mediates between the parties involved and seeks, where possible, an amicable resolution of conflicts. The ombudsperson also advises persons who have been involuntarily drawn into a case of research misconduct on how they can preserve or restore their scientific or personal reputation.

If, however, a suspicion of misconduct cannot be ruled out, the ombudsperson reports to the management, which is thereby obligated to convene the investigation commission. The three-member investigation commission is chaired by an external scientist.

Both ombudspersons and commission members and chairs are elected and appointed by the Ithaka Advisory Board for terms of six years each. In addition to the ombudspersons, the commission members are also named on the Ithaka website.

After the ombudsperson has been contacted, the review must be concluded through examination of documents and discussions within two months. The investigation proceedings by the commission begin within a maximum of two months after the ombudsperson has informed the management.

§ 8 Performance Agreements

At regular intervals, target agreements are made and responsibilities assigned. At these same meetings, previous agreements are discussed and, in case of insufficient progress, joint solutions are agreed upon and implemented. A positive, sustainable practical impact on society, climate, and agriculture is at the forefront of Ithaka's research, whereby publications are regarded as an important means but not as an end in themselves. The quality of scientific work

and the resulting publications is the paramount concern. For performance evaluation, the most important publications with particular relevance to Ithaka's goals are consulted.

Ombudspersons and Investigation Commission for the Period 2026–2031

Ombudspersons:

Dr Thomas Bucheli, Agroscope, Reckenholzstrasse 191, CH-8046 Zürich

Deputy: Prof. Dr Claudia Kammann, Hochschule Geisenheim University, Von-Lade-Straße 1, D-65366 Geisenheim

Investigation Commission:

Chair: Prof. Dr Andreas Kappler, University of Tübingen, Hölderlinstraße 12, DE-72074 Tübingen

Deputy Chair: Prof. Dr Thilo Hofmann, University of Vienna, AT-1090 Vienna

The commission further consists of Dr Nikolas Hagemann as Director of Ithaka Institut gGmbH (Deputy: Hans-Peter Schmidt as Director of the Foundation Ithaka Institute) and Dr Gabriel Sigmund (Deputy: Dr E. Marie Mühe) as scientific staff and associated members of Ithaka.