

## **Principles of Good Scientific Practice at the University of Bonn**

*The following document is an English translation of the official German statements. In case of doubt, the German original will be binding.*

### **Preamble**

As a research university, the University of Bonn has a special commitment to research and research-driven teaching. Good academic work is based on the fundamental principle of honesty with oneself and others, and requires compliance with the principles of good scientific practice. Compliance with and communication of these principles by all of its members and associates are central concerns for the University of Bonn.

In developing their curricula, departments must appropriately integrate these principles for ensuring good scientific practice, and must inform students and other young academics working in the department about the guiding principles at the University of Bonn.

In addition to measures for identifying and penalizing academic misconduct, suitable measures must be taken or strengthened in order to prevent academic misconduct from occurring in the first place. The university, as a place of research, teaching and support for young academics, has an institutional responsibility here.

### **First section: Principles of good academic practice**

#### **§ 1 Guiding principles**

Anyone performing academic work at Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms University Bonn must

- work according to professional standards,
- document their results and the steps taken to achieve them, and consistently question all findings themselves,
- maintain strict honesty regarding articles by their academic partners,

- competitors and predecessors,
- prevent academic misconduct, and
- follow the rules described below.

## **§ 2**

### **Leadership responsibility toward young academics**

Anyone who has leadership responsibility toward young academics must behave in an exemplary academic manner and is responsible for ensuring that quality assurance is actually carried out. Young academics must also be vigilant with regard to possible misconduct in their environment, in the interest of their own plans for the future.

## **§ 3**

### **Supervising young academics**

(1) Anyone who supervises doctoral candidates and post-docs is responsible for ensuring their appropriate supervision. Further details are established by the individual departments.

(2) Departments must keep a list of all doctoral candidates and tenure-track assistant professors.

## **§ 4**

### **Performance and evaluation criteria**

Originality and quality always take precedence over quantity as performance and evaluation criteria for academic work.

## **§ 5**

### **Backing up and storing primary data**

Primary data used as a basis for publications must be stored on stable, secure carriers within the institution where it was created for a period of ten years. Whenever possible, any compounds used to obtain the primary data must be stored for the same period of time.

## **§ 6**

### **Academic publications**

Authors of academic publications are always jointly responsible for their content. Only persons who made a significant contribution to an academic publication are considered authors.

The following contributions do not in and of themselves establish authorship of an academic publication:

- organizational responsibility for obtaining funding,
- providing standard study materials,

- instructing employees about standard methods,
- technical participation in gathering data,
- technical support, e.g. providing equipment or lab animals,
- sharing data sets,
- reading the manuscript without substantially changing its content,
- heading the institution or organizational unit where the publication was created.

## **§ 7**

### **Academic misconduct**

(1) Academic misconduct exists if the rules established under §§ 1 through 6 are violated by providing false information, either intentionally or through gross negligence.

(2) Academic misconduct also applies to behavior that creates a shared responsibility for others' misconduct, particularly through active participation, knowledge of falsifications, co-authorship of falsified publications, or gross negligence in performing supervisory duties.

### **Second section: Procedures for suspected academic misconduct**

## **§ 8**

### **Prosecution of academic misconduct**

The Rectorate at the University of Bonn will pursue every suspected case of academic misconduct as long as concrete evidence exists. If the suspicion of misconduct is confirmed after the circumstances have been clarified, appropriate measures will be taken based on the available options for the individual case.

## **§ 9**

### **Whistleblower protection**

(1) The Rectorate at the University of Bonn, as well as the bodies through which it clarifies academic misconduct, will ensure that persons reporting a specific suspicion of academic misconduct do not experience any negative consequences at the University.

(2) Reports of academic misconduct must be made in "good faith." Frivolous accusations of academic misconduct, particularly inaccurate reports that are made knowingly, may themselves be considered a form of academic misconduct.

## **§ 10**

### **Appointment and responsibilities of the Ombudsperson**

(1) The Rectorate will appoint an internationally experienced academic (the Ombudsperson) as a contact partner for members and associates of the

University who report suspected cases of academic misconduct. In addition, the Rectorate will appoint a representative for the Ombudsperson to perform the Ombudsperson's duties in the event of a conflict of interest or unavailability. Members of the Rectorate, deans, and persons in leadership positions at University institutions cannot be appointed as an Ombudsperson or representative.

(2) The Ombudsperson advises persons who report a suspected case of academic misconduct, and reviews the plausibility of the accusations in terms of their concreteness and significance, as well as possibilities for clearing up the accusations (preliminary investigation). If the Ombudsperson is not able to clear up the accusations, he or she requests that an investigation be initiated by the Investigative Commission (§ 12), and reports the findings from the preliminary investigation to the Rectorate and the Investigative Commission. The Ombudsperson's review and preliminary investigation should take no longer than three months.

## **§ 11 Commission**

In order to clarify academic misconduct, the Rectorate will establish a standing Investigative Commission. The Rectorate will appoint three professors to the Commission, each for a three-year term, who must be members or associates of the University and must come from different departments. The Chair of the Commission must be a Law professor who is qualified for judicial office. The Investigative Commission can involve the Ombudsperson, and other persons who have special experience with such cases, as consultants.

## **§ 12 Investigative proceedings by the Commission**

(1) The Investigative Commission takes action at the request of the Ombudsperson (§ 10) or one of its members. The Chair of the Commission then informs the Rectorate of this. Before beginning investigative proceedings, the Commission members must be screened for a possible conflict of interest. Members with a conflict of interest will be replaced by representatives named by the Rectorate.

(2) The Investigative Commission meets privately. Until culpable misconduct has been proven, the Investigative Commission will treat all information about participants in the proceedings, as well as its findings, as strictly confidential.

(3) The Investigative Commission is entitled to take all appropriate steps to clarify the circumstances. To do so, it may obtain the necessary information and statements, and may also consult specialized experts from the relevant academic area in individual cases.

(4) The accused party must be informed of the incriminating facts and any evidence against him or her.

(5) Both the accused party and the person reporting the information must be given an opportunity to provide a verbal statement.

(6) If the accused party does not know the identity of the person reporting the information, this must be disclosed in cases where it will allow the accused party to properly defend himself or herself. In particular, this applies if the reporting party's credibility is significant for determining misconduct.

(7) If the Investigative Commission determines that academic misconduct has occurred, it will also suggest possible next steps, particularly with regard to possible consequences. In addition to determining sanctions under employment law and administrative law, it may also initiate academic, civil-law or penal consequences.

(8) The Chair of the Investigative Commission will report the results of his or her work to the Rectorate in writing, and must submit a recommended decision within six months of beginning the investigative proceedings. In case academic misconduct is determined, this decision should include suggested next steps for the Rectorate.

### **§ 13 Procedure by the Rectorate**

(1) Based on the report and recommendations of the Investigative Commission, the Rectorate will decide within three months whether to suspend the proceedings or whether academic misconduct has been adequately proven. In the latter case, the Rectorate will also determine the consequences.

(2) For questions regarding the use of academic titles, the Rectorate shall immediately forward the Investigative Commission's report and recommendation to the committee responsible for granting or revoking the title in the department in question. The responsible committee will decide whether to revoke the title. The members of the Investigative Commission and the members of the national commission "Self-Regulation in Science" can be involved as advisory members during meetings of the responsible committee.

(3) The accused party and the person providing information must be informed about the decision by the Rectorate as well as the office responsible for revoking the title, if applicable. Any significant reasons leading to the decision must also be provided. The Rectorate can announce the decision in an appropriate manner.

(4) The entire investigative process, including the decision by the Rectorate, should take no more than a year.