About research integrity

Research integrity is the set of values and rules to ensure that research and higher education are beyond reproach. It is an essential condition for maintaining trust between research groups and between Science and Society.

Key milestones

The key principles of research integrity were set out in 2007 on the occasion of a conference organised by the OECD and in 2010 in the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity.

- **European harmonisation**

  In 2011, in order to harmonise European research integrity policies, All European Academies (ALLEA) published a Code of Conduct for Research Integrity which was then revised in 2017. In 2015, the Council of the European Union formulated a series of conclusions underlining the importance of integrity for research.

  The ENRIO (European Network of Research Integrity Offices) was set up in 2008 and brings together research integrity officers from more than 31 member organisations in 23 European states. The **OFIS** is one of the members representing France, alongside representatives of Inserm, Cirad, CNRS, Inrae, Inria, Institut Curie, IRD.

- **National implementation**

  - 2010: in France, the “Alix” Report laid down the foundations for collective reflection on research integrity.
  - January 2015: eight research operators (Cirad, CNRS, Inrae, Inria, Inserm, Institut Curie, IRD and the Conference of University Presidents representing the academic world as a whole) signed the first French Charter for Research Integrity. They thus gave an undertaking to respect and enforce the principles of integrity and rigour that are inherent in research work.
  - June 2016: Pierre Corvol submitted his report to the Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research on the implementation of the French Charter for Research Integrity.
  - March 2017: the Secretary of State for Higher Education and Research called upon French research operators to roll out a series of concrete measures, most of which are now in place. He launched the **French Office for Research Integrity (OFIS)** to drive the effective application of research integrity rules in France.
  - October 2017: the OFIS, together with the French Advisory Board for Research Integrity, was set up as a department of Hcéres and entrusted with three missions: expertise, observation and coordination.
  - March 2018: the Ministry for Higher Education, Research and Innovation set up its board for deontology, which provides a legal frame for the duties of civil servants acting under its supervision (especially conflicts of interest); its action is connected with OFIS, which focuses on research integrity matters sensu stricto.

- View the list of signatories of the charters and of research integrity officers
- View the bibliography
Fundamental principles

Whatever the specific disciplinary approaches, research integrity is based on common principles that apply to research in all scientific and scholarly fields, and upon which good research practices are based in turn.

Respect for the essential values of research integrity

The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity emphasises their fundamental importance:

- **Reliability** in the design, methodology, analysis and use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, evaluating and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and impartial way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organisation, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

Fighting against research misconduct

The fabrication or falsification of data, plagiarism and other forms of theft of ideas seriously undermine the reliability of research. Although these fraudulent practices are fortunately rare, they must be avoided and firmly combated on an ongoing basis by all those engaged in research, whether individual or collective.

Other forms of research misconduct are less rare but more difficult to characterise and are also breaches of integrity. They must also be combatted and avoided: selective citation, self-plagiarism, presenting misleading results or statistical analyses, etc. The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity provides an illustrative and open-ended list of such practices.

- **2017 - The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity**
- **2016 - CNRS-CPU Guide - Integrity and Responsibility in Research Practices**
- **2015 - The European Charter for Researchers**

A culture to be shared

Each researcher is deeply aware of the positive values of research integrity. This culture is shared by all and must be consolidated collectively.

This process is being implemented:

- within the operators (universities, research bodies, agencies, etc.) which are implementing research integrity policies and appointing dedicated officers. These officers report to the President or Executive Director and oversee the effective implementation of this policy. In particular, they help researchers and research groups avoid situations of conflicting demands that might challenge their integrity: “publish or perish”, conflicts of interest, access to study programmes or to data saving and filing systems, etc.
- by organising training courses that are dispensed by:
  - doctoral schools for future doctors,
  - universities at different levels for higher education,
  - research operators for established researchers.

At all levels of the higher education and research system organisation, research integrity must be a subject to be discussed and shared, part of a common culture to be upheld and promoted by all.

- **Order of 25 May 2016 establishing the national training framework and procedures for delivery of the national doctorate diploma (2016, see Art. 3-3)**
- **French Charter for Research Integrity (2015)**

Values and challenges

Research is the first phase in developing our knowledge and understanding of the world we live in. It is based on:
Sharing, contradicting and debating research results on a shared theoretical basis are an integral part of the development of knowledge. This sharing requires the utmost rigour in collecting data and constructing knowledge. It is research integrity that enables us to make the distinction between proven knowledge, a working hypothesis or even an opinion.

Research integrity raises issues of cohesion and of trust:
- of society toward scientific research. This trust is crucial at a time when the major challenges facing our planet are making a robust understanding of the world of particularly critical importance. In addition, new technologies are constantly accelerating the sharing and dissemination of information, whether proven or not.
- between research groups themselves.

Research integrity is a fundamentally positive value on a par with research ethics. Promoting integrity is more essential than ever before. It is by ensuring compliance that the quality and credibility of research can be guaranteed.