

Guidelines for the promotion of good scientific practice

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

The Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) promotes high-quality research within the framework of a vibrant, productive, and critical research culture based on freedom of research and trust between research and society. In this context, the faculty adheres to [the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) and [the Danish Universities' principles for good research communication](#), and all academic staff members are expected to comply with the principles, duties, and responsibilities as stated herein.

PURPOSE AND SCOPE

According to Aalborg University's statutes, the Academic Council is responsible for developing and maintaining a high academic standard, including establishing guidelines for promoting good scientific practice.

The Academic Council at SSH has set up these guidelines, which aim to:

- promote good scientific practice;
- disseminate knowledge and understanding of good scientific practice through various initiatives;
- prevent failures that occur due to a lack of knowledge of standards and principles for good scientific practice.

The guidelines for the promotion of good scientific practice apply to all academic staff including PhD students, research assistants, and student assistants at SSH. The guidelines also apply to all research conducted in affiliation with SSH at Aalborg University, including research conducted by visiting researchers and students. The departments are responsible for ensuring that their students are taught and guided in good scientific practice. Aalborg University's rules on disciplinary measures apply to all AAU students.

The guidelines must also be observed in connection with the assessment of scientific products at SSH.

The guidelines summarise the most important principles and standards from the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and refer to the full text, which contains references to relevant international declarations in this area.

CONTENT

Definition of good scientific practice

The Danish Code is a code of conduct that concerns the integrity of Danish research. The Danish Code describes principles and standards for good scientific practice and thus aims to ensure quality, credibility, and integrity in Danish research.

SSH defines good scientific practice as research conducted following the principles and standards recommended by the code, including the international guidelines and recommendations to which the code refers and the discipline-specific regulations and guidelines that apply.

The Danish Code is based on three basic principles:

- Honesty – ensure the credibility of the research
- Transparency – to ensure the credibility of scientific reasoning
- Accountability – to ensure the reliability of research

Six standards of good scientific practice

The Danish Code implements six standards for good scientific practice, which serve as a non-exhaustive list of recommendations as to how research should be conducted from initiation to completion of specific research activities. The six standards relate to 1. research planning and conduct, 2. data management, 3. publication and communication, 4. authorship, 5. collaborative research and 6. conflicts of interest.

The six standards are general standards that should be further developed by the individual institutions in accordance with the traditions and practices of the different disciplines. To promote integrity and credibility in the research and based on the six standards for good scientific practice in the Danish Code, SSH has laid down the principles below. The principles must be seen as guidance and support to researchers and research groups to promote research of high quality, integrity, and credibility.

Thus, the intention is to provide a framework that may support all research activities. The principles are based on, elaborate, and complement national standards and therefore do not constitute an exhaustive discipline-specific list.

Conduct and practice of research.

- The responsible researcher(s) must describe how they conducted their research activities in a design or method section, in accordance with the standards of their discipline.
- The research must be conducted following current laws and regulations as well as the discipline-specific relevant methodological and ethical requirements, norms, principles, and recommendations that apply.
- The research must be conducted in accordance with the documentation requirements of the disciplines, including, to the extent possible, documentation of data analysis, data executions, etc.
- All relevant data must be reported.
- The consent of involved people and entities must be ensured in accordance with the relevant laws, regulations, requirements, norms, principles and recommendations that apply.
- Necessary approvals and permissions must be obtained before the research is conducted and in connection with relevant changes in the research activities.

Data management

- Data must be stored securely in accordance with national and international regulations and using the university's storage facilities.
- To the extent possible, data must be stored in a manner that enables reuse and secondary analyses of data.

- Third-party access to data must be ensured to the greatest extent possible.
- Personal data (data about natural persons) must be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Danish Data Protection Act as well as other relevant national and international laws and regulations
- The above also applies after the research project has been completed.

Publication and communication

- Results from the research must be published and presented honestly, transparently, and accurately. All relevant organisations or individuals who have participated in or contributed to the conduct of research activities must be credited and listed explicitly.
- When using work, data, or material from other sources in a publication, the author must state the necessary references.

In accordance with the Vancouver Declaration, authorship is based on the following:

- The author has made significant contributions to the concept and design or data collection or analysis or interpretation of the data, and
- the author has contributed to the manuscript by providing drafts or critical academic revisions, and
- the author has approved the final manuscript, and
- the author acknowledges responsibility for all aspects of the research by ensuring that all issues of accuracy or integrity have been adequately investigated and resolved.

All individuals who meet the above criteria should be accredited as authors.

Collaborative research

- As early in the research process as possible, researchers who collaborate must reach a common understanding of the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of the parties to ensure good scientific practice.
- In collaborative research, each party must take responsibility for ensuring good scientific practice.
- Where deemed relevant by researchers or their research leaders, research collaboration must be based on agreements between the parties; such agreements may include the use, sharing, and ownership of data, intellectual property rights, including rights to results, and confidentiality.
- When collaborating with external parties, collaboration agreements must be entered into, and these must be approved by the university's contracting unit.

Conflicts of interest

- Potential conflicts of interest that may raise doubts regarding the credibility and integrity of research must be clearly stated in connection with the publication and other dissemination of research results.
- All assessment work, including peer review, requires transparency of relevant interests (personal as well as professional) to ensure that the neutrality of the assessment cannot be called into question.

Breach of good scientific practice

At Aalborg University, the competence to process claims of questionable conduct of research or research misconduct Practice Committee, which conducts investigation of cases or preliminary processing before consideration by the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct, depending on the nature of the case.

The Practice Committee was appointed to contribute to ensuring that allegations of questionable research practice are addressed at Aalborg University, and to ensure a coordinated dialogue with the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct, cf. the [Danish act on research misconduct](#).

The primary task of the Practice Committee is to investigate allegations of questionable scientific practice. These are defined as allegations related to scientific products (scientific articles, PhD theses, etc.) produced as part of the research conducted at Aalborg University that are outside the scope of the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct or have been dismissed by the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct.

Furthermore, the Practice Committee must forward any allegations of fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism that are within the scope of the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct for further investigation by the Committee, in accordance with the Danish act on research misconduct.

Generally, the further processing of cases concerning breach of good scientific practice (scientific misconduct, questionable research practice, etc.) is carried out at the faculty or department, involving the relevant management.

Cases that do not belong under the Danish Committee on Research Misconduct or the AAU Practice Committee are investigated and processed by the faculty or the department, depending on the nature of the case.

Promoting good scientific practice at SSH

The principles and standards of the code form the basis for a common understanding and culture of integrity in Danish research, but at the same time, the code recognises that the standards must be implemented in different ways within the individual research area, i.e., with respect for the tradition of the discipline. SSH includes a number of different disciplines, and interdisciplinary collaboration, which necessitates that the implementation and development of in-depth principles and standards, in addition to the code's recommendations, takes place primarily at department level and, on an ongoing basis, in accordance with the development of the academic disciplines.

Management and staff are jointly responsible for ensuring good scientific practice in all research activities at the faculty. It is the responsibility of the members of staff to ensure that research activities are carried out following the principles of good scientific practice, and it is the responsibility of the management to establish a framework promoting this. All academic staff are encouraged to seek out relevant knowledge regarding good scientific practice, and

all research communities are encouraged to participate actively in discussions about good scientific practice and seek advice if doubts arise as to whether applicable standards and guidelines are being complied with. However, it should be emphasised that the ongoing endeavours to ensure good scientific practice rest with the heads of department at the faculty.

It is thus the responsibility of the department heads to ensure that good scientific practice is observed by all researchers at the department and that the competencies of the research groups are developed in connection with research at SSH. The heads of department have the overall responsibility to ensure that focus is directed towards good scientific practice, through both staff development and dialogue with members of staff.

Initiatives aimed at promoting good scientific practice at SSH

The following initiatives are intended to spread knowledge of the standards and principles in force. The initiatives aim to ensure easily accessible information, guidance, and sparring as well as ongoing articulation of the principles to maintain a culture that ensures good scientific practice in the research conducted at the faculty.

Course on good scientific practice for academic staff at the faculty.

To provide researchers at SSH with a basic understanding of the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, a mandatory course for academic staff at the faculty will be developed in 2023. The manager with HR responsibilities will ensure that all academic staff complete the course.

Ongoing feedback

The research group leaders articulate good scientific practice in the research group and ensure that the research group provides a framework for ongoing professional feedback, including the traditions of the respective disciplines as regards good scientific practice. Department heads are responsible for ensuring that such articulation and feedback occur.

Freedom of research

SSH safeguards freedom of research as a fundamental precondition for the independence and legitimacy of research. Among other things, freedom of research consists of the researcher's right, based on scientific considerations, to freely define research topics, employ methods and theoretical perspectives, and present results. AAU's legal department offers advice in connection with the conclusion of contracts and external collaboration, including advice on how to ensure freedom of research.

Data Management

To ensure implementation of AAU's Policy for data management at SSH, courses, seminars, etc. are offered on an ongoing basis in collaboration with the CLAAUDIA-Research Data Services unit. The faculty is represented in the CLAAUDIA steering committee to ensure that cross-disciplinary initiatives also reflect the faculty's research interests and needs, while at the same time organising faculty-specific initiatives in close dialogue between CLAAUDIA and the dean's office/faculty management. In addition, AAU's contracting unit advises academic staff on data protection practices.

Research training - Mandatory course in good scientific practice

PhD students at SSH must attend a course in good scientific practice as part of their PhD training programme. The doctoral school regularly offers the course *Applying the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity to your Research*. The course is held in collaboration with the other doctoral schools at AAU to ensure awareness of the traditions of other main areas as regards good scientific practice.

Plagiarism screening of PhD theses

Pre-screening of PhD theses (screening of a preliminary thesis) takes place in the academic environments at the departments. Furthermore, a screening of the final degree-awarding thesis is carried out under the auspices of the doctoral schools at AAU PhD. Pre-screening takes place as part of the training programme attended by the PhD student; this includes training in good scientific practice within the relevant subject area. This training takes place in the academic environments at the departments, which is why the pre-screening of the thesis also takes place here. This means that pre-screening can be used as a tool to facilitate dialogue between the supervisor and their PhD students regarding good scientific practice. Screening of the final, degree-awarding thesis takes place after submission of the thesis for assessment, so that the thesis submitted for assessment has been plagiarism screened.

Mandatory declaration of compliance with good scientific practice

Together with their PhD thesis, PhD students must submit a mandatory declaration stating that the thesis, to the best of their knowledge, complies with applicable principles and standards for good scientific practice as stated in the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

Academic Council

The AAU Practice Committee must report to the Academic Council once a year, and the Academic Council will then consider whether these guidelines are adequate and updated as regards the rules in force and other initiatives in the area. In collaboration with the departments, the SSH dean's office will prepare a status of initiatives to promote good scientific practice to be discussed in the Academic Council.

OVERALL FRAMEWORK

[Statutes for Aalborg University](#)

[Danish act No 383 of 26/04/2017 on research misconduct etc.](#)

[Danish code of conduct for research integrity](#)

[Policy for research data management](#)

[Rules on disciplinary measures against students:](#)

[Universities Denmark's principles for good research communication](#)

[New principles and recommendations on research-based collaboration and consultancy - Universities Denmark \(dkuni.dk\)](#)

CONTACT / RESPONSIBILITY

Dean's Secretariat, SSH