

Rules of Good Scientific Practice

at the

Frankfurt School of Finance & Management, Frankfurt am Main¹

Preface

Compliance with rules of good scientific practice is a fundamental requirement for the recognition of scientific work by the public and the research community. Violation of these principles destroys public trust in the reliability of scientific results and seriously damages relations between scientists. Based on this conviction, we regard the following principles as necessary and appropriate to increase awareness for the requirements of good scientific practice. At the same time, our aim is to show how we intend to increase the quality of scientific work at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management and will deal specifically with misconduct while taking the peculiar conditions of each case into due consideration.

Declaration

These rules of good scientific practice were discussed and adopted by the majority of the members of the Board of the Faculty of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. Within its powers, the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management will ensure that its scientists and others working for the institution will obey these rules of good scientific practice.

A. Safeguarding Good Scientific Work

§A1 Our Guidelines for Good Scientific Work

- 1) Good scientific work requires rigorous diligence when gathering and selecting data, unambiguous and comprehensible documentation and publication of all important results as well as openness towards doubt and critique with respect to implicit and explicit assumptions, methodological approaches and results. All insights and results must be subjected continuously to internal and external critique.

¹ The rules laid down here are based on recommendations made by the Hochschulrektorenkonferenz entitled „Zum Umgang mit wissenschaftlichem Fehlverhalten in den Hochschulen“ from July 1998, which are, in turn, based on resolutions from the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft published under the title „Verfahren bei Verdacht auf wissenschaftliches Fehlverhalten in Forschungseinrichtungen der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft – Verfahrensordnung“ in November 1997. They have also been supplemented by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft's recommendations entitled „Proposals for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice “ dated December 1997.

Valuable suggestions were also taken from the rules of the University of Leipzig to ensure good scientific practice (<http://www.zv.uni-leipzig.de/de/forschung/satzung.html>).

All parts of these texts refer to the female as well as male gender. The text refrains from using gender-specific distinctions in order to enhance readability.

- 2) In particular, the following rules will be considered as general principles of scientific work at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management:
- Research will be conducted according to state-of-the-art scientific knowledge; acquaintance with current states of subject matter and appropriate methods is essential.
 - Methods used and insights gained will be revealed, documented and archived for a period of ten years. In particular, primary data upon which publications are based must be saved on durable and secured data storage facilities for ten years. These rules will not interfere with further storage requirements due to regulatory or legal rules as well as with measures to protect personal data.
 - Scientific results are communicated to the scientific public through publications. Publications will always comply with the requirements accepted for each academic discipline. It is understood that publishing renders researchers open to public discussion and critique. Authors of a joint scientific publication collectively share responsibility for its content.
 - Accepted principles of scientific work in academic disciplines will be followed. In particular, originality, innovation and quality not quantity will always be the primary criteria when evaluating exams or research achievements, granting academic titles and hiring academic staff.

§A2 Responsibilities and Implementation

- 1) All involved with research and teaching are obliged to comply with the rules of good scientific work. The deans inform the academic teachers, researchers and junior scientists about the rules of good scientific work effective at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. These rules are also a firm part of the School's education.
- 2) Special attention will be given to the training and advancement of junior scientists who will receive a written copy of the rules of good scientific work at the beginning of their work. The rules will then be instilled during the research period under the supervision of an experienced researcher.
- 3) Those responsible for the organization of a certain area of work must ensure that all tasks concerning management, supervision, conflict management and quality assurance are clearly assigned and carried out in a satisfactory manner.

§A3 Academic Misconduct

- 4) If during the process of scientific work false information is given either intentionally or due to gross negligence, or if intellectual property rights are violated or the research activity of others sabotaged by other means, then this behaviour will be viewed as academic misconduct. Individual examples for academic misconduct follow but do not include all aspects. It is forbidden to:
 - forge or fraudulently alter data, e. g. by selecting only convenient data or rejecting unwanted evidence, without revealing such practices,
 - violate intellectual property with respect to third party copyrighted material or major scientific insights, hypotheses, teachings or research approaches,
 - assume the (co-)authorship of another without permission,

- pressure others to grant (co-)authorship by abusing power,
 - impair the research work of others,
 - destroy primary data if this violates legal rules or the accepted rules of scientific work.
- 5) Sharing responsibility for academic misconduct can also arise as a result of:
- contributing to the misconduct of others,
 - co-authoring fraudulent publications,
 - grossly neglecting supervisory responsibilities.

B. Procedure when Academic Misconduct is Suspected

The Frankfurt School of Finance & Management sets out the following rules for dealing with potential or actual misconduct based on its principles of good scientific work.

§B1 Ombudsperson

- 1) The faculty members of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management entitled to vote elect an independent and qualified ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson who serve as contact persons for the members of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. The latter can turn to the ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson in cases of conflict or suspected academic misconduct.
- 2) The ombudsperson is elected with a simple majority vote. Professors and scientists/doctoral students at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management are entitled to vote excluding visiting scientists.
- 3) Professors of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management are eligible to become ombudsperson.
- 4) The ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson are elected for a period of three years; re-election is possible. The election for a new term should be conducted in good time before the end of the current office term. In the case of resignation of the ombudsperson or vice ombudsperson as well as after their regular term, they will remain in office until successors have been elected. The head of the commission for investigating allegations of academic misconduct mentioned in §B2 is responsible for the proper running of the election of the ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson. Further details of the election procedure for the ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson are stated in the election regulations of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.
- 5) The ombudsperson acts as confidential advisor for those reporting presumed academic misconduct. All information received as well as the identity of informants is strictly confidential.
- 6) Once the ombudsperson has received indications of academic misconduct, these must be investigated with appropriate discretion. If the conclusion is reached that there is sufficient evidence to substantiate the initial suspicions, then the commission for investigating allegations of academic misconduct mentioned in §B2 must be informed.
- 7) The vice ombudsperson acts in place of the ombudsperson when the latter is prejudiced or absent. The rules for exclusion due to personal involvement (Art. 20 and 21 Administrative Procedures Act) apply for the ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson as well as for the members of the commission for investigating allegations of academic misconduct.

- 8) The ombudsperson reports yearly to the commission for investigating allegations of academic misconduct at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management.

§B2 Commission for Investigating Allegations of Academic Misconduct

- 1) After election by simple majority, the faculty members of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management entitled to vote propose three professors as members of the commission for investigating allegations of academic misconduct (from now on called „investigative commission“) and their proxies to the Faculty Board. The Faculty Board decides on their appointment.
- 2) The members of the investigative commission are:
 - the Vice President Research
 - three professors of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management,
 - the ombudsperson and vice ombudsperson as guests with advisory authority.
- 3) The investigative commission selects one of its members as its head. The investigative commission can consult further persons with advisory authority.
- 4) The term of office is three years. Re-election is possible.
- 5) If a member of the investigative commission is prejudiced or absent, the elected proxy member takes over the duties.

§B3 General Procedural Rules

- 1) The investigative commission becomes active when the ombudsperson reports suspicions of academic misconduct. The investigative commission also acts when it receives indications for such misconduct directly.
- 2) The investigative commission must do all it can to clarify the case brought to its attention taking all evidence into unbiased consideration in accordance with relevant legal rules. The investigative commission confers excluding the public. The investigative commission adopts the appropriate procedure conscientiously at its own discretion.
- 3) Deadlines for official statements, hearings, proceedings and final rulings should be set – unless otherwise specified – to ensure a speedy process. Generally speaking, the entire process should not exceed four weeks.
- 4) The rights of all involved must be respected. Suspects as well as informants can demand a private hearing.

§B4 Procedure for a Preliminary Investigation

- 1) Once the investigative commission has received substantial information on suspected academic misconduct, the person involved must be given the opportunity to respond within two weeks of the allegation. Exculpatory and incriminating evidence must be documented in written form.
- 2) All information on those involved in the case together with their statements and any findings from other sources must be treated strictly confidentially until the case for culpable misconduct has been proven.

- 3) Within two weeks of receiving statements from those involved or once the deadline for statements has passed, the investigative commission has two weeks to decide whether the preliminary investigation should be closed as suspicions were not confirmed, informing those under suspicion and informants of the reasons for this decision, or whether a formal investigation should be instigated.

§B5 Procedure for a Formal Investigation

- 1) The head of the investigative commission informs the president of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management about the beginning of a formal investigation.
- 2) The investigative commission documents the procedure and writes a report on the results of the investigation stating main reasons for decisions.
- 3) The investigative commission must clarify all issues according to its means, adopting the necessary procedure conscientiously with utmost discretion. The investigative commission is officially authorized to investigate relevant cases. In this function, it can request statements from every scientist or others involved and issue summons to oral hearings.
- 4) Any claim of bias must be asserted both by the investigator and the person under suspicion. In such a case, the investigative commission of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management must assign the investigative tasks to the vice ombudsperson or a proxy member.
- 5) Those involved must be informed about incriminating facts and possible evidence. They have the right to access files as long as this does not impede with the rights of others, in particular the rights of informants and the public interest. The right to demand a hearing must be granted. Those involved have the right to be heard in person, as do the informants, especially when contradictory evidence is to be discussed.
- 6) Those involved as well as informants must be given the opportunity for an oral hearing; for support, they can be accompanied by a trusted person. This also applies for others taking part in the hearing.
- 7) Meetings of the investigative commission are not public and are strictly confidential. All information on those involved in the case and the findings of the investigation must be treated strictly confidentially until culpable misconduct has been proved.
- 8) The investigative commission reaches its decisions based on the facts of the investigation and the evidence it has gathered according to its own independent conviction.
- 9) The main reasons for a decision must be communicated to the suspected person, informants and trusted third parties in written form before the end of the formal investigation. These then have the opportunity to comment on the report.
- 10) If the investigative commission is convinced with a 2/3 majority that misconduct has been proven, it submits its report together with statements and files to the president of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management. In such a case, the report also contains a recommendation for further steps especially with respect to academic consequences for the person involved. The procedure will be terminated when suspicions prove to be false. However, in well-founded cases the president of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management can then demand that the results of the investigation be re-examined.
- 11) The files of formal investigations must be stored for a period of 30 years.

- 12) At the end of a formal investigation, the investigative commission must ensure that those wrongly suspected of academic misconduct do not suffer any further damage to their private or scientific integrity. The following measures can be taken:
- a) consultation with the ombudsperson,
 - b) a written – where appropriate also public – statement by the head of the investigative commission that the person involved is not guilty of academic misconduct.
- Informants should also be protected from discrimination in an appropriate fashion.

§B6 Decisions of the President

- 1) Based on the report and the recommendations of the investigative commission, the president of the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management decides in cases of misconduct what consequences this will have for the person involved.
- 2) Depending on the severity of the proven misconduct, the president can enforce the following sanctions: oral admonishment, written admonishment, cease-and-desist order/warning, termination with or without notice. The offender is obliged to correct or withdraw publications proved to be false if the president so demands.
- 3) The person involved as well as the informant must be informed about the final decision. This information must be submitted immediately in written form including the main reasons leading to the decision.
- 4) (Scientific) Institutions outside of the school and associations must be informed about academic misconduct if they are immediately affected or if the scientist involved holds a leading position or – as in the case of sponsoring organizations – participates in decision-making bodies. If a case for considerable academic misconduct concerns research funded by external sources, the sponsoring institution will be informed.

These rules of good academic practice were enacted formally at the Frankfurt School of Finance & Management on May 9th, 2008. They were modified upon decision of the faculty council on May 9th, 2012.