

The University of Copenhagen's code of good scientific practice in research collaborations with external partners

1. Background

The University of Copenhagen collaborates in its research with a wide range of private companies and public institutions and agencies. The University wants to maintain and strengthen such research collaboration with external partners for the benefit of the quality and relevance of the research, and for the benefit of the surrounding society.

In connection with research collaboration with external partners it is important that the integrity of the research cannot be called into question. For the external partners, it will often be important that the results of the collaboration are received with trust because they come from an independent and highly ranked research institution such as the University of Copenhagen; and for the University, it is crucial that trust in the institution's independence and objectivity cannot be called into question.

2. Scope

This document sets out the University's code of good scientific practice in research collaborations with external partners. The Code applies to research conducted at the University of Copenhagen, and must be adhered to in research agreements with external partners at the University of Copenhagen.

The Code does not apply to collaborative relationships in which a member of staff at the University of Copenhagen participates as a private individual, and where the collaboration cannot therefore be considered to relate to research at the University of Copenhagen.¹

The Code does not apply if their application would be contrary to vital public interests.

3. Purpose

This Code aims to set out the broad framework for good scientific practice in research collaborations. Hence, the Code must counterbalance the various, sometimes conflicting, interests between the University, the University's researchers and external partners who may be party to research collaborations.

The Code serves to ensure that research results are published, and to protect research integrity by promoting transparency and clarity in collaborative agreements and elaborating on possible financial interests and other private interests relevant to the research collaboration.

¹ The University of Copenhagen's rules regarding outside professional activities include rules on the notification of, among other things, sideline occupations of tenured lecturers and professors, and the disclosure of sideline occupations that may give rise to conflicts of interest.

The Code is in accordance with current Danish and international rules in the area.

4. Definitions:

“Research collaboration”: Performance of research activities that take place as a collaboration between one or more external partners and one or more members of staff at the University of Copenhagen.

“External party”: A natural or legal person who has a customary or operational purpose different from the purpose in Section 2² of the Danish University Act, including private companies, organisations and public agencies.

“Financial interests and other private interests”: All interests that could potentially discourage independent research and access to research results.

“Conflict of interest”: A situation in which financial or other interests may compromise or influence professional judgment³. It is not only important whether there actually is an influence, but also whether there may be grounds for suspicion, justified or not, that an influence exists. Conflicts of interest can occur in a variety of situations. For examples please refer to the university’s guide on conflicts of interest.

5. Code for researchers

5.1. General principles

Researchers must not accept obligations that involve acts contrary to good scientific practice.

5.2. Integrity

In collaborative research there is a risk that the research may, directly or indirectly and consciously or unconsciously, be influenced by an external partner’s private interests, and one therefore cannot be sure of the reliability and credibility that otherwise characterises independent research. The following principles should ensure the integrity of the research:

- a. An external partner can contribute to defining research topics and questions, but scientific methods should only be selected on the basis of scientifically based considerations, and the University researcher must be able to vouch for the scientific method.
- b. Researchers must have the freedom to present their research as they wish.
- c. For quality assurance purposes, the University’s researchers should have full access to data (including raw data and metadata), obtained or held by an external partner, if the research is based on this data.

² Consolidation Act no. 960 of 14 August 2014.

³ Cf. Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, p. 15.

- d. Provision of funds and other resources from an external partner must be made to a unit at the University and not directly to the individual researcher.

5.3. Transparency

- a. All researchers should be transparent as regards possible conflicts of interest, by default on the researcher's CURIS profile and the researcher's website.⁴

5.4. Publication

- a. All publishable research results from a research collaboration should be made available for publication.
- b. It cannot be agreed that the publication of research results is subject to approval of an external partner.
- c. The partners may agree that a researcher shall, at an appropriate time, notify an external partner about the date of impending publication, as well as provide notification of the academic content of the planned publication.
- d. It may be agreed that an external partner who receives notification regarding impending publication, cf. point (c), can demand postponement of publication for a reasonable period of time, generally three months, if such action is necessary in order for the external partner:
 - to secure relevant Intellectual Property Rights; or
 - to take appropriate steps in cases where the planned publication concerns research where the results will affect the external partner's interests.

5.5. Confidential information and trade secrets

- a. In collaborations with external partners, statutory duties of confidentiality should be respected.
- b. It may be agreed that an external partner's confidential knowledge that meets the requirements for protection as a trade secret under the Danish Marketing Act shall be kept secret. However, the length of such a secrecy clause must be limited to a maximum of three 3 years after project completion so that the researcher is no longer prevented from publishing his or her research on the grounds of the secrecy obligation after the expiry of this period. Where warranted by exceptional circumstances, such a period of secrecy may be extended.
- c. Secrecy cannot be agreed in collaborations with public authorities, except for the disclosure of information that, by law, must be handled confidentially, and information that is exempt from the right of data access. However, in relation to public authorities, it is possible to agree confidentiality of trade secrets, cf. the provision in point 5(5)(b).

⁴ The University of Copenhagen's rules outside professional activities state that researchers at lecturer and professor level must disclose sideline occupations that may give rise to conflicts of interest

6. Code for units within the University of Copenhagen

6.1. Integrity

- a. A research collaboration with an external partner should be adequately described in a written agreement and exist in a permanent form (electronic archiving), and must at least contain provisions regarding the partners' rights and obligations, the duration of the collaboration and any options to terminate the collaboration.
- b. Agreements regarding collaborative research with external partners relating to research at the University of Copenhagen should be entered into between the external partner and the University and not with the researcher as a private individual.
- c. The University should support the freedom of researchers to present their research as they wish.
- d. As far as possible, the University should ensure that researchers have varied work assignments so that the job security of researchers does not depend on collaboration with one or a few external partners.

6.2. Transparency

- a. As far as possible, the University shall seek to ensure transparency in relation to financial interests as regards research at the University of Copenhagen.

/ Adopted by Management Team – 6 October 2016