

## **Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Academic Practice and Addressing Academic Misconduct at Ecologic Institute**

The researchers of Ecologic Institute pledge to follow and uphold these Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Academic Practice in their research. Ecologic Institute considers compliance with these principles to constitute an obvious pre-condition for undertaking any type of research.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG), the foundation for funding academic research in Germany, Ecologic Institute has decided upon the following Guidelines for Safeguarding Good Academic Practice and Addressing Academic Misconduct. The wording and formulation of the following were thus borrowed in part directly and in part indirectly from the following sources:

- DFG: Recommendations of the Commission on “Professional Self Regulation in Science” – Proposals for Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice
- German Rectors’ Conference: “Addressing Scientific Misconduct in Universities”

### **1. General (Recommendation 1)**

All researchers of Ecologic Institute are required to observe the rules of good scientific practice. These include, in particular:

- complying with the professional standards of each scientific discipline,
- documenting results,
- consistently questioning one’s own scientific findings,
- maintaining strict honesty with regards to the contributions of partners, competitors, and predecessors.

### **2. Scope (Recommendation 2)**

The rules of good academic practice apply to all scientific staff of Ecologic Institute.

### **3. Responsibility of the Management (Recommendation 3)**

The management of Ecologic Institute is responsible for ensuring that work is arranged in a way that responsibilities for project management, supervision, conflict resolution, and quality control are clearly allocated, in a way that is appropriate to the respective research project or task. The management also ensures that these responsibilities are fulfilled by all scientific staff. Within the context of a research project, the project leader is obliged to ensure that everyone working on the project is familiar with the standards of good academic practice and lives up to them. This is facilitated through regular discussions and proper organizational measures.

### **4. Supervision of Junior Scientific Staff (Recommendation 4)**

The professional development and training of junior researchers deserve particular attention. The rules of good academic practice will be communicated to junior staff. In all cases an experienced researcher will instruct and guide the junior staff, taking on oversight and supervisory responsibilities. Within the project teams, individuals will be assigned clear responsibilities. The project leader is responsible for ensuring that these assignments are understood. In addition, Ecologic Institute’s general procedures for quality assurance apply.

### **5. Ombudspersons (Recommendation 5)**

Ecologic Institute will designate up to three independent trusted staff persons to be ombudspersons, who the scientific staff can contact in the event of a conflict regarding questions about good academic practice as well as in the case of suspected or known academic misconduct (see number 8). These ombudspersons shall be available for advice and guidance for all scientific staff of Ecologic Institute. Members of Ecologic Institute's management cannot serve as ombudspersons.

#### **6. Quality before Quantity (Recommendation 6)**

Ecologic institute defines performance and evaluation criteria for its hiring and promotion processes, such that originality and quality are preferred over quantity.

#### **7. Data Storage (Recommendation 7)**

Raw and primary data used as the basis for publications shall be stored by durable and secure means for at least ten years.

#### **8. Addressing Scientific Misconduct (Recommendation 8)**

Scientific misconduct occurs when, in a scientifically relevant context, intentional or grossly negligent misrepresentations are made, the intellectual property of another individual is infringed, or the research activities of another individual are adversely affected. The circumstances of each individual case are crucial.

Possible examples of serious misconduct include:

- a) Misrepresentation: the fabrication of data; the falsification of data, e.g. through the selection and removal of undesirable results or by manipulating a figure or presentation of data, without full disclosure; providing incorrect information in an application or contract (including misrepresentation in print and digital publications).
- b) Violation of intellectual property with regard to the copyright protected work of another person or misappropriation of essential findings, hypotheses, lessons, or research approach of other persons; the unauthorized use under the pretense of authorship (plagiarism), the exploitation of research methods and ideas, particularly when acting as a reviewer or evaluator (idea theft), the presumption or unfounded acceptance of scientific authorship or co-authorship, the falsification of content, the unauthorized publication or distribution to third parties of work, findings, hypotheses, lessons, or research methods that have not yet been published.
- c) Claiming (co-)authorship of another person's work without their agreement.
- d) Disposal of primary or raw data when this constitutes an infringement of legal regulations or discipline-specific principles of scientific work.

One can be held co-accountable for misconduct as a consequence of actively participating in another person's misconduct, having knowledge of the falsification carried out by other people, co-authoring a falsified publication, or displaying gross negligence in supervisory responsibility.

In the event that, on the basis of the information provided, one of the appointed ombudspersons has reason to suspect scientific misconduct, the management of the institute shall be informed. At the request of the ombudspersons, the management shall form an examination board. The ombudspersons will submit proposals on the composition of the examination board.

A potential bias on the part of one of the members of the examination board or one of the ombudspersons can be claimed at any time by the board, the ombudspersons, or by the individual(s) charged with misconduct.

The individual(s) concerned shall have the opportunity at every phase of the the examination process to make a statement or respond.

The examination board shall investigate the circumstances of the case at a hearing with the person charged with misconduct present. If the board finds no evidence of misconduct it will conclude the examination. Otherwise it will submit proposals to the management for further action. The management shall decide in individual cases which measures to take.

Until misconduct is established, all participants (ombudspersons, examination board, Ecologic Institute management) shall maintain strict confidentiality regarding those involved and the results of the process.

The proceedings and results of each step in the examination process shall be documented in written minutes.