

Rules for Ensuring Good Academic Practice at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research

Preamble

Scholarship is based on fundamental principles, the most important of which are honesty and integrity towards oneself and others. These principles are both ethical norms and the basis for professional scholarly work and should be put into practice in academic institutions and imparted to younger scholars in the course of academic research and teaching. Securing a framework in which good practice in scholarship can be realized is one of the key responsibilities of academic self-government. The Hamburg Institute for Social Research is committed to fulfilling its obligation to realize this goal. The guidelines and procedures for ensuring good academic practice formulated here reflect proposals made by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [German Research Foundation, DFG] in January 1998 and have been modified to reflect the special status of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research as a foundation under German civil law.¹

I. Ensuring Good Academic Practice

§ 1 General Principles

(1) The following rules for good academic practice are intended to contribute to promoting the quality of scholarship and research and preventing academic misconduct.

(2) The following standards for good academic practice will be applied:

1. Scholars² are obliged, to the best of their knowledge and ability, to adhere to the general principles of good academic practice, that is, to conduct their work in keeping with the state-of-the-art in their field, to document all findings, to question and examine results critically, and to honestly acknowledge the contributions of their research partners and collaborators, predecessors, and competitors. They should make all possible efforts to conduct their research in a manner that

reflects the most current status of work in their field, including knowledge of recent literature and of appropriate methods. All sources used in their work must be named and acknowledged.

2. Good academic practice is also characterized by ongoing critical reflection of the results of one's own work. Equally essential is constant monitoring of findings and their interpretation, for example, through reciprocal assessment and discussion within the Institute's research units and working groups.

3. The methods used in research and research findings must be documented and archived for a period of ten years. Documentation and archiving must employ durable storage media that meet the latest technical standards.

4. The results of academic research are made accessible to the (academic) public in published form.

5. A key aspect of good practice in scholarship is responsibility for authorship and co-authorship of publications. The authors of an academic publication bear joint responsibility for its contents. They are accountable and vouch for the content of all publications.

6. If more than one person is involved in a research project or in writing an academic report or publication, only such individuals shall be named as co-authors who make a significant contribution to formulating the research question or the research design, and/or to implementing the actual research, and/or to evaluating or interpreting the results of such research, and/or to drafting the manuscript, and/or to subjecting its contents to critical scholarly revision. Co-authorship cannot be derived from mere technical assistance in collecting data, from the provision of funds used for academic work, or from an individual's general role as head of the unit within which a specific academic endeavor was undertaken. Reading or reviewing a manuscript without an active contribution to its content also fails to justify acknowledgement as a co-author. Staff members with grievances related to these issues can appeal to the Institute's ombudspersons (see § 6).

§ 2 Obligations

(1) All scholars who work at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research are obliged to comply with these Rules for Ensuring Good Academic Practice. The Hamburg Institute for Social Research assumes its responsibility towards its staff by ensuring that each research staff member is informed personally about the general principles of good academic practice in research and other scholarly endeavors and, more specifically, about the provisions of these Rules.

Confirmation that this briefing has taken place will be documented in writing and countersigned by all parties involved.

(2) This obligation to be informed about these Rules for Ensuring Good Academic Practice and to confirm compliance with them in writing applies equally to guest fellows and to scholars who work for the Hamburg Institute for Social Research as self-employed or freelance professionals.

§ 3 Implementation of the Rules for Ensuring Good Academic Practice

(1) The research units of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research ensure that the objectives of research and the responsibilities of its research staff are identified, defined, and distributed and that there is a clear assignment of responsibilities to each individual staff member.

(2) The research units are responsible for monitoring and securing the quality of scholarship at the Institute. Monthly meetings of each research unit are the context in which the directors of the research units contribute to achieving these goals. In addition, an annual meeting called the “Institutswochen” will take place, during which the research projects undergo a process of monitoring and evaluation. In preparation for this meeting, an Institute reader with information on all ongoing projects and research endeavors will be produced and distributed. Final responsibility for quality control lies with the directorship of the Institute and of the head of the Institute’s board of directors.

(3) Selection of new members of the Institute’s research staff will be based solely on candidates’ academic capabilities with respect to the profile of the project or projects for which they will be responsible and under consideration of the Institute’s perspectives for future academic development. In defining criteria for evaluation, originality and quality shall have the highest priority. Productivity must be assessed within the context of indicators of quality.

(4) The Hamburg Institute for Social Research considers support for young scholars to be an indispensable element of good academic practice and is committed to fulfilling this function wherever possible. Of special importance in promoting the academic development of younger colleagues is the responsibility of research unit directors and more experienced staff members to advise and support younger staff members in acquiring and applying both academic qualifications and the ethical principles of good practice in scholarship.

II. Academic Misconduct

§ 4 Academic Misconduct by Research Staff

(1) Academic misconduct will be held to have been committed if, in the course of academic work and either deliberately or by gross negligence, false statements are made, the intellectual property rights of others are infringed upon, or their research work is compromised or impeded in any way. These criteria for academic misconduct also apply correspondingly to the behavior of members of the Institute's technical staff.

(2) The following will be viewed as academic misconduct according to these Rules:

1. all forms of misrepresentation, in particular,

- fabrication of data;
- manipulation of data (for example, by non-disclosure of undesirable results or by manipulating a text or image);
- providing incorrect information in job or funding applications or project proposals (including deliberately incorrect information about publications in any stage of the publication process, from manuscript acceptance to printing to actual release);

2. violation of intellectual property rights with respect to the work of others if such work is protected by copyright and/or constitutes a substantial scholarly discovery, hypothesis, theory, concept, or research approach, in particular in the form of

- unauthorized use of such work and assumption of authorship for it (plagiarism);
- utilization or dissemination of research approaches and ideas without acknowledgement of the source (theft of ideas);
- unjustified assumption of authorship or co-authorship of an academic work;
- fabrication or manipulation of content;
- unauthorized publication or disclosure to third parties of the work of another person as long as their work, discovery, hypothesis, theory, concept, or research approach is otherwise unpublished;

3. claiming authorship or co-authorship for or with another person without her or his consent;

4. compromising or hampering the research work of others (including damaging, destroying, or manipulating equipment, documents, hardware, software, or any other items required by another person to carry out their research);

5. removal or destruction of data when this violates existing laws and regulations or contravenes § 1 paragraph 2 of these Rules;

6. formulating and disseminating evaluations of the research activities of third parties that are false or misleading as a result of actions that are grossly negligently or deliberately as well as preparing and disseminating unjustified expert opinions as a favor to third parties.

§ 5 Joint Responsibility for Misconduct

Joint responsibility for misconduct according to § 4 may result from

1. active participation in misconduct committed by others,
2. knowledge of misconduct of others,
3. gross negligence in fulfilling supervisory obligations (see § 3).

§ 6 Informal Procedures in Case of Conflicts

1. Two ombudspersons will be appointed from among the research staff of the Hamburg Institute for Social Research to deal with conflicts in the sphere of good academic practice. A search committee will be appointed to select these two ombudspersons.

The ombudspersons will function as contacts and advisors for all parties involved when a suspicion is articulated that violations of the principles of good academic practice have occurred. The ombudspersons will hear all parties individually or jointly and confidentially with the goal of resolving the case at hand internally and, if possible, without initiating a formal procedure.

2. Staff members have the right to seek out the ombudsperson or –persons if they perceive a violation of these Rules. Moreover, they are obliged to inform the ombudsperson(s) if there are signs of such a violation and to disclose to the best of their knowledge any relevant information to the ombudsperson(s), should an investigation be forthcoming. Such information can be dealt with confidentially upon request. The ombudsperson(s) are obliged to investigate charges or complaints within a reasonable period of time after having been informed of them.

III. Procedures in Cases of Suspected Academic Misconduct

Should a conflict remain unresolved or the veracity of charges remain unclear after implementation of the procedures outlined in § 6, the head of the board of directors and the directors of the research units at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research must be informed by the ombudspersons. The ombudspersons, the head of the board of directors and the directors of the research units will then meet as a joint committee and strive to reach an internal joint resolution within the framework of a formal procedure according to §§ 7 and 8. Both at the outset

and throughout the entire process, those involved, including the person or persons accused and those charged with investigating the occurrences, are permitted to petition the committee to have one or more of the investigating persons disqualified. Furthermore, in the case of these procedures being conducted on charges of academic misconduct, all information about the participants in such proceedings and the occurrences in question are to be dealt with confidentially until such time as wilful misconduct has been established.

§ 7 Statements by Persons Suspected of Academic Misconduct

- (1) Within a specified period (in most cases two weeks) and after supplying details of the charges and any existing evidence, the Ombuds Committee will immediately give individuals who are suspected of misconduct the opportunity to respond to such charges.
- (2) The names of the persons involved cannot be disclosed during this phase without their express consent.

§ 8 Preliminary Assessment by the Ombuds Committee

- (1) After the statements of the parties involved have been submitted or after the end of the specified time period, the Ombuds Committee will deliberate and decide within two weeks on their further course of action. The Committee can decide to end the internal proceedings after those persons who were accused of misconduct and those who brought the charges to the attention of the ombudspersons have been informed about the reasons; such a decision can be reached for the following reasons: for lack of sufficient evidence to confirm suspicion that misconduct occurred; because suspicions about misconduct have been completely dispelled; or because the academic misconduct ascertained is negligible and the person or persons involved have acknowledged their misconduct. Alternatively, the committee can decide that an external ombudsperson will be charged with further investigation of the occurrences. In this case, the reasons for the committee's decision must be recorded in writing.
- (2) If the informants who brought suspected misconduct to the attention of the ombudsperson or committee do not agree with the decision to terminate the internal investigation, they can appeal the decision by submitting their arguments orally or in writing to the Ombuds Committee. The committee will deliberate and decide by applying paragraph 1, after again hearing the persons involved.

(3) If one of the Institute's research unit directors or the head of the board of directors is suspected of academic misconduct, then he or she will not be permitted to sit on the Ombuds Committee.

§ 9 Procedures for External Investigation

(1) Should the internal procedure outlined above fail to lead to clarification and resolution, an external ombudsperson will be asked to intervene. Prof. em. Dr. Lars Clausen (Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel) has been appointed as the external ombudsperson. The decision to call on the external ombudsperson lies solely in the hands of the internal Ombuds Committee, which reaches its decision by a majority vote. The external ombudsperson is charged with hearing all parties involved in the conflict and reaching a final resolution and should, where appropriate, make recommendations to the Institute's directorship as to what sanctions and consequences he feels should be implemented.

(2) The external ombudsperson conducts a formal investigation. In individual cases, the external ombudsperson can request that expert opinions be commissioned from scholars who are competent in the relevant academic field or that external experts are asked to participate in the review as consultants. The persons involved will be heard by the external ombudsperson in a confidential, closed session. The ombudsperson will consider incriminating as well as mitigating circumstances and assess, under consideration of all evidence, whether academic misconduct has occurred. All persons involved are obliged to maintain confidentiality.

(3) The person or persons or the research unit or group affected by possible academic misconduct are to be provided an opportunity to make a statement regarding the accusations. These persons are to be heard orally if they so desire and each of them may be supported by a person of their own choosing during the hearing.

(4) The name or names of informants are to be disclosed to the other parties involved upon request, if those other parties would otherwise be unable to respond to the accusations or if the credibility and the motives of the informant or informants are significant in reviewing the charges. In this case, the informant or informants are to be notified that their identity has been disclosed.

(5) The external ombudsperson will deliberate on the results of the investigation and possible consequences with the internal Ombuds Committee.

(6) If after implementation of the procedures outlined in § 9 Paragraphs 1–4 no final resolution can be reached between the conflicting parties, the internal Ombuds Committee together with the external ombudsperson as described in § 9 Paragraphs 5 must deliberate on further legal consequences and initiate such action if this is considered appropriate.

§ 10 Support for Informants and Persons Involved

(1) After completion of the proceedings, appropriate action must be taken to ensure that those persons who have been involved in alleged cases of academic misconduct through no fault of their own are protected from possible disadvantageous effects for their personal dignity and their academic integrity.

(2) To protect the personal and academic integrity of all parties involved, the head of the Institute's board of directors can deem it necessary to declare in writing that this person or these persons have not been proven guilty of academic misconduct, nor are they considered to share responsibility for such misconduct.

(3) Informants are to be protected in a similar fashion from such disadvantageous effects, insofar as their accusations have not been proven to be unfounded.

§ 11 Final Clause

These Rules for Ensuring Good Academic Practice at the Hamburg Institute for Social Research enter into force with their announcement to the Institute and its staff.

Hamburg, 7 January 2009

Prof. Dr. Jan Philipp Reemtsma

Head of the Board of Directors, Hamburg Institute for Social Research

¹ The following texts and guidelines have been referred to in formulating these Rules: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft: Vorschläge zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis. Empfehlungen der Kommission "Selbstkontrolle in der Wissenschaft", Bonn 1998; Regeln zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis, Soziologisches Forschungsinstitut Göttingen, 19 December 2002; Regeln zur Sicherung guter wissenschaftlicher Praxis, Institut für Sozialforschung Frankfurt/Main, 8 July 2002.

² References to persons and functions used in this text, including terms such as scholar, staff member, or author, are understood to include male and female individuals.