



Ethics Code of the Institute of Nutrition

The Code of Ethics of the Institute of Nutrition defines the ethical standards of the research community of the Institute's employees and associates in their encounters with ethical questions in research work. Each individual is responsible for identifying any ethical questions arising in their research work and, in the case of ethically sensitive questions, for seeking guidance from their superiors (e.g. their mentor or the head of the research project or programme) and, where necessary, the approval of the competent ethics committee. The fundamental principle guiding the work of the Institute's employees and associates, through which they give expression to their commitment to the Institute of Nutrition, is the endeavour to realise and preserve its mission through the principles of scientific research integrity grounded in responsibility, communication and respect for life, the natural environment, public goods and the law.

1. Scientific-research integrity

- Respect for sound scientific research doctrine through continuous education and the maintenance of excellence in science and research.
- Diligent and honest conduct in one's work, including the presentation of actual results, respect for the work of others and the transmission of these virtues to younger generations.
- The ethical conduct of scientific research work with regard to its benefit or risk to society and the environment, and the continuous education of employees in the ethical principles of scientific research work.
- Acquiring, developing and maintaining good scientific research practices.
- Recognising research that is beneficial, justified and lawful for society.
- Transparency of research in accordance with the Institute's mission, and the prevention of any conflicts of interest and corruption.
- Recognising and respecting the contributions of collaborators, both in research and in publications.
- Honest, fair and respectful review of the publications and projects of others.
- In reviewing and assessing the research work of others, researchers observe the principles of responsible research assessment: they judge the work on its content, quality and impact, and not merely on bibliometric indicators or the prestige of the journal.
- Establishing and maintaining relationships and an environment that foster scientific research integrity.

2. Responsibilities

- Promoting responsibility in respect of all ethical standards and of scientific research integrity.
- Educating employees in the ethical principles that promote responsibility in science.



- Promoting responsibility in relationships among employees at the management, organisational, mentoring and research levels, and in relations between different disciplines.
- The researcher approaches every task with an awareness, and a transparent declaration, of potential personal bias.
- The researcher must disclose situations in which financial or other personal considerations may influence decisions, the conduct of research tasks, review or editorial work (conflict of interest).
- The researcher, while observing the highest standards of personal data protection and any confidentiality requirements, openly shares data, results, ideas, tools and resources with other researchers and accepts criticism and new ideas. Research data are typically published in accordance with the FAIR principles in the national repository DiRROS, which is the standard venue for publishing the Institute's research data. Before publishing data, the researcher obtains the consent of their superior. Where the publication of data is not appropriate or possible, researchers are encouraged to publish the metadata.
- The researcher avoids carelessness and negligence, carefully and critically checks their own work and that of their colleagues, and diligently documents their research activities.
- For every task, the researcher documents the sources of information and the research procedures in sufficient detail to allow the study to be reproduced.
- In the course of their research work, the researcher strives for the well-being of others and of society as a whole. In their work, they avoid causing any harm.
- In their work, the researcher respects the rights, dignity and well-being of all people and takes account of cultural and other individual diversity.
- The researcher does not discriminate against colleagues, students or others on the basis of sex, race, ethnicity or any other grounds that would lead to unequal treatment.
- The researcher must observe the confidentiality of data or findings where this is required by ethical standards in research or by the client or employer.
- In communicating with the general public and the general media, the standards of honesty, credibility and responsibility must be maintained, while avoiding any attempt to exaggerate the importance and practical applicability of the findings.
- In research involving human participants or their personal data, the researcher ensures, in addition to obtaining the approval of the relevant ethics committee, compliance with the applicable personal data protection legislation, including the appropriate anonymisation or pseudonymisation of the data.
- Mentors and heads of research projects are responsible for the induction, training and support of young and early-career researchers, including familiarising them with this Code, with good research practice and with the rules of authorship.

3. Authorship and affiliation

- Authorship of a publication belongs to all those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, conduct, analysis or interpretation of the research and have taken part in drafting or critically revising the text and who agree to the final version. Honorary, gift or ghost authorship is not permitted.
- Wherever possible, the contributions of individual authors are stated according to the international CRediT taxonomy; the order of authors is agreed in advance and adjusted as necessary to reflect the actual contributions.



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- In all publications arising from work at the Institute, researchers consistently state their affiliation with the Institute of Nutrition and acknowledge funders in accordance with contractual provisions – including acknowledgement of the stable funding provided by ARIS, where this is relevant.
- Researchers strive for a diversity of high-quality publication venues. Researchers publish their results with reputable publishers; publishing with so-called predatory publishers is not consistent with this Code. For assistance in verifying a publisher, researchers may turn to their superiors and also to the contract library (CTK, Ljubljana).

4. Use of artificial intelligence

- Researchers may use artificial intelligence (AI) tools to support their research work, but full responsibility for the content, accuracy and integrity of the results always rests with the researcher; an AI tool cannot be an author.
- Significant use of AI tools (e.g. in data analysis or the preparation of texts) is disclosed transparently in the publication, in accordance with the publisher's requirements and the revised edition of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2023).
- When using AI tools, researchers do not disclose confidential, personal or as-yet-unpublished data where doing so could jeopardise confidentiality, data protection or intellectual property rights.
- The use of AI tools in reviewing the work of others is permitted only within the rules of the party commissioning the review and without disclosing the confidential content of the work under review.
- To support the appropriate use of AI tools, the Institute provides each researcher with an appropriate tool licence within the organisation's workspace (a so-called business workspace), in which the tool provider explicitly specifies that the data submitted are not shared outside the organisation's workspace and are not used for the so-called training of AI tools for third parties.

5. Handling of suspected breaches

- Anyone who has reasonable grounds to suspect a breach of this Code or of research integrity may report the suspicion in confidence to the integrity counsellor or directly to the Director. The integrity counsellor is appointed by the Director; this role is, as a rule, performed by the Quality Manager.
- A report is handled confidentially, impartially and without undue delay, as a rule within 30 days. The handling respects the principle of hearing both parties and the presumption of innocence of the person reported.
- A whistleblower acting in good faith is protected against any retaliatory measures, in accordance with the Whistleblower Protection Act (ZZPri).
- In cases that exceed the capacity for internal handling or in which a conflict of interest exists, the matter is referred to the competent external body (e.g. the Ethics committee of an external organisation or the National Council for Ethics and Integrity in Science).
- Established breaches are dealt with within the quality management system (corrective measures) and, where necessary, in accordance with employment law.



6. Reference documents

- Resolution on the Scientific Research and Innovation Strategy of Slovenia 2030 (ReZrIS30) (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 49/22),
- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity – Revised Edition (ALLEA, 2023),
- Recommendations to research and higher education organisations on the regulation of the field of research integrity (National Council for Ethics and Integrity in Science, 2025),
- San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the commitments of the CoARA coalition,
- Whistleblower Protection Act (ZZPri, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, No 16/23),
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Personal Data Protection Act (ZVOP-2).

7. Final provisions

- The Code is published publicly on the Institute's website in Slovenian, and English translation.
- All employees and new associates are familiarised with the Code during their induction; this familiarisation is recorded within the quality management system.
- The Code is reviewed at least every three years, or upon any major change to the reference documents; the review is carried out as part of the management review.
- The Code enters into force on the day it is signed by the Director and supersedes the previous version.

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Inštitut za nutricionistiko
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