

CODE OF RESEARCH CONDUCT AND RESEARCH ETHICS

Introduction

In recent decades, multiple universities and research centers have developed their codes and have created several committees in order to incorporate ethical parameters on regard to the proper development of scientific research. In this context, the majority of European countries have noted an increase in the effectiveness of research support by different bodies, specifically by respective governments. It is important to emphasize that governments need a systematic assessment of the optimization, reallocation, and rationalization of research funding provided to universities or research institutes.

The Code of Ethics for Research is an indispensable and key tool for the understanding, stimulation and application of ethical principles and values in the process of developing research projects, which allow regulating the ethical behavior of researchers, respecting the fundamental rights of people, the dignity and freedom of the human beings and contribute to the progressive solution of society's problems.

POLIS University, in compliance with its role of change and transformation of society, develops processes and research projects within the framework of ethics and current legal regulations.

POLIS is therefore committed to achieving full implementation of the set of ethical principles and values and professional standards.

The ethical principles stipulated in this Code, which apply to all components of POLIS University in all areas of research, constitute models of behavior supported by the University itself and those commonly agreed by the international scientific community.

This Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics is effective from the date of its approval by the University Council.

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Section I – Fundamental values of the researcher/s

- ✓ **Autonomy:** Researchers have to think, act, give opinions and investigate independently of criteria and conceptual autonomy.
- ✓ **Correct citation:** Researchers have to correctly cite reference sources. Always citing when using other people's ideas and posts.
- ✓ **Honesty:** Researchers have to be rational and honest while using financial resources received to carry out research projects.
- ✓ **Coherence:** Researchers have to maintain consistency and coherence between what is thought, said and done publicly and privately.
- ✓ **Share experiences:** Researchers have to train and share experiences when serving as a mentors, in order to increase their skills and knowledge for a better development of investigations.
- ✓ **Competence:** Researchers have to master and apply the methods, techniques and tools of scientific research, to guarantee the credibility of its results.
- ✓ **Confidentiality:** Researchers have to treat manuscripts and funding requests with confidentiality and use them appropriately when acting as reviewer.
- ✓ **Conflicts of interest:** Researchers have to disclose conflicts of interest that may arise in their roles as author, evaluator and tutor.
- ✓ **Constructive criticism:** Researchers have to accept constructive and honest criticism from peers regarding the results of the research carried out.
- ✓ **Humility:** Researchers have to demonstrate humility by acknowledging the value, successes and contributions of other researchers or by admitting and rectifying the respective mistakes.
- ✓ **Self-control:** Researchers need to have control over their emotions, feelings, thoughts, character and personality.
- ✓ **Emotional intelligence:** Researchers must have the apprehensible capacity to know, control and induce individual and group emotions and states of mind, respectively.

- ✓ Critical research: Researchers have to investigate from different positions and independently of criteria, truthfulness, objectivity, intellectual honesty, impartiality, pluralism, spirit of social, political, legal and ethical responsibility, applying critical thinking and leading to increased collective well-being and the solution of the problems of the community.
- ✓ Objectivity: Researchers have to be objective, since the conclusions obtained from the study are not the product of subjective impressions, but of observed, verified facts. Therefore, in the interpretation of the results, researchers and collaborators of POLIS University should avoid any prejudice and influence of an ideological, political or religious nature that you may receive. The observations made by the researchers are based on realistic and self-critical criteria.
- ✓ Perseverance: Researchers have to be persevering in the achievement of the programmed objectives, ends and goals.
- ✓ Anti-plagiarism policy: Researchers must know and apply the anti-plagiarism policies and software applied within POLIS University.
- ✓ Plurality of sources: Researchers have to use the greatest possible number of sources, for the best knowledge, analysis and explanation of the facts.
- ✓ Intellectual production: Researchers have to participate in research activities endorsed through publications; participate in publications in internationally indexed journals; present the results of their research at conferences, symposiums, workshops, forums, round tables; support original conferences in the national and international academic field.
- ✓ Prudence: Researchers can not accept, exclude and reject theories and bibliographic sources without first distinguishing and verifying their plausibility, regardless of whether they are contrary to your personal criteria and experience.
- ✓ Challenge: Researchers have to challenge bribery, extortion or blackmail during the process and development of investigations.
- ✓ Rectification: Researchers have to show a behavior of admission of errors and the will of timely rectification.

- ✓ Report findings and share results: Researchers have to report research findings to the respective bodies within the University, to the internal community of scientific research, and share their results with other researchers.
- ✓ Respect: Researchers have to respect the decision of informative sources to maintain their anonymity and/or to participate or not to participate in the investigation and to respect the intellectual property of others.
- ✓ Scientific rigor: Researchers have to present ideas objectively, truthfully, transparently and with scientific rigor.
- ✓ Professional secrecy: Researchers have to keep secret the identity of the informative sources, in compliance with the word pledged.
- ✓ Teamwork: Researchers have to perform teamwork and recognize, value and encourage the contributions of their collaborators in the development of research projects.

Basic conditions to be a researcher

- ✓ **Published works:** Actively publishing academic works and research papers.
- ✓ **Recognition:** Having recognition by the national and international scientific community.
- ✓ **Own line of research:** Developing one or more lines of research and with sustained and important production of original knowledge.
- ✓ **Maintain relationship and collaboration:** Maintaining a permanent relationship with the intellectual environment and maintaining active international collaborations and membership in editorial committees of indexed journals.
- ✓ **Language proficiency:** Mastering and practicing English and/or other languages according to the nature and complexity of the problem being investigated.
- ✓ **Tutoring:** Actively mentoring researchers, directors, heads and assistants of research groups at the university.

Section II – Principles of Ethical Research

Legal and ethical obligations of the researcher/s

Researchers have to know and comply with institutional and governmental legal and ethical standards that govern and regulate research conditions and intellectual property rights.

Researchers have to continuously improve professional development through updates and extensions of their skills and qualifications.

Researchers need to share individual or group work environments that promote inclusive cultural diversity.

Researchers need to describe their experiments and research work with professionalism and scientific rigor, in a clear, precise and coherent manner.

Researchers have to timely deliver the results of the investigations carried out, or that are the product of their consultancies to the university, as established in the personal contracts.

Researchers are required to respect the rights of others, to carry out the tasks inherent to their role with rigor, dignity and to scrupulously observe all the rules governing University activities.

Researchers are not allowed to

Omitting the data that contradicts the hypothesis of the research work carried out at the University.
Carrying out investigations that violate the law, affect the environment, public order, national security or those that affect the common good.

Resorting to unethical, illicit or criminal resources (bribery, deception, plagiarism, wiretapping, violation of correspondence, incursion into the privacy of people, use of hidden cameras, etc.) to obtain information, statements, documents, pictures etc.

Promoting interests that are against the mission, vision, and goals of the POLIS University.

Violating professional secrecy, the clause of conscience, the private life of people and Human Rights.

Manipulating information, statistical figures and conclusions, for subordinate purposes and interests of economic, religious and political groups

Researcher's attitude

Researchers have to demonstrate attitude of an objective, cognitive, reflective and moral manner during the collection of data and the organization of the activities of their research.

- ✓ Cognitive attitude: Researchers need to show curiosity and a desire to know and discover. They also need to show an open attitude to the process of learning and a willingness to investigate the essence and truth of things, facts, phenomena, situations or problems of different nature and complexity.
- ✓ Reflective attitude: Researchers need to act with critical thinking, critical sense and critical spirit in the analysis of sources and in the detection and selection of research problems, to be in a position to make personal contributions and propose impact approaches to future research.
- ✓ Objective attitude: Researchers need to demonstrate a positive and optimistic disposition to study and focus on the sources of knowledge as they occur in reality.
- ✓ Moral attitude: Researchers need to assume the tasks and research activities with responsibility.

Collaboration with external parties

POLIS University collaborates with any public or private body for legitimate and shared purposes. This collaboration takes place in compliance with the institution regulations and with the independence of members within POLIS' community.

Community impact

Researchers and academic staff are required to evaluate the feasibility of the project, the ethical and legal profiles and, if necessary, the demands and social needs to which it responds. In cases where the project is likely to produce a significant impact on the research objects and, on the society overall, the researchers have the responsibility to examine this potential impact, accounting for these assessments in the relevant documentation.

Conflicts of interest management

Any staff member/researcher/collaborator of POLIS University who may be found in a situation of conflict of interest, even with third parties with whom they collaborate, are obliged to refrain from any activity or from participating in the adoption of any decision. If the situation of incompatibility or conflict of interest concerns the Rector, the Dean/s of the POLIS University must be entrusted with the decision.

Funds assigned to research management

The funds assigned to research are managed and reported with diligence and transparency.

Diligence in carrying out research

Researchers and academic staff undertake to carry out their roles and fulfill their functions in a diligent and responsible manner, following what has been previously agreed within the group research. Within a research group, each research participant can not suspend their participation in the research or abandon it without adequate notice.

Likewise, the researcher or academic staff in charge must communicate to all collaborators in advance if they will cease to participate in the project.

Procedures for the treatment of data

Within each research project, the subjects designated for the use, management and storage of the materials and data produced, are clearly identified.

Documentation and data

The conduct of the research and acquired results must be documented in a precise, detailed and truthful manner, such as to allow their possible reproduction of the research by other parties. The loss of raw materials and data must also be reported promptly to the competent authority within POLIS University.

Storage and processing of personal data

The storage and processing of personal data must take place in compliance with current national and international legislation and with internal POLIS regulations.

The processing and storage of the personal data of the participants enrolled in the study must preferably take place in an anonymous/coded form.

Section III - Dissemination of Research results

Confidentiality

The dissemination of the research results must take place in compliance with the confidentiality of the people involved.

In those cases where it is not possible to respect anonymity, the consent of the persons enrolled in the research whose personal data needs to be disclosed, must be previously acquired.

Dissemination of research

The dissemination of the results must take place in an honest, transparent, complete and, as far as possible, timely form.

Members of POLIS community undertake to ensure maximum sharing and dissemination of the results achieved.

POLIS University condemns the falsification of the citation of sources, the manufacture of completely or partially non-existent results, as well as the falsification and manipulation of the results obtained.

Dissemination of the Code

Academic staff and researchers are obliged to instruct all their collaborators and members of their research group on the content of this Code, also to organize dedicated meetings for this purpose.

It is the responsibility of the entire institution to ensure the widest dissemination of this Code, through communications, publications, conferences, educational activities and any other means.

In addition, all members of POLIS community are obliged to prevent misconduct and to report cases of violation of this Code of which they become aware.

Obligations relating to publication

Staff/researchers of POLIS University must proceed with an accurate and on time publication of their research results, choosing the method that allows them to be widely disseminated.

The Ethics Committee

All members of POLIS University community can contact the Ethics Committee to obtain opinions and suggestions regarding the correct interpretation of the Code of Ethics or its application in particular circumstances.

The Committee, having assessed the relevance of the request, records a reasoned opinion and issues a copy to the interested party.

Anti-Plagiarism objectives

Raising awareness of the importance and transcendence of respect for intellectual property in the university environment.

Promoting the development of an ethical culture in original intellectual production, learning and research, as well as knowledge of the causes, consequences and forms of prevention and eradication of the crime of plagiarism.

Promoting the development of skills of academic staff and students for the correct preparation of citations, footnotes and bibliographical references of printed or digital information resources during the preparation of academic work and scientific research.

Preventing, sanction and progressively eradicate acts of plagiarism in any of its forms.

Contributing to the continuous improvement of academic-professional quality at the university.

Section IV - Anti-plagiarism Control Procedure of dissertations

During the research work of the student of the third cycle program (Doctorate), continuous comments are given not only by the supervisor but also by the Joint Academic Board of the program. These comments and suggestions are reflected in the research topic before the student launches it to external readers. External readers elaborate a report specifying whether the student is willing to discuss or whether the topic should be elaborated for another six months.

When the student is assessed as ready to discuss, five days after the comments are received from external readers and reflected in the dissertation, the latter undergoes a scan with specific software in order to identify the originality of the work and material similarities from other sources. At the end of this process, a similarity report is generated which is transmitted to the ad-hoc Commission for the control of authenticity and the avoidance of plagiarism.

- a) In case it is found to be a original work and without plagiarism, the commission decides that the dissertation is approved and it is ready to be submitted to the final defense commission.
- b) The commission may decide that as a result of encountering non-essential problems with the rules of academic writing, to give recommendations for modifications which must be fulfilled within a period of 10 (ten) days before submission to the final defense commission.
- c) The commission may decide that as a result of encountering serious problems with the rules of academic writing, to extend the deadline for submitting the doctorate by 6 months in order to review problems with plagiarism
- d) The commission may decide that as a result of encountering major problems, to suspend the student and send her/him to the ethics council.
- e) In any case, for points b, c, d the council of professors should organize a special meeting with the doctoral student to explain the motivation of the decision.

After reviewing the dissertation in accordance with the rules of academic writing, the topic is further submitted to the Commission for Final Evaluation.