SAFE Ethics Code
„Good Scientic Practice“

Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE

Content

0. Preambel

The freedom of research guaranteed in the constitution is inextricably linked to a correspondingly high level of responsibility. Scientific integrity is an expression of researchers' awareness of this responsibility and forms the basis for trustworthy research. Scientific integrity and good research practice are genuine examples of scientific self-organization and place an obligation on every researcher, and on all institutions where research is conducted. They are also an essential condition for both knowledge-oriented and public welfare-oriented science and research.

Against this background, the Leibniz Institute for Financial Research SAFE (hereinafter referred to as "SAFE") has adopted the following Code of Ethics "Good Scientific Practice", which is based on the code "Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice" presented by the German Research Foundation (DFG) in 2019 and implements it for SAFE. The following Code describes the basic principles and standards of good scientific practice and shall serve SAFE researchers as a reliable guideline for their scientific practice. SAFE aligns its structures and processes with this Code of Ethics.

The Code is supplemented in Annex 1 by the SAFE Guideline "Good Scientific Practice", according to the Guideline for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association[1]. The SAFE Guideline formulates the rules of good scientific practice and defines scientific misconduct. It also describes the role and tasks of the SAFE ombudspersons and defines the procedure for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct.

The SAFE Code of Ethics and the SAFE Guideline in Annex 1 was adopted by the Institute's Board of Trustees on June 10, 2022 on the proposal of the Management Board and the Scientific Board in consultation with the Research Advisory Council of the Institute. They come into force with the internal announcement within the Institute.

[1] See Guidelines of Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Assocation.

1. Standards of good research practice

1.1. Commitment to the general principals

SAFE has adopted and published rules for good scientific practice in accordance with its statutes. All researchers working for the institute have to follow these rules in their work. Each of them is responsible for ensuring that his or her own conduct complies with the standards of good scientific practice.

The basic principle of good scientific practice is to work lege artis. This includes maintaining strict honesty with regard to one's own and third parties' contributions, consistently doubting all results, and allowing and encouraging critical discourse in the scientific community.

1.2. Professional ethics

Every SAFE researcher is responsible for implementing the basic values and standards of scientific work in his or her own actions and for standing up for them. The teaching of the basics of good scientific work is part of the research education at SAFE from the earliest possible stage. SAFE researcher at all career levels regularly update their knowledge of the standards of good scientific practice and the state of the art of research and support each other in the continuous learning and training process and in a regular exchange.

SAFE promotes a culture of regular internal exchange through the structure of its development of young researchers, through suitable communication formats, and through its premises, in which experienced scholars and junior researchers support each other in the learning and further education process and exchange information a. o. on issues of good scientific practice.

1.3. Organisational responsibility of heads of research institutions

The SAFE Management Board and the Scientific Board create the framework for the research work at the Institute. They are responsible for maintaining and communicating good scientific practice and for providing appropriate career support to all SAFE researchers. They ensure that researchers can comply with legal and ethical standards. The framework includes clear and written procedures and policies for personnel selection, career development and equal opportunities.

The SAFE Management Board and the Scientific Board are responsible for an appropriate institutional organizational structure that ensures that the tasks of management, supervision, quality assurance, and conflict resolution are clearly assigned and appropriately communicated. Gender equality and diversity are taken into account in the selection and development of staff. The corresponding processes are transparent and avoid, as far as possible, non-knowledgeable influences ("unconscious bias"). SAFE has developed a concept for equal opportunities, in which all measures for the realization of equal opportunities as well as for a family-friendly environment are summarized (link to the concept). Suitable support structures and concepts are established for young researchers. Sincere advice for career paths, further training and advice opportunities for researchers and research-supporting staff are offered.[2]

[2] See Leibniz Career Guideline.

1.4. Responsibility of the heads of research work units

The Director/Coordinator of a research department, a cluster or a center in SAFE bears responsibility for the entire unit. The interaction is such that the group as a whole can fulfill its tasks, that the necessary cooperation and coordination take place and that all members are aware of their roles, rights and duties. The management task also includes, in particular, ensuring the appropriate individual supervision of young researchers and the career development of research and research-supporting staff. Abuse of power and exploitation of relationships of dependency are to be prevented by appropriate organizational measures both at the level of the individual research department, the individual cluster and at the level of the management of SAFE. SAFE can make use of suitable joint agreements and offers of the Leibniz Association. [3]

The size and the organization of the research units in SAFE are designed in such a way that the management tasks, in particular the transfer of competences, the scientific support as well as the supervisory and mentoring duties, can be adequately fulfilled. A concept of interdepartmental exchange and centralized feedback meetings guarantees mutual support and control among the supervising researchers with regard to their supervisory and mentoring duties and prevents any abuse of power or exploitation of dependencies. In addition, two ombudspersons, a coordinator for young researchers, two equal opportunity officers and the Leibniz Association's external conflict advice center are available to employees.

Both SAFE researchers and research-support staff enjoy a relationship of guidance and personal responsibility appropriate to their career level, with corresponding rights of participation, and are enabled to shape their careers through increasing autonomy.

1.5. Dimensions of performance and assessment criteria

The evaluation of the performance of SAFE researchers is based on a multi-dimensional approach: The evaluation of the performance basically follows qualitative, discipline-specific standards. Quantitative indicators should be differentiated and reflected in the overall evaluation. In addition to academic performance, other aspects can be taken into account. The principles of the Leibniz evaluation procedure also take this multidimensional approach into account. [4]

In the annual central feedback interviews with junior researchers, community services are taken into account and appreciated in addition to research and teaching performance, e.g., commitment in the context of supervisory tasks, public relations, knowledge transfer, or infrastructure service.

In addition to the categories of the General Equal Treatment Act, individual characteristics in CVs are also taken into account when making judgments, insofar as they are stated voluntarily. Appropriate consideration is given to personal, family or health-related absences or the resulting extension of training or qualification periods, alternative career paths or comparable circumstances.

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[3] See Guiding Principles for Our Actions und Leibniz Advice Centre.
[4] See *The Leibniz Association Senate Evaluation Procedure Basic Principles*.

1.6. Ombudspersons

The SAFE guideline "Good Scientific Practice" (see Appendix 1) provides for two elected, independent ombudspersons to whom SAFE employees and, if necessary, third parties can turn in matters of good scientific practice and suspected scientific misconduct. The SAFE management takes sufficient care that the ombudspersons are known at the institution. Substitutions are provided for in case of concern of bias or prevention. The Leibniz Association provides a Leibniz Ombuds Body with central Leibniz ombudspersons in accordance with the Guideline on Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association.

Suitable ombudspersons are researchers who have the personal integrity, objective judgment and experience, e.g. in management positions, required for the fulfillment of their tasks. The ombudspersons may not be members of the governing bodies of SAFE (Management Board and Scientific Board) during the exercise of this office. The term of office of the ombudspersons is limited to three years. Re-election is possible. The ombudspersons advise as neutral and qualified contact persons in questions of good scientific practice and in suspected cases of scientific misconduct and contribute, as far as possible, to solution-oriented conflict mediation. They receive inquiries while maintaining confidentiality and investigate allegations of scientific misconduct in a formal procedure defined in the SAFE guideline "Good Scientific Practice". The ombudspersons receive the necessary content-related support and acceptance from the SAFE management in the performance of their tasks. In order to increase the functionality of the ombudsperson system, SAFE provides for measures to relieve the ombudspersons from other tasks. The interaction between decentralized ombudsperson structures and the central Leibniz Ombuds Body is regulated by the SAFE guidelines. In addition, all SAFE researchers and employees have the possibility to turn to the supra-regionally active committee "Ombudsman for Science", established by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG). Details of the procedure are regulated by the SAFE guideline.

2. Research process

2.1. Cross-phase quality assurance

SAFE researchers perform each step of the research process in a lege artis manner. When research findings are made publicly available (in the narrow sense in the form of publications, but also in the broader sense via other communication channels), the applied quality assurance mechanisms are always explained. This is especially true when new methods are developed.

Continuous, research-related quality assurance refers in particular to compliance with subject-specific standards and established methods, to processes such as the collection, processing and analysis of research data, and to the selection and use of research software and its development and programming. SAFE researchers always follow the latest findings in each step of the research process and use scientifically sound and comprehensible methods.

They correct their data and findings if they notice discrepancies or errors after publication. If the discrepancies or errors are the reason for the retraction of a publication, they shall work towards ensuring that the correction or retraction is made and appropriately identified. The

same applies if such discrepancies or errors are pointed out to them by third parties. Every effort will be made to ensure replication feasibility.

The origin of data and software used in the research process is identified and the subsequent use is documented; the original sources are cited. The source code of publicly available software should be persistent, citable and documented.

2.2. Stakeholders, responsibilities and roles

The roles and responsibilities of the researchers involved in a research project, as well as those of the research-support staff, must be clear at all times during a research project.

Participants of a research project of the Leibniz Institute SAFE are in a regular exchange. They define their roles and responsibilities in an appropriate manner and adjust them if necessary. An adjustment is particularly indicated if the focus of the work of one of the participants changes.

2.3. Research design

SAFE researchers take comprehensive and critical account of the current state of research when planning a project. The identification of relevant and suitable research questions requires careful investigation of already publicly available research achievements. The SAFE management ensures the necessary framework conditions for this.

The research design of the own work is to be discussed as broadly as possible. Alternative research designs and interpretations of results will be mentioned. Methods to avoid (unconscious) bias in the interpretation of results, e.g. control of possible further influencing factors, are applied as far as possible. SAFE researchers check whether and, if so, to what extent gender and diversity can be significant for the research project (with regard to the methods, the work program, the objectives, etc.). When interpreting results, the respective (e.g. institutional) framework conditions are taken into account.

2.4. Legal and ethical frameworks, usage rights

SAFE researchers handle the constitutionally granted freedom of research responsibly. They take into account rights and obligations, in particular those resulting from legal requirements, but also from contracts with third parties, and, if necessary, obtain and present approvals and ethical opinions. With regard to research projects, a thorough assessment of the research consequences and the evaluation of the respective ethical aspects should be carried out. The legal framework of a research project also includes documented agreements on the rights of use of research data and research results arising from it.

SAFE researchers should be continuously aware of the dangers of misuse of research results. Their responsibility is not limited to compliance with legal requirements, but also includes the obligation to use their knowledge, experience and skills in such a way that risks can be identified, assessed and evaluated.

SAFE is responsible for ensuring that the actions of its employees conform to the rules and promotes this through suitable organizational structures. With the SAFE guideline "Good Scientific Practice" (see appendix), SAFE has developed binding principles for research ethics and procedures for the corresponding assessment of research projects.

SAFE researchers make documented agreements about the rights of use at the earliest possible stage of the research project, if possible and reasonable. Documented agreements are particularly useful if several academic and/or non-academic institutions are involved in a research project, or if it is foreseeable that scholars will change research institutions and wish to continue using the data generated by them for (their own) research purposes. In particular, those who collect the data are entitled to continue using it. In the context of an ongoing research project, the authorized users also decide (especially in accordance with data protection regulations) whether third parties should have access to the data.

2.5. Methods and standards

SAFE researchers apply scientifically sound and comprehensible methods to answer research questions. When developing and applying new methods, they place particular emphasis on quality assurance and the establishment of standards.

The application of a method usually requires specific competencies, which may be covered by close cooperation. The establishment of standards for methods, the application of software, the collection of research data and the description of research results is an essential prerequisite for the comparability and transferability of research results.

2.6. Documentation

SAFE researchers document all information relevant to the research result as comprehensibly as is necessary to verify and evaluate the result. In principle, they therefore also document individual results that do not support the research hypothesis. A selection of results must be avoided in this context. If concrete professional recommendations exist for the review and evaluation, the SAFE researchers document the results according to the respective requirements. If the documentation does not meet these requirements, the limitations and the reasons for them are explained in a comprehensible way. Documentation and research results must not be manipulated and should be protected against manipulation as best as possible.

An important basis for enabling replication is to deposit the information necessary for the understanding of the research about used or emerging research data, the method, evaluation and analysis steps as well as, if applicable, the origin of the hypothesis, to ensure the traceability of citations and, as far as possible, to allow third parties access to this information. In the development of research software, the source code is documented.

2.7. Providing public access to research results

In principle, SAFE researchers contribute all results to the academic discourse. In individual cases, however, there may be reasons not to make results publicly available (in the narrower sense in the form of publications, but also in the broader sense via other communication channels). This decision must not depend on third parties. Researchers decide on their own responsibility whether, how and where they make their results publicly available. Once a decision to make results publicly available has been made, SAFE researchers describe it fully and comprehensibly. This also includes, as far as possible and reasonable, making available the research data and information on which the results are based, the methods applied and the software used, and comprehensively describing work processes. Self-programmed software will be made publicly available with indication of the source code. Researchers must provide complete and accurate evidence of their own and others' preliminary work.

All SAFE researchers publish their preliminary results in the SAFE Working Paper series, whose papers are made directly accessible to the academic community on relevant platforms and archived permanently and securely in certified document servers.

For reasons of traceability, connectivity of research and reusability, SAFE researchers deposit the research data and central materials underlying a publication – following the FAIR principles ("Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-Usable") – in recognized archives and repositories, such as SAFE's own FiF repository, whenever possible.

Following the idea of "quality over quantity", SAFE researchers avoid inappropriately small publications. They limit the repetition of the contents of their publications as (co-)authors to the extent necessary for an understanding of the context and cite their results that have already been made publicly available.

2.8. Authorship

An author is anyone who has made a substantial and independent contribution to the content of a scientific text, data or software publication. All authors agree on the final version of the work to be published. They are jointly responsible for the publication. Deviations from this principle must be explicitly stated in the publication. SAFE authors take care and, as far as possible, work towards ensuring that their research contributions are marked by the publishers or infrastructure providers in such a way that they can be correctly cited by users.

The contribution justifying authorship must be made to the scientific content of the publication. When a contribution is substantial, independent and comprehensible must be examined separately in each individual case. As a rule, this is the case if a researcher has contributed in a scientifically relevant way to

- the development and conception of the research project or
- the development, collection, procurement, provision of the data, the software, the sources, or
- the analysis/evaluation or interpretation of the data, sources and the conclusions drawn therefrom, or
- the writing of the manuscript.

If a contribution is not sufficient to warrant authorship, such assistance may be appropriately acknowledged in footnotes, in the preface, or in an acknowledgement. Honorary authorship, where precisely no such contribution has been made, is not permissible in the Leibniz Association. A managerial or supervisory function does not in itself constitute a co-authorship.

SAFE researchers agree on who is the author of the research results. The agreement on the order of authors is made in good time, usually at the latest when the manuscript is formulated, on the basis of comprehensible criteria.

Without sufficient reason, the required consent to the publication of results may not be withheld. The refusal of consent must be justified with a verifiable criticism of data, methods or results.

2.9. Publication medium

SAFE authors carefully select the publication organ, taking into account its quality and visibility in the respective field of discourse. SAFE researchers who assume the function of editor carefully consider for which publication organs they assume this task. The scientific quality of

a contribution does not depend on the publication organ in which it is made publicly available.

In addition to publications in books and journals, specialized repositories, data and software repositories, and blogs are particularly worthy of consideration. New or unknown publication organs are checked for their seriousness. An important criterion for the selection decision is whether the publication body has established its own guidelines for good scientific practice.

2.10. Confidentiality and neutrality of review processes and discussions

Honest behavior is the basis of the legitimacy of a judgment process. SAFE researchers, who in particular evaluate submitted manuscripts, funding applications or the credentials of persons, are obliged to maintain strict confidentiality in this respect. They shall disclose all facts that could give rise to concerns of bias. The obligation of confidentiality and disclosure of facts that may give rise to a concern of bias shall also apply to members of scientific advisory and decision-making bodies.

The confidentiality of third-party content to which a person gains access as a reviewer or committee member precludes disclosure to third parties and personal use. Researchers shall immediately notify the responsible office of any conflicts of interest or bias that may be justified with regard to the research project being reviewed or the person or subject of the consultation.

2.11. Archiving

SAFE researchers shall adequately secure publicly accessible research data or research results as well as the underlying central materials and, if applicable, the research software used, and shall retain them for an appropriate period of time. If there are comprehensible reasons for not retaining certain data, the researchers shall explain this. SAFE ensures that the necessary infrastructure is in place for this purpose.

If research findings are made publicly available, the underlying research data will be stored for a period of at least ten years. Provided that there are no licensing, data protection or individual contractual restrictions, the data is made publicly available via the SAFE Data Center's FiF Repository. In justified cases, shorter retention periods may be appropriate. The corresponding reasons must be explained in a comprehensible manner. The retention period begins with the date on which public access is established.

3. Procedures in cases of non-compliance with good research practice

3.1. Complainants and respondents

The procedures in case of allegations of scientific misconduct are governed by the SAFE guideline "Good Scientific Practice" (see Appendix 1) and the guideline "Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association". According to these guidelines, the SAFE ombudsperson(s) and the central ombudsperson(s) investigating suspected scientific misconduct are committed to protecting both the complainant and the person(s) affected by the allegation(s) in all procedural steps in an appropriate manner. The investigation of allegations of scientific misconduct is carried out expressly in compliance with confidentiality and the basic principle

of the presumption of innocence. The complainant's report must be made in good faith. Deliberately false or wanton allegations may themselves constitute scientific misconduct. Neither the complainant nor the person affected by the allegations should suffer any disadvantage to his or her own scientific or professional advancement as a result of the report.

The SAFE ombudspersons take into account the basic principle of the presumption of innocence towards the person concerned at every stage of the proceedings within the framework of a case-by-case consideration. As a matter of principle, the person affected by the allegations should not suffer any disadvantages from the examination of the suspicion until scientific misconduct has been formally established.

Particularly in the case of young researchers, reports should not lead to delays in the qualification of the complainant; the preparation of theses and doctorates should not be disadvantaged; this also applies to working conditions and possible contract extensions.

The complainant must have objective evidence that standards of good scientific practice may have been violated. If the complainant is unable to check the facts him/herself or if there are uncertainties in the interpretation of the applicable rules of good scientific practice with regard to an observed event, the complainant should contact the SAFE ombudspersons or, if necessary, the central ombudsperson board of the Leibniz Association to clarify the suspicion. The basic responsibility of the "Ombudsperson for Science" remains unaffected.

A report made anonymously can only be reviewed in a procedure if the person making the report provides the office investigating the suspicion with reliable and sufficiently concrete facts. If the informant is known by name, the investigating agency shall treat the name confidentially and shall not disclose it to third parties without appropriate consent. The only exception is if there is a legal obligation to do so or if the person affected by the allegations cannot otherwise defend him/herself properly because the identity of the person providing the information is exceptionally important. Before the name of the complainant is disclosed, the complainant shall be informed immediately; he/she may decide whether to withdraw the report if the name is likely to be disclosed. The confidentiality of a procedure is restricted if the complainant turns to the public with the suspicion. The SAFE ombudspersons decide on a case-by-case basis how to deal with a breach of confidentiality by the complainant. The complainant must also be protected in the event of unproven scientific misconduct, unless it can be proven that the report of the allegations was made against better knowledge.

3.2. Procedures in cases of alleged research misconduct

In its guideline "Good Scientific Practice" (see Appendix 1), SAFE has defined a procedure for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct on the basis of sufficient legal foundations and the applicable Leibniz Guideline on Good Scientific Practice[5]. The SAFE guideline includes definitions of facts of scientific misconduct, procedural rules and measures in case of detection of scientific misconduct. It is always applied in addition to relevant, higher-ranking standards.

[5] See *Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice in the Leibniz Association*.

Not every violation of the rules of good scientific practice constitutes scientific misconduct. The nature and severity of possible violations are set out in detail in the SAFE guideline or in the relevant guidelines and regulations of the Leibniz Association.

The SAFE guideline includes regulations on the responsibility for each individual stage of the procedure, on the evaluation of evidence, on the role of the ombudspersons and the central ombudsperson body of the Leibniz Association, on bias and, if necessary, on the principles of due process. Accordingly, the person affected by the allegations as well as the complainant are given the opportunity to comment in each phase of the proceedings. Until scientific misconduct has been proven, information about the parties involved in the procedure and the findings to date are treated confidentially. SAFE ensures that the entire procedure is carried out as promptly as possible and takes the necessary steps to complete each stage of the procedure within a reasonable period of time. The SAFE guideline outlines various measures to be applied depending on the severity of the proven scientific misconduct. If, after scientific misconduct has been established, the withdrawal of an academic degree is considered as a measure, the bodies responsible for this are involved. After completion of the investigations, the result shall be communicated to the scientific organizations concerned and, if necessary, to third parties who have a justified interest in the decision.

The principles laid down in paragraphs 3.1 and 3.2 and the aforementioned requirements for completion shall be taken into account comprehensively and completely in the application and future updating of the procedural rules of the guideline.

Appendix 1: SAFE Guideline „Good Scientific Practice“

1. Introduction

On the basis of the Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice of the Leibniz Association, approved by the General Assembly of the Leibniz Association on 28 November 2019, the Leibniz Institute for Financial Market Research SAFE (hereinafter referred to as "SAFE" or "the Institute") has adopted a set of rules to safeguard good scientific practice which is binding for all scientific staff. It formulates the rules of good scientific practice and defines scientific misconduct. In addition, it describes the role and tasks of the SAFE ombudspersons and the central ombudspersons of the Leibniz Association and lays down the procedure for dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct.

2. Rules of good scientific practice

Good scientific practice is

- Working lege artis in accordance with current professional and discipline-specific standards,
- fully documenting all steps and results of an experiment or study and securely storing protocols and research data. Test protocols should record the test objective, the test conditions, the test execution and the test result in a comprehensible manner and in a form that cannot be changed afterwards,
- critically and consistently verifying the validity and reproducibility of all results of experiments and other research designs,
- Honesty in the distinguishing of the contributions of all contributors and in the disclosure of third-party funding sources,
- respecting the intellectual authorship of others in all publications and duly identifying all citations and endorsements,
- the assumption of responsibility by the authors of scientific publications for the content and presentation of the results and their discussion as a whole, as well as the explicit identification and justification of cases in which responsibility extends to only part of the publication,
- the appropriate support of researchers during their in qualification phases, including an adequate transfer of competencies, continuous individual support as well as an appropriate and comprehensible academic performance evaluation of the qualification work,
- the responsible cooperation and performance of scientific management tasks in the institution as a whole and in its respective working units, including the assurance of transparent forms of organization, a sufficiently clear division of responsibilities and tasks and the consistent avoidance of the abuse of power and the exploitation of relationships of dependency,
- the primacy of originality and quality of scientific performance as evaluation criteria for promotions, recruitment, appointments and fund allocations.

Scientific publications should describe scientific results and the way they are produced in a complete and comprehensible manner. Results published earlier can only be part of later publications if they are indispensable for understanding the context of the publication and if reference is made to their first publication.

Only those who have made a significant contribution to the conception of the studies or experiments, to the preparation, analysis or interpretation of the data, or to the formulation of the manuscript itself and who have agreed to the publication, i.e. who are responsible for it, may act as authors of an original scientific publication.

Research data must be kept complete and accessible for at least ten years, if possible in central, public repositories, such as the SAFE Financial Data Repository (FiF). Information on work processes as well as on applied materials, methods and software must be made accessible as far as possible and reasonable.

Ethical standards and legal norms must be observed in the collection of personal data and in dealing with examined persons, whether in surveys, experiments or observations. In particular, the personal rights and autonomy of persons involved in investigations must be respected. As a rule, permission to participate must be obtained and documented in advance. Persons who are included in studies as observers or respondents or in other ways, for example in connection with the evaluation of personal documents, must not be exposed to disadvantages or dangers through the research. The persons concerned must be informed about all risks that exceed the level of what is usual in everyday life. In general, an acceptable ratio of risks to the probable return must be maintained. The right to anonymity of the persons investigated must be guaranteed. Confidential information obtained from persons under investigation must be treated accordingly and protected by careful precautions. Data protection regulations must be observed.

3. Scientific misconduct

Scientific misconduct includes misrepresentation in a scientific context by, in particular:

- the invention of data,
- the falsification of data (for example, by selecting desired results or rejecting undesired results or evaluation procedures without disclosing this, or by manipulating a presentation or illustration)
- incorrect information in publication lists or in a grant application (including incorrect information on the publication medium and on publications in print),
- Multiple publication of data or texts without appropriate disclosure.

Scientific misconduct includes the violation of intellectual property rights, in particular:

- relating to a legally protected work created by others, or to essential scientific knowledge, hypotheses, teachings or research approaches originating from others
  - the unauthorized adoption or other use of passages without adequate proof of authorship (plagiarism),
  - the exploitation of research approaches and ideas without consent, in particular as a reviewer,

  - the presumption or unfounded assumption of scientific authorship or co-authorship as well as the refusal of such,
  - the falsification of the content or
  - the unauthorized publication and unauthorized sharing to third parties as long as the work, knowledge, hypothesis, teaching or research approach has not yet been legally made public;
- Claiming authorship or co-authorship from another person without their consent.

Scientific misconduct includes unfair obstruction of the research activities of others, including damaging, destroying or manipulating experimental set-ups, equipment, documents, hardware, software or other items needed by others to conduct an experiment.

The removal of research data if this violates legal provisions or recognized principles of scientific work, as well as the unlawful failure to remove (in particular personal) data, is considered scientific misconduct.

The neglect of scientific leadership responsibility and the duty of supervision by the heads of working groups or institutes in a way conducive to violations of good scientific practice is scientific misconduct.

Co-authoring with deliberate acceptance of participating in a publication that is subject to falsification is scientific misconduct.

Deliberately pretending to implement or use quality assurance measures and procedures (such as peer review) is scientific misconduct.

4. SAFE Ombudspersons

For the mediation or clarification of discrepancies, suspicious facts or disputes in connection with good scientific practice, the SAFE researchers elect two ombudspersons from their midst by a simple majority of the votes cast. All researchers and academics who carry out research tasks at SAFE against payment or within the framework of a cooperation agreement are entitled to propose and vote. The institute management ensures that a secret ballot is conducted properly and that the ombudspersons' work is sufficiently visible, independent and supported.

The ombudspersons should have the personal integrity and objective judgement necessary for the performance of their duties and have leadership experience. They may not be members of the executive bodies (Management Board and Scientific Board) of SAFE. They mutually represent each other. The term of office is three years. Re-election is possible.

The ombudspersons exercise their function on a voluntary basis, independent and free from instructions. In the performance of their role, they are to be supported by all researchers involved in a procedure. They report annually in writing to the SAFE Management Board and the Board of Trustees.

An ombudsperson can be removed from their function by two-thirds of the votes of the researchers entitled to vote, if a permanently reliable fulfilment of tasks no longer appears possible or if confidence in the proper fulfilment of the tasks no longer exists. The ombudsperson concerned must be given the opportunity to be heard before such a decision is taken.

The SAFE ombudspersons advise the researchers and mediate in conflicts related to good scientific practice. They can make statements to the management of SAFE and contribute to the establishment of a culture of good scientific practice and scientific integrity at the Institute. They also examine allegations of scientific misconduct in a formal procedure (see next section). If, in the course of such an investigation procedure, it emerges that it is not possible to conclusively clarify the allegations within SAFE or that extraordinary circumstances prevent the procedure from being carried out, the ombudspersons submit the case to the central ombudspersons body of the Leibniz Association. This does not affect the possibility of turning at any time to the central ombudspersons body of the Leibniz Association or to the "Research Ombudsman" committee set up by the DFG.

5. Investigating allegations of scientific misconduct and proceeding with the investigation[6]

The SAFE ombudspersons can and should be contacted by anyone who suspects or is suspected of scientific misconduct within the Institute.

Preliminary examination

If an allegation of scientific misconduct is brought to the ombudspersons, they will conduct a preliminary examination independently and immediately. Usually, they first hear the complainant in oral or written form and comprehensively examine all evidence submitted. They then request the person suspected of misconduct to submit an oral or written statement within two weeks, commenting on the incriminating facts and evidence. The deadline must be extended in a reasonable manner upon request. In order to clarify the facts, the ombudspersons may question further persons and obtain expert opinions.

A conflict of interest of an investigating ombudsperson can be asserted both by him or her or by one of the persons concerned. If there is disagreement about the allegation of bias, the Chairman of the Research Advisory Council will decide.

After receipt of the statement of the person concerned or after expiry of the deadline, the ombudspersons will make a decision within one week as to whether the previous findings invalidate or confirm the suspicion of misconduct.

If the ombudspersons consider the allegation to be unjustified, the procedure will be closed without further steps or reporting. The complainant and the person affected by the suspicion will be informed. In the event of a continuing suspicion, the ombudspersons shall prepare a written report. The report concludes with the recommendation to set up an investigation committee or to forward the proceedings to the ombudspersons body of the Leibniz Association. If the accused person is a cooperating professor, it may alternatively be recommended to forward the case to the corresponding body of the cooperating university.

The report shall be submitted to the person(s) involved and to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The latter, if so recommended, shall appoint an investigation committee to review the allegation of academic misconduct. The Board of Trustees shall be informed of the matter.

Investigation Committee to Review Allegations of Scientific Misconduct

[6] See also SAFE Ethics Code, section 3.

The Investigation Committee to review allegations of scientific misconduct is bound by the guidelines and standards of good scientific practice issued for the Institute and the definitions of scientific misconduct. It shall also take into account accepted professional standards and align its work with the usual principles of truth-finding.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees, in consultation with the ombudspersons, shall select the members of the Investigation Committee. The Committee shall include at least three voting members, who may not be employees of the Institute, among them

a. The Chairperson of the Scientific Advisory Board or a member of the Advisory Board appointed by him/her,
b. one additional member who is qualified to comprehensively understand the scientific facts of the case,
c. a lawyer.

At least one of the two ombudspersons shall be a member of the Investigation Committee without voting rights.

The bias of a nominated member may be asserted either by the member himself or by the persons concerned. If there is disagreement about the allegation of bias, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall decide. Should one of the three above-mentioned members be permanently prevented from participating in the Investigation Committee during the course of the proceedings, the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall immediately elect a successor in consultation with the ombudspersons.

The Investigation Committee shall deliberate in a non-public manner. It shall agree on rules of procedure at its first meeting. It shall appoint a chairperson from among its members who shall be responsible for chairing the meetings. It shall also commission one of its professionally qualified members to search for exculpatory arguments in the sense of an advocate for the accused and to introduce these into the Committee's discussion.

The Investigation Committee shall hear the accused and the complainant and determine the context of the conduct complained of. It may question further persons and obtain expert opinions or consult experts in an advisory capacity.

The review by the Investigation Committee shall be completed within a period of no more than six months from its constituent meeting.

The Investigation Committee shall prepare a report to the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees in which it shall assess the existence of scientific misconduct. If the investigating committee comes to the conclusion that scientific misconduct has occurred, i.e. if the majority of the investigating committee considers scientific misconduct to be sufficiently proven, the report shall in particular describe the extent of such scientific misconduct as well as evaluate, determine and substantiate whether such conduct was negligent, grossly negligent or intentional, and make recommendations on further action or measures.

All investigations – both in the context of the preliminary examination and in the context of the Investigation Committee – are carried out in strict compliance with the confidentiality and protection of all parties concerned. Personal information is anonymized as far as possible. As a rule, disclosure of the name of the complainant to the accused person is only necessary if no other appropriate defense against the accusations is possible. The

ombudspersons are obliged to prevent disadvantages for the scientific and professional advancement of the complainant as far as possible and to protect the accused from unjustified accusations. This obligation also applies to any person and body that needs to be consulted in further proceedings.

6. Closure of the procedure

The Chairperson of the Board of Trustees shall deal with the report of the Investigation Committee. He/She either determines the existence of scientific misconduct or decides to discontinue the proceedings. If he/she deviates from the report of the Investigation Committee, detailed reasons must be given. If he/she determines that scientific misconduct has occurred, he/she shall forward the report to the SAFE Management Board.

The Management Board shall decide on the basis of the report on necessary and appropriate measures. In doing so, it shall take into account whether the misconduct was negligent, grossly negligent or intentional.

Measures may include:

- a written reprimand,
- a request to withdraw incriminating publications or - in less serious cases - to correct incorrect data by publishing an erratum,
- the use of actions with academic, disciplinary, work related consequences or civil or criminal sanctions.

If, based on the report of the Investigation Committee, the Management Board determines that the academic misconduct may result in the revocation of academic degrees, it shall forward the matter to the awarding university.

The main grounds that led to the termination of the proceedings or to decisions on measures to be implemented must be communicated to the persons concerned, the complainant and the Chairperson of the Research Advisory Council.

The Management Board decides on the disclosure and publication of its decisions and the ombudspersons' reports on a case-by-case basis, taking into account the existence of a legitimate interest by third parties.