

CODE OF GOOD PRACTICES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIC

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of the University of Vic
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1. Introduction

The University of Vic (UVic) has established a Code of Good Practices for high quality research that meets ethical standards. The Code is designed to ensure that UVic researchers' attitudes, the procedures they follow, and the way they disseminate information about scientific activities are in line with the principles of integrity and social commitment.

The *Code of Good Practices* is an internal regulation of the University of Vic. It complements the Spanish university legislation that is currently in force and the UVic's own regulations.

2. Scope of application

This regulation affects:

1. Research staff who have a contractual relationship with the UVic and carry out their scientific activity at the University.
2. Staff who support research and knowledge transfer activities, have a contractual relationship with the UVic, and carry out their scientific activity at the University.
3. Trainee research staff who may or may not have a contractual relationship with the UVic and who have proof of acceptance and enrolment on a UVic doctoral programme.
4. Research staff and trainee research staff who carry out their research in UVic facilities, whether or not they have a contractual relationship with the UVic.

The director of each UVic department shall be responsible for disseminating the *Code of Good Practices* to all members of the University community who undertake any research activity at the UVic.

Thesis supervisors shall be responsible for disseminating the *Commitment Agreement* to doctoral students enrolled in the doctoral programme.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the *Code of Good Practices* are to:

- Improve the quality of scientific activity and ensure ethical behaviour.
- Ensure that trainee researchers gain good scientific practices.
- Establish mechanisms to ensure the integrity and rigour of research.
- Ensure compliance with the administrative procedures involved in the management of scientific activities.
- Promote the protection of research results.

4. Organization of research groups and centres

Each research group and centre must appoint at least one head who shall ensure that the research and knowledge transfer objectives are met, and shall foster cooperation with other research teams, institutions, organizations and companies to promote knowledge exchange among researchers attached to state or international research centres.

Heads of research groups and centres must create a work environment among members that allows their individual abilities to develop.

Researchers must participate in the activities that are proposed and organized by the group or centre to which they belong. Their research activity must be focused on the group's or centre's areas of research.

5. Responsibilities of research staff

Research staff must be consistent and honest in their research activity. They must respect the activities of other researchers and must not infringe on the intellectual and industrial property rights established in the UVic's *Regulations on Intellectual and Industrial Property*.

Research staff must not plagiarize the work of others or falsify the results of their research.

Research staff must take responsibility for the veracity of information about projects in which they participate, both with respect to statements about the resources used and the results obtained.

When other UVic research groups or centres or members of other research centres and institutions participate in a research project, a research protocol or agreement must be established to determine the conditions of the collaboration.

Researchers who are involved in publicly or privately funded research must ensure that it follows the guidelines in the original proposal and that resources are used to meet the objectives described in the funded project.

Research staff who are attached to a UVic doctoral programme and supervise doctoral theses shall understand and accept the rights and responsibilities indicated in the *Internal Regulations* of the UVic Doctoral School, to ensure good supervision of the doctoral student's training activities and of the doctoral thesis.

6. Responsibilities of trainee research staff

All individuals who are considered trainee research staff will have a thesis supervisor or tutor, who shall be responsible for supervising and ensuring the quality of results generated by the research activity. The thesis supervisor or tutor shall also provide the trainee with all the required information, including this *Code of Good Practices*, ethical standards for human or animal experimentation, the UVic's *Doctoral Studies Regulations*, the *Internal Regulations* of the UVic Doctoral School and the UVic's *Regulations on Intellectual and Industrial Property*.

Trainee research staff have the responsibilities, rights and obligations inherent in the tasks associated with their training and those indicated in the *Internal Regulations* of the UVic Doctoral School,

the *Commitment Agreement*, the UVic's *Regulations on Intellectual and Industrial Property*, and the UVic's *Doctoral Studies Regulations*.

Trainee research staff who have a predoctoral contract must also comply with the conditions established in the contract or grant.

Trainee researcher staff who participate in publicly or privately funded projects must ensure that the research follows the guidelines in the original proposal, that resources are used to meet the objectives described in the funded project, and that the conditions established in the call for applications or in the contract with the commissioning party are met.

7. Systems for managing doctoral training

The UVic Doctoral School is responsible for organizing the academic and administrative management of doctoral training activities, which are aligned with the University's research and knowledge transfer activity.

The functions of the Doctoral School are described in the *Internal Regulations* of the UVic Doctoral School.

All paperwork and procedures related to doctoral training management are described in the UVic *Doctoral Studies Regulations* and on the Doctoral School's website.

8. Procedures, methods and facilities

All the procedures that are associated with a scientific activity must be described in the research protocol. This document must include at least the following: the background to the proposal, the specific objectives, the method that will be used, the work plan and expected schedule, the available and required resources, and the participants. When a study involves people or animals, the protocol must also include legal and ethical aspects, safety precautions and risk assessment.

The researchers, the staff supporting the scientific activity, and trainee research staff must comply with the UVic's *Regulations on Occupational Risk Prevention*. They must adopt appropriate specific protection measures for carrying out different experimental tasks, and have sufficient training to carry out research without risks.

All the procedures and methods used in projects must be referenced and/or documented, to ensure the reliability of results.

The facilities and equipment used for research, development and innovation activities must be suitable, and preventative maintenance must be carried out to ensure optimum operation and the reliability of the results.

The use of any facility or equipment that does not belong to the research group or centre must first be approved by the person responsible for the institution, centre, facility or equipment in question.

Researchers must use the University's scientific facilities and equipment with care.

9. Recording, documenting, storing, safeguarding and preserving data and material

Each research protocol must determine the system that will be used to collect the biological or chemical material, and the data and records resulting from the research. The protocol must also describe how data and material will be safeguarded and preserved.

Without exception, all of the research results and observations must be gathered. Records must include all changes, errors, negative results, unexpected results, and the names of the people who have carried out the research. Records must be in a form that can be read by other people.

The protocol must determine the resources and infrastructure needed to correctly safeguard and preserve the documents and material resulting from the research. If data are recorded in digital format, a backup system must be established. All data that contain information about individuals must be stored in accordance with data protection legislation.

All members of the research team must have access to the research data and its interpretation. The project leader shall have one record of the tools used to gather the data and the results, and to safeguard samples.

All primary and original documents must be kept for at least five years after the date of the first publication of results, except when legislation stipulates that they must be kept for longer periods, or when a longer storage period has been agreed.

10. Publication, protection and industrial and intellectual property

The publication of research results is considered an inevitable part of the research itself. Publication is the means by which results are subject to the scrutiny of other researchers.

The definitive publication of the results should include:

- The institutions or centres to which the author/s belong and the institutions or centres at which the research was undertaken.
- The independent ethics committees that supervised the research protocol and any authorizations that were issued by the relevant authorities.
- Any financial aid or sponsorship that was received.

References must be provided for all papers by other authors that are directly related to the research. Unwarranted references or honorary mentions should not be included.

Strict criteria should be used for the "Acknowledgements" or "Personal Communication" section. Individuals or institutions may not wish to appear in this section. Consequently, it is advisable to seek written authorization.

All primary documents (laboratory notebooks containing data, databases, etc.) and biological or chemical material resulting from the research is the property of the centre with which the project leader is associated.

Protocols on the use of institutional computer files or the creation of databases containing information about individuals must guarantee anonymity, and comply with current regulations on database records.

To be listed as author of a publication, a researcher must:

- Have contributed substantially to the conception, design and development of the project or to the analysis and interpretation of data.
- Have contributed to the preparation of papers, reports or the resulting publications.
- Be able to present their personal contribution to the research in detail, and to discuss the main aspects of the research project as a whole.

Researchers must understand and comply with the UVic's policies on the protection and exploitation of intellectual and industrial property, and on the assessment, promotion and marketing of research results, as determined in the UVic's *Regulations on Intellectual and Industrial Property*.

11. Research involving people

In the experimental and health sciences, the social sciences and humanities, humans may be the subject of the scientific activity. In this case, the research must be governed by ethical principles and potential limitations must be accepted, due to the nature of the research (for example, when it involves handling people, the administration of surveys and questionnaires) or to protect industrial and intellectual property.

Any research protocol that involves studying biological samples taken from people must be approved by the Clinical Research Ethics Committee (CEIC) of the UVic or of the institution with which the University has an agreement.

Researchers must understand and comply with the recommendations in the European Charter for Researchers (EU, 2005).

Researchers and collaborators who participate in a research project involving people shall follow the research protocol strictly. In addition, if a project involves biological sampling, express consent must first be obtained from the donors, and data must be stored under strict confidentiality, in accordance with the provisions in regulations on personal data protection.

Data or biological samples cannot be transferred to other projects or researchers without the authorization of the donors and the corresponding ethics committee.

12. Research with experimental animals

Any research protocol that involves studies with experimental animals must be in accordance with current legislation and approved by the Animal Experimentation Ethics Committee (CEEA) of the UVic or of the institution which the University has an agreement.

Staff involved in such studies must have the corresponding accreditation and endeavour, when possible, to replace them with other studies that do not involve the use of animals, or to reduce the number of animals to the minimum needed to draw valid conclusions. They shall also implement the measures required to reduce the suffering of the animals.