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Principles of good scientific practice at Saarland University

6 June 2001

Pursuant to Article 20, Section 1(4) of the Saarland University Act, the Saarland University Senate has agreed the following principles:

Preamble

Further to its guidance on preventing and responding to scientific misconduct at the university (see Official Bulletin 1999, p. 54), Saarland University wishes to set out principles that will establish a framework for good scientific practice with the aim of averting future scientific misconduct. Saarland University considers it self-evident that its members share this conviction and that the following principles therefore represent common practice:

1. Principles of good scientific practice:

- a. The main general principles governing scientific work are:
 - work shall be conducted in accordance with recognized and established scientific standards;
 - results shall be documented;
 - scientists, scholars and academics (hereafter: ‘academics’) shall question and critically appraise their own results;
 - complete honesty and transparency when attributing the contributions of other academics, as well as those of academic competitors and predecessors.
- b. Primary data that serve as the basis of scientific publications shall be stored for ten years at the institution of their origin (laboratory, university or hospital department) insofar as this is necessary for verification purposes.

- c. Every member of the university is responsible for ensuring that they and all employees working under them comply with these principles. The principles of good scientific practice are a core component of university teaching and of the education and training of young researchers, who, in addition to being taught theoretical, subject-specific knowledge and methodological skills, also need to appreciate the ethical standards underlying scientific work.
- d. Notwithstanding the responsibility of university management, each individual section of the university shall be responsible for maintaining a suitable organizational structure that ensures that within that section the relevant managerial, supervisory, quality assurance and conflict resolution duties are all unambiguously assigned and that these duties are actually discharged.

2. Publication, authorship and responsibility:

Academics have a responsibility to society to explain and to render an account of their work that is characterised by truthfulness, completeness, transparency, methodological integrity, and verifiability. Publications should satisfy the following criteria:

- publication of new observations or knowledge as original research papers;
- proper attribution of relevant work published previously by other authors.

Authorship shall be established via significant contributions (conceptual and preparatory work, acquisition, analysis and presentation of data and the transposition of these data into a publishable manuscript). Individual authors have co-responsibility for the content of the entire manuscript. Authorship cannot be attributed solely on the basis of a position as head of an institution, department or group. So-called honorary authorships are not acceptable.

3. Young researchers:

- a. The education and development of young researchers is a matter of particular importance.
- b. Doctoral researchers and other young scientists should be mentored by at least two experienced researchers, one of whom should not be a member of the research group or department to which the young researcher belongs. The mentors should offer advice and assistance and should, where necessary, act as mediators in conflict situations.

4. Assessment of scientific work:

Criteria for assessing academic achievements and performance should be specified such that greater significance is given to originality and quality rather than quantity.

Saarbrücken, 7 June 2001

The President of the University
(Prof. Dr. Margret Wintermantel)