

## **SAS Code of Ethics**

Scientific research occupies an important place in all sectors of society and represents an integral part of it as one of the basic sources of its material and spiritual wealth; further, research helps society achieve an adequate quality of life for all citizens. The fundamental value of scientific research is the freedom and independence associated with the awareness of the responsibility of scientists towards their community, the organizations to which they belong, and society in general. An important factor in the development of science and the consolidation of its place in society is to maintain the credibility of scientific research and improve its quality. Respect for ethical rules is a prerequisite for the integrity of scientific research and for maintaining the credibility of science and improving the quality of scientific research. The SAS Code of Ethics<sup>1</sup> is an expression of the social responsibility of the Slovak Academy of Sciences and its role in the creation of the European Research Area. The purpose of the Code is to define the basic ethical rules governing the employees and PhD students of the SAS and the SAS's organizational units (hereinafter referred to collectively as "employees") in research, development, innovation and pedagogy as well as in management and support activities.

### **I. General Principles**

1. The fundamental value of science is the freedom of scientific discovery, its independence from political, religious and ideological beliefs.
2. Any restriction of the freedom of discovery by any authority or based on political, religious or ideological grounds is not permitted at the SAS.
3. In carrying out their activities, employees and PhD students of the SAS and the SAS's organizational units are governed by generally applicable ethical principles; in their relations to other employees they act with consideration, respect, courtesy, and honesty in accordance with the principles set out in this Code.
4. Employees preserve and support the interests of their organizational unit and the SAS, protect their intellectual and material property, and work to maintain their good reputation.
5. Employees shall not perform any other kind of professional activity that hinders them in the proper fulfillment of their duties at the SAS, and if they have other employment

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<sup>1</sup> SAS Code of Ethics was elaborated in accordance with The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (ALLEA, 2017), the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (European Commission, 2005), Singapore Statement on Research Integrity (2010), and with reference to the following documents: The Code of Ethics for the Researchers of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, 2013), Rules of Good Scientific Practice (Max Planck Society, 2009), Science Ethics Code of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (2010), Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity, 2012).

relationships, they will declare which of these is principal for their scientific research activity.

6. In research activities as well as in management and support activities, employees shall proceed in such a way as to eliminate any possibility of a conflict of interest that would reduce the credibility of the organization, persons, achievements, publications, public statements, review and examination procedures, and management and decision-making practices.
7. Employees must be aware of and adhere to the basic rules and regulations governing their activities.
8. The research and development staff<sup>2</sup> of the SAS and the SAS's organizational units (hereinafter referred to as researchers) must be aware of and adhere to the basic rules and regulations governing their research activity and be aware of the constraints arising therefrom.

## **II. Principles of Scientific Work**

1. Researchers shall focus their activities on expanding the boundaries of scientific knowledge and its use for the benefit of society.
2. Researchers shall be aware of their responsibility for the quality of their research and the credibility of the results obtained.
3. Scientific research shall be conducted exclusively by means of scientific methodology, subject to discipline-specific rules.
4. Scientific research relies on systematic skepticism. It is open to doubt as well as rational and justified criticism. The results of scientific research must be verifiable and reproducible.
5. Scientific research must respect human dignity and not endanger human health or life.
6. Scientific research must adequately respect every object of scientific research, including people, animals, the environment and objects of cultural heritage.
7. All research data obtained must be appropriately recorded and stored to allow for verification by other scientists.
8. Researchers shall make data and knowledge available in a standard manner, while safeguarding the primacy of their copyright and the rights of their co-authors, the rights of the SAS organization as well as the rights of other participating researchers.
9. Researchers shall not duplicate research carried out by other scientists, with the exception of the research necessary to verify, supplement or compare the results previously obtained.
10. In public appearances for the dissemination of scientific knowledge and achievements, researchers shall be guided by the expertise in which they carry out their research, development, innovation or teaching activities, distinguishing between their expert opinion and their personal opinion.

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<sup>2</sup> Act. 553/2003 Z. z., § 7, p. 1

### **III. Principles for Publishing Research Results**

1. Researchers shall publish the results of non-classified scientific research, seeking to make publicly available the results of publicly funded research.
2. When publishing their research results, researchers shall respect the contribution of all authors and their copyright, as well as the contribution of all those who have supported the research.
3. When publishing their research results, researchers shall respect the contribution of the authors they follow and shall respect the principles of correct citation of the literature used, with the appropriate indication of the relevant sources.
4. When publishing research results, researchers are required to indicate the organizational unit at which the results were achieved.
5. Researchers shall not publish in questionable ways and shall not make use of untrustworthy publishing platforms such as predatory journals.

### **IV. Principles for Assessment, Review, Evaluation and Expert Activities**

1. Assessment, review and evaluation activities contribute significantly to maintaining standards and improving the quality of scientific knowledge. Participation in these processes is an important ethical commitment.
2. Researchers shall formulate their expert opinions and evaluations in the field in which they carry out their research, development, innovation or teaching activities, or in related fields.
3. In their assessment, review, evaluation and expert activities, researchers shall
  - a) conduct the evaluation personally and responsibly,
  - b) use exclusively objective criteria, independent of their own personal beliefs and preferences,
  - c) base themselves on the knowledge, theories and methods of the relevant scientific discipline,
  - d) not be subject to external pressure which could affect their expert opinion,
  - e) not unduly prolong the evaluation of the submitted materials for their own benefit or for the benefit of a third party,
  - f) strictly protect the data contained in the assessment documents and the intellectual property of the authors of materials submitted.
4. Researchers shall refuse to carry out an evaluation if they are aware of a conflict of interest or if the conclusions of their expert opinion could be influenced by their personal interest.
5. The evaluation of individuals, research teams and organizations must be based on a balance of quantitative and qualitative indicators.

## **V. Principles of Behavior towards Colleagues and Students**

1. The SAS and its organizational units shall strictly observe the principle of equal opportunities. No employee shall be discriminated against on grounds of sex, age, nationality, birth or ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, language, disability, or social or economic status.
2. Employees shall not abuse their position to intimidate, humiliate, slander, harass or defame other employees.
3. Researchers and PhD students shall be recruited on the basis of an open competition and an objective evaluation of their professional skills, intellectual abilities and personality.
4. In their teaching, researchers shall develop their students' independent, critical thinking skills and a responsible attitude toward the performance of their work. At the same time researchers should respect the right of their students to express themselves freely.
5. Research team leaders and officers shall ensure that they are fair and open in communicating with their subordinates, supporting their professional development and qualifications. At the same time they shall require from their subordinates that they engage in adequate research, publication, project and organizational activity, as well as develop collaboration with other scientists in Slovakia and abroad.

## **VI. Violation of the Ethical Principles of Research and Development**

1. Any violation of the principles set out in this Code shall be deemed to be a violation of the ethical principles of research and development.
2. In particular, the fabrication and falsification of results and plagiarism are considered to be particularly serious violations of the ethical principles of research and development.
3. Fabrication is defined as the presentation of fictional data and knowledge not obtained by the methods specified in the research report or publication output.
4. The falsification of results is understood as the manipulation of the research results and their subsequent presentation or a selection of only those results that do not contradict the stated objective of the research. The concealment of results and any information which is essential for the conclusions formed is also considered to be falsification.
5. Plagiarism is the literal or modified appropriation of theories, ideas or research results of another person and their presentation or publication without the appropriate attribution or acknowledgment of the original source. Plagiarism may relate to project proposals, research plans, manuscripts and published outputs, including individual parts, visuals or translations.
6. The following are considered to be further violations of the ethical principles of research and development:
  - a) The misrepresentation of authorship.
  - b) The unjustified postponement of the publication of the results of other persons, in particular in the peer-reviewed process.

- c) The manifestly unfounded accusation of others for violating the principles of ethical conduct.
- d) Misleading and deceiving the public by presenting biased and false information about results achieved or their possible use in practice.

## **VII. Process of Resolution of Contentious Ethical Issues**

1. Possible violations of the ethical principles of research and development and other ethical issues of concern shall be addressed by the cooperation of all stakeholders, namely:
  - a) directly at the SAS organizational unit at the level of its organizational structure, always at one instance higher than the one at which the disputes occur. Ad hoc commissions may also be set up to resolve disputes,
  - b) in the Ethics Committee of the SAS, if the solution goes beyond the scope of the SAS organizational unit or if the parties to the dispute are not satisfied with the conclusions adopted in the organizational unit.
2. The highest possible protection of privacy shall be exercised when addressing any issues arising from complaints.
3. Conclusions shall be communicated in writing to all affected parties. In the event of a proven violation of the Code of Ethics, the conclusions shall include a proposal for action to be taken.

## **VIII. Final Provisions**

1. The SAS Code of Ethics was approved per the resolution of the SAS Presidium no. 691 on July 9, 2015 and is a part of the SAS internal regulations. The Code is valid on the day of its approval and comes into effect on the day of its publication on the SAS's website thereby invalidating the SAS Code of Ethics of November 3, 2011.
2. Suggestions for amendments or supplements to the SAS Code of Ethics shall be addressed to the Ethics Committee of the SAS.
3. Any change or amendment of the SAS Code of Ethics shall be valid only after approval by the SAS Presidium.
4. The supplement to the SAS Code of Ethics no. 1 was approved per resolution of the SAS Presidium no. 405. C on June 14, 2018. This comes into force on the date of its approval and comes into effect on the date of its publication on the SAS website.

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