

# Research Integrity Promotion Plan (RIPP)

V 1.0

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## Preface

**Research Integrity** encompasses the aspects of **scientific integrity** and **research ethics**. Researchers are obligated to conduct their work responsibly in accordance with the fundamental principles of **scientific integrity**—independence, honesty, diligence, transparency, and fairness—toward the scientific community. In addition, to protect third parties—such as humans, animals, the environment, and society—there are fundamental principles of **research ethics**. These have long been established in biomedical and clinical research and are enshrined in international declarations. They include autonomy (self-determination; also: respect for human dignity and physical integrity), the principle of non-maleficence (principles of benefit and harm avoidance), and justice (fairness in the distribution of the benefits, burdens, and risks of research).<sup>1</sup>

Under the Guideline for Good Scientific Practice (GSP) of Karl Landsteiner Private University, researchers are obligated to uphold both aspects of research integrity. KL offers training programs to promote the principles of research integrity among students and researchers and has established procedures to address misconduct related to research integrity.

The Research Integrity Promotion Plan of KL provides an overview of the existing structures and measures aimed at establishing and maintaining international standards of research integrity at the university. It identifies areas with potential for improvement and outlines concrete steps to realize that potential. The plan follows the structure outlined in the *Guideline for Promoting Research Integrity in Research Performing Organizations*<sup>2</sup>, developed within the Horizon 2020 project *Standard Operating Procedures for Research Integrity (SOPs4RI)*.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Praxisleitfaden für Integrität und Ethik in den Wissenschaften, Mitglieder der Hochschulkonferenz Arbeitsgruppe „Research Ethics / Research Integrity“, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung, Wien, 2020 ([Praxisleitfaden für Integrität und Ethik in der Wissenschaft](#))

<sup>2</sup> [guideline-for-promoting-research-integrity-in-research-performing-organisations\\_horizon\\_en.pdf](#)

<sup>3</sup> [SOPs4RI, Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme, grant agreement No. 824481](#)

# 1. Research Integrity in the Research Environment at KL – Institutional Framework and Guidelines

## 1.1. Current state

The [Commission on Ethics and Scientific Integrity](#) (Ethikkommission, EK) is the central point of contact for all questions relating to research integrity at KL and its university hospitals in Krems, St. Pölten, and Tulln. The activities of this independent commission, which is not bound by any instructions, are divided into four sub-areas<sup>4</sup>:

1. Evaluation of research projects in accordance with the KL Guideline for Good Scientific Practice (GSP), the Declaration of Helsinki, the EU-GCP Note for Guidance, and domestic national law (Arzneimittelgesetz, AMG; Medizinproduktegesetz, MPG; Niederösterreichischen Krankenanstaltengesetz, NÖ KAG; Kranken- und Kuranstaltengesetz, KAKuG; Gentechnikgesetzes, GTG; Datenschutzgesetz, DSG). Projects that fall under the Austrian Medicinal Products Act (Arzneimittelgesetz, AMG) or the Austrian Medical Devices Act (Medizinproduktegesetz, MPG) are excluded from evaluation.
2. Assessment of preclinical study protocols (animal testing applications) according to scientific and ethical criteria and their approval before submission to the responsible federal ministry.
3. Assessment of suspected cases of scientific misconduct and recommendations for action for the Rectorate.
4. Statements on medical ethics issues submitted by members of the KL or their university hospitals.

The KL is a member of the [Austrian Agency for scientific integrity](#) (OeAWI). The OeAWI offers training courses in scientific integrity and has a panel of experts that can be called upon to investigate suspected cases of scientific misconduct.

The guidelines for scientific work in accordance with the principles of scientific integrity and research ethics at KL are outlined in the [Guideline for Good Scientific Practice](#) (GSP).

Information on gender aspects in research is summarized in the Equality Plan ([Gleichstellungsplan](#)) and in a separate guide on integrating the gender dimension into research ([Leitfaden zur Integration der Gender Dimension in der Forschung](#)). The Research Management Unit offers courses for researchers ([Science Skills Services](#), SSS) that cover various aspects of research integrity. The topic is also addressed in the curricula of the study programs and for teachers as part of the [Educational Skills Services](#) (ESS).

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<sup>4</sup> Vgl.: [Geschäftsordnung der Kommission für Scientific Integrity und Ethik der Karl Landsteiner Privatuniversität GmbH](#)

## 1.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Creation of a solid reporting basis for the targeted advancement of research culture in the field of research integrity
  - Planned steps:  
Ongoing documentation of all activities regarding research integrity in a standardized annual progress report (Research Integrity Progress Report, RIPR)
- Coordinating the planning of activities in the area of research integrity
  - Planned steps:  
Targeted planning of measures based on the progress report on research integrity in cooperation with representatives from Education (Vice Rector for Education, Education Management Unit), Research (Research Management Unit) and the Commission on Ethics and Scientific Integrity.
- Improving information for researchers about university guidelines and existing resources
  - Planned steps:  
A separate section on research integrity in the KL Research Manual, which provides researchers with an overview of university requirements and resources in the field of scientific integrity and research ethics.
- Expanding expertise in the field of research integrity at KL
  - Planned steps:  
External training for employees of the Research Management Unit (OeAWI's Train-the-Trainer course)
- Expansion of the KL network in the field of research integrity
  - Planned steps:  
Participation in relevant events/conferences (European Network of Research Integrity Offices, Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity)

## 2. Supervision and Mentoring

### 2.1. Current State

In the degree programs at KL (BA Medical Science, MA Human Medicine, BA/MA Psychology, PhD Neuroscience and Mental Health) and the KL Academy, supervisors of academic theses are obliged to familiarize students with the principles of research integrity and to provide advice and guidance throughout the work process. Supervisors can acquire research integrity skills through the Educational Skills Services (ESS) and Science Skills Services (SSS).

In addition, the members of the Commission for Ethics and Scientific Integrity offer individual advice on issues relating to research integrity.

### 2.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Coordination of training courses for supervisors
  - Planned steps:  
Documentation and coordination of training measures by representatives from Education (Vice Rector for Education, Education Management Unit), Research (Research Management Unit) and the Commission on Ethics and Scientific Integrity

## 3. Research Integrity Training

### 3.1. Current state

Various aspects of research integrity are taught in courses offered by Science Skills Services (SSS). The program is aimed at researchers and includes training by external partners, internal experts, and peer-to-peer learning. Students of Medical Science (BA, MA) and Psychology (BA, MA) can take selected courses as electives. The topic of research integrity is addressed specifically for teachers as part of the Educational Skills Services (ESS) (see Appendix A1).

The principles of research integrity are taught to students in lectures and seminars as part of the KL degree program curricula (Appendix A2).

The topic of research integrity in the handling of research data is part of the advisory services offered by the Department of Biostatistics and Data Science.

### 3.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Coordinating existing training offerings and identifying gaps in the course program
  - Planned steps:  
Ongoing documentation of all training activities on research integrity in the progress report and joint coordination of existing offerings by representatives from Education (Vice Rector for Education, Education Management Unit), Research (Research Management Unit) and the Commission on Ethics and Scientific Integrity
- Further development of existing activities
  - Planned steps:  
Targeted expansion of training opportunities for researchers and students via Science Skills Services (SSS) and Educational Skills Services (ESS), and external experts (OeAWI; LBG Ethics and Diversity Hub, commercial providers)

## 4. Research Ethics: Processes and Structures

### 4.1. Current state

Projects that use data or materials from patients/test subjects and for which a vote by an ethics committee is required in accordance with legal requirements and the provisions of the Declaration of Helsinki are handled by the KL's Ethics and Scientific Integrity Committee, unless they are subject to the Austrian Medicinal Products Act (Arzneimittelgesetz, AMG) or Medical Device Act (Medizinproduktegesetz, MPG). Projects involving animals are assessed by the KL's Animal Experimentation Committee in cooperation with the Ethics Committee.

### 4.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Documentation of the activities of the Ethics Committee
  - Planned steps:  
Ongoing recording of activities (number of applications processed) in the annual Research Integrity Progress Report.
- Assistance for researchers conducting studies that do not require approval by an ethics committee due to legal provisions.
  - Planned steps:  
Provision of an ethics self-assessment tool on the KL website

## 5. Dealing with Breaches of Research Integrity

### 5.1. Current state

Violations of Good Scientific Practice (GSP) are dealt with by the Commission for Ethics and Scientific Integrity. If external expertise is required, the OeAWI expert committee is consulted.

### 5.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Ongoing awareness-raising among employees in research and administrative organizational units to ensure consistent, policy-compliant handling of suspected cases
  - Planned steps:  
Special consideration of the topic in the context of training courses for students/researchers and employees of the KL
- Systematic documentation of suspected cases
  - Planned steps:  
Ongoing anonymized documentation of suspected cases in the annual Research Integrity Progress Report.

## 6. Data Management

### 6.1. Current state

Data protection supervision of the handling of research data is the responsibility of the Data Protection Officer of KL. The Division of Biostatistics and Data Science offers advice and provides structures for the collection, storage, and analysis of research data in accordance with international standards (eCRF REDCap, compute server for data analysis).

### 6.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Ongoing awareness-raising among students and researchers on data management issues
  - Planned steps:  
Expansion of existing training offerings with a focus on the creation of data management plans
- Documentation of existing KL processes and offerings in the area of data management
  - Planned steps:  
Documentation of KL processes for handling research data in the KL Research Manual

## 7. Research Collaboration

### 7.1. Current state

The contractual handling of research collaborations (non-disclosure agreements, consortium agreements, agreements on publication rights, data transfer agreements, material transfer agreements, agreements on intellectual property) is carried out in consultation with the KL's legal advisor. For projects involving university hospitals, the internal guidelines of the Landesgesundheitsagentur Niederösterreich (NÖ LGA) are taken into account. Researchers can find an overview of the contractual requirements with practical instructions in the KL Research Manual.

### 7.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Continuous updating of information for researchers on KL processes in collaborative research projects in coordination with the participating organizational units (KL legal advisor, Research Management Unit)
  - Planned steps:  
Updating the documentation of existing processes in the KL Research Manual

## 8. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

### 8.1. Current state

The obligation to document conflicts of interest is regulated in accordance with internationally applicable recommendations in KL's Good Scientific Practice Guidelines. General guidelines for KL employees on dealing with conflicts of interest are laid down in KL's Compliance Guideline.

### 8.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Ongoing awareness-raising among students/researchers on how to deal with conflicts of interest
  - Planned steps:  
Continuation and expansion of existing information services for students and researchers

## 9. Publication and Communication

### 9.1. Current state

The university's guidelines on research integrity in science communication and the publication of research results are summarized in KL's Good Scientific Practice Guidelines. Information on the correct procedure for publishing and disseminating research results is part of the curriculum of KL's degree programs. Courses are also offered for researchers and students as part of the Science Skills Services (SSS).

### 9.2. Opportunities for improvement and planned steps

- Ongoing awareness-raising among students/researchers regarding research integrity in publications and scientific communication
  - Planned steps:
    - Continuation and expansion of existing training programs

## Appendix A1

### Courses covering aspects of Research Integrity - 2024/25

Program Line	Title	Event format	Presenter	Topic
Science Skills Services (SSS)	Ihr Weg zu Studienprotokoll und erstem Ethikvotum	Seminar	Intern F. Trautinger / S. Schober / B. Ghanim	Research Ethics
	GCP Basiskurs	Seminar	Extern A. Raffainer (GxP)	Research Integrity in Clinical Research
	GCP Refresher	Seminar	Extern A. Raffainer (GxP)	Research Integrity in Clinical Research
	Literaturrecherche für das Verfassen von Reviews	Webinar	Extern M. Heindl	Scientific Writing
	Der Weg zum ersten Paper	Seminar	Intern B. Ghanim	Scientific Writing
	Schreibwerkstatt	Seminar	Intern H. Taghizadeh	Scientific Writing
	REDCap-Anwendner:innen-Schulung	Webinar	Intern M. Eder	Data Management
	Scientific Writing – Schwerpunkt Projekt- und Förderanträge schreiben	Webinar	Extern S. Geldner	Scientific Writing
	Science Communication	Seminar	Extern T. Jellito (PR&D)	Science Communication
Educational Skills Services (ESS)	Betreuung wissenschaftlicher Arbeiten - Basics	Seminar	Intern S. Geiselhart, M. Drinic	Supervision of Scientific Thesis
	Künstliche Intelligenz in der Lehre	Seminar/Webinar	Intern M. Schmidts	AI in Education

## Appendix A2

### Research Integrity in study programmes (Medical Sciences, Psychology)

	Title	Type	ECTS	Topic
Bachelor Study Programme Medical Science: Line Science and Research	Research Ethics (SRE 1.03/2.03/5.03)	Lectures/Seminars	1.5	Research Ethics
	BA Thesis (SRE 6.06/6.08)	Seminar	0.5	Scientific Working
	Academic Writing (SRE 3.07/4.07/6.07)	Lectures/Exercises	1.4	Scientific Writing
Master Study Program Human Medicine: Line Science and Research	Seminar Master Thesis (SRM 1.0.1)	Lectures/Seminars	1.0	Scientific working
	Study Protocol / Thesis (SRM 1.03/3.03/6.03/)	Lectures/Seminars/Exercises	2.5	Scientific Working
Bachelor Study Programme Psychology	Grundlagen wissenschaftlichen Arbeitens (BP 01.2)	Lectures/Exercises	2	Scientific Working
	Ethik und Berufsrecht (BP 14.3)	Lectures/Exercises	2	Research Ethics
	Empirisch-experimentelles Praktikum I/II/III (BP 02.3/05.3/09.2)	Exercises	12	Scientific Working
	Begleitseminar Bachelorarbeit I&II (BT 3/4)	Seminar	2	Scientific Working
Master Study Programme Psychology	Theorie und Empirie wiss. Arbeitens (MT .01.02)	Exercises	3	Scientific Working
	Begleitseminar Masterarbeit I&II (MT 4/5)	Seminar	4	Scientific Working
	Wissenschaftliches Schreiben (MT 6)	Seminar	3	Scientific Writing