PRIF's Ethics Guideline[1]

Preamble

As PRIF, we see the goal of our work as laying the foundations for a peaceful world order. A central prerequisite for this is the freedom of research, which is particularly protected by the Basic Law and which can only be limited to protect other important constitutionally protected values.

In weighing the benefits and risks of its research, PRIF is committed to the welfare of humanity, the protection of the environment and the concept of peace. In this sense, all those working for PRIF have a duty to avoid – directly or indirectly – harming people and the environment as far as possible and to promote peace. Therefore, in addition to the feasibility of research, its consequences and controllability should always be considered. All those working for PRIF should be aware of this situation and the inherent constraints that could lead to abuse of their influence, and take steps to avoid such abuse where possible. In doing so, the rules of good scientific practice are to be observed at all times.

The boundaries of research are initially determined by legal standards. These legal regulations must be strictly adhered to. However, the law alone cannot fully identify the risks and possibilities of misuse and prevent misconduct. Those active in the scientific enterprise must therefore not be content with complying with legal regulations, but must take into account more far-reaching ethical principles. They bear social responsibility and should use their knowledge, experience and skills to recognize, assess and, if necessary, avert relevant risks. In critical cases, they must make a personal decision about the limits of their work, for which they are responsible within the framework of their freedom of research. This can lead to projects, even if they are not prohibited by law, being carried out only in modified form or not at all.

This Ethics Guideline supports the persons working for PRIF in the implementation of these principles. It does not represent a state-enforceable right, but is intended to prevent misuse of research and scientific misconduct as far as possible and to avoid risks by way of self-regulation, but also to provide a procedure with which ethical questions of doubt can be addressed and which can contribute to the avoidance of unethical behavior. At the same time, this guideline provides guidance on requirements and expectations that may be placed on peace and conflict science research and practice in various situations by investigators, students, staff, colleagues, and potential private and public clients, and that could lead to ethical conflicts.

The naming of concrete examples is deliberately omitted here, as otherwise the impression could arise that this is an exclusion list. The Ethics Guideline lives from continuous discussion and practical application. It specifies values and principles on which the work of PRIF is based and is intended to sensitize those working for the Institute to ethical problems in their work and to encourage them to critically examine their own professional actions as well as to communicate principles of professional ethics to junior professionals and to encourage them to practice accordingly.

1 We would like to thank the DVPW, the Joint Committee on the Handling of Security-Relevant Research of the DFG and the German Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, and the University of Konstanz in cooperation with the Technical University of Braunschweig for permission to use their respective guidelines, including the adoption of individual formulations and text passages.

Rules of good scientific practice

The rules of good scientific practices include in particular:

(a) to work *lege artis*, in particular

- Fully document all steps and results of an experiment or study and securely store protocols and primary data,
- Critically and consistently examine the validity of all findings and research designs,
- Maintain strict honesty with respect to the contributions of collaborators as well as with respect to third-party funders,
- Respect the intellectual authorship of others in all publications and properly identify all citations and takeovers,

(b) Provide appropriate guidance to scholars in the preparation and academic evaluation of qualifying papers,

(c) Cooperate responsibly in working groups and perform leadership duties responsibly, including providing appropriate supervision to their members,

(d) to always prioritize originality and quality over quantity as performance and evaluation criteria for promotions, hiring, appointments, and resource allocations,

(e) as authors of scientific publications, to take responsibility for their content, including the presentation of results and their discussion. This includes that in the case of lectures and publications, the broader topic may be specified by the inquirer, but no influence may be exerted on the results.

Scientific publications should, in accordance with the publication format, describe scientific results and how they came about in a comprehensible way. Previously published results and texts can only be part of later academic publications in a clearly identified form (double publication) and only if they are necessary for understanding the context of the publication. Exceptions are conceivable if, for example, similar content is made available to different target groups or in different types of publication, or if the author's own formulations are used again to present fundamental facts.

Only those who have contributed significantly to the conception, development, analysis and interpretation of the data as well as to the formulation of the manuscript and who have agreed to its publication, i.e. who are responsible for it, should be designated as authors of an original scientific publication. A so-called honorary authorship is excluded. These regulations should be the subject of a cooperation agreement, for example in the case of large collaborative research projects.

Primary data must be kept accessible for at least ten years. Data for which there are central, public repositories should be made available to them.

Scientific misconduct

Scientific misconduct occurs when false statements are made intentionally or grossly negligently in a context relevant to science, intellectual property rights are violated, or the research activities of others are impaired. In addition to violations of the scientific ethics, especially by inhuman or by deceptive procedures, belong to scientific misconduct above all:

(1) Misstatements – in particular:

- the invention of data,
- the intentional falsification of data,
- incorrect information about own publication lists and activities in grant applications and external presentations,
- Multiple publication of identical data or text in clearly scientific formats without disclosing this.

(2) Infringement of intellectual property rights – especially with respect to a legally protected work created by others or essential scientific findings, hypotheses, doctrines or research approaches originating from others. This includes:

- the unauthorized adoption or other use of passages without adequate proof of authorship (plagiarism),
- The use of research approaches and basic ideas without consent, especially as a reviewer,
- the presumption or unfounded assumption of scientific authorship or co-authorship, as well as the denial of legitimate co-authorship,
- the falsification of the content or
- unauthorized publication and unauthorized making available to third parties as long as the work, finding, hypothesis, teaching or research approach has not been lawfully published,
- claiming the (co-)authorship of another person without that person's consent.

(3) Interfering with research activities of others (including damaging, destroying, or tampering with experimental setups, equipment, records, hardware, software, or other property needed by others to conduct an investigation).

(4) The disposal of primary data if this violates legal provisions or recognized principles of scientific work. This also applies to the unlawful non-disposal of (in particular personal) data.

The handling of accusations of scientific misconduct is regulated by a further guideline. In addition to the aforementioned rules of good scientific work, PRIF employees must also take the following aspects into account in their work.

Rights of investigated persons

Following rules of the scientific method may result in unfavorable consequences or specific risks to individuals or groups who are part of an investigation. In addition, research actions may limit or close off future access to a study group for the profession as a whole or related professional groups. Those working at PRIF should anticipate both of these to avoid negative consequences.

In research, the personal rights of persons involved in investigations must be respected, as must their right to decide freely whether to participate in research projects.

In general, participation in research is voluntary and based on the most detailed information possible about the aims and methods of the research project in question. The principle of informed consent cannot always be put into practice, e.g. if comprehensive prior information would distort the research results in an unacceptable way. In such cases, attempts must be made to use other possibilities of informed consent.

Persons who are involved in research as observers or interviewees or in any other way, e.g. in connection with the evaluation of personal documents, must not be exposed to any disadvantages or risks as a result of the research. The persons concerned must be informed about foreseeable risks. The anonymity of the persons interviewed or examined must be preserved; unless they consent to be identifiable as persons in the documentation of the research.

To the extent possible, those working at PRIF shall anticipate potential breaches of trust. Procedures that preclude identification of those under investigation shall be used in all appropriate cases. Special attention shall be paid to the possibilities of access to data provided by electronic data processing. Again, careful precautions must be taken to protect confidential information. This applies to all phases of the research process, especially as early as the collection of data, for example, in the course of field research.

Confidential information obtained from persons under study must be treated accordingly; this obligation applies to all members of the research group with access to the data (including interviewers, coders, typists, etc.). It is the responsibility of project leaders to inform staff of this and to control access to confidential material.

The General Data Protection Regulation regulates the handling of personal data in a binding manner and must be observed accordingly by those working for PRIF. For the collection and processing of data and the handling of investigated persons in the context of field research, the instructions in the “PRIF Security Manual for Field Research” should also be taken into account.

Risk of misuse of research results

Successful research requires transparency, the free exchange of information and the publication of research results. In view of the responsibility of research for society as a whole, it also aims to provide appropriate information to a broad non-scientific public. However, free and transparent research also entails risks. These do not necessarily result directly from negligent or intentional misconduct by scientists. In the case of individual research projects, there is also an indirect risk that results – which are neutral or useful in themselves – may be misused by others for harmful purposes. This is referred to as misuse or also negligent use.

The possibilities of misuse or negligence prevent a clear distinction in many areas, e.g. civilian or armaments research, research for defense or for offensive purposes, for peaceful or non-peaceful applications. This problem must also be considered in basic research, the results of which are often unpredictable. For PRIF, further challenges arise from the explicitly intended combination of basic research with practical advice. It is the mission of the institute not to limit itself to the analysis of peace and conflict conditions, but to develop transformation and solution concepts on the basis of such investigations in order to make the findings of research effective in society and politics.

Examples of research that opens up opportunities for misuse in the PRIF context include:

Research that provides knowledge, scenarios, and strategies that can be adapted for criminal and terrorist activities;

- Research that contributes to the development of forms of surveillance that subsequently have a negative impact on human or fundamental rights by invading personal privacy or restricting freedom of association;
- Research that conflicts with human or fundamental rights, such as freedom of expression and privacy in particular;
- Research that supports the development of group-based profiling, which can result in stigma, discrimination, harassment, or intimidation.

Knowledge of possible risks is a prerequisite for conducting research responsibly. Researchers must therefore consider the consequences as well as the possible uses and misuses of their work and how they can be controlled. In this context, the risks that arise from not conducting research must also be taken into account. For the researchers, this also means informing themselves about the context of the research project or the clients and cooperation partners.

Although international cooperation promotes successful research, in individual cases it may be advisable to limit cooperation or to refrain from working with partners or collaborators in order to minimize risks. It must be transparent for all parties involved whether there is cooperation with groups or individuals who are actively involved in armed conflicts or support them by providing them with knowledge, products and technologies from research projects.

Risk assessment of research is a continuous process and dependent on contextual conditions. Even with careful prior consideration, it may be necessary to rethink the publication and dissemination strategy for research results as the project progresses. In principle, the free exchange of information and especially the publication of results are important factors for the progress of research. They serve transparency, reproducibility, control and thus quality assurance of the research process. However, the imperatives of transparency and communication do not preclude scientists from minimizing certain risks of their research by publishing the results of their work not immediately but with a time delay or in an appropriate risk-conscious form. The social responsibility of researchers may require modifying the choice of forms, audiences, and organs of publication. Complete abandonment of communication and publication of research results can be considered only if other measures to prevent hazards are not possible. However, this is justified only in special cases.

The above principles also apply to researchers who are active in the scientific publication process, e.g. as reviewers or editors. Researchers in such positions should work to ensure that the publication of research results and the policies of the publishers and other institutions they support are compatible with the principles stated here.

If research could lead to risks to human dignity, to human life or health, to the environment or to other important constitutionally protected goods, these risks, their weighing against the anticipated benefits and the measures taken to minimize them should be documented in a comprehensible manner before work begins and, in the event of changes, also during the work. If potential risks are identified during

project planning or in the course of research, the relevant documentation should be brought to the attention of the Board of Directors, the Research Council, and the PRIF Ethics Committee. In applications for research funding, corresponding risks and the measures taken to minimize them must be indicated.

Dealing with employees and colleagues

Those working at PRIF should behave towards colleagues, staff, students, research partners and other groups of people in a sincere, considerate, fair and respectful manner, especially in cases of conflict.

- Those working for PRIF must consult with PRIF on hiring, firing, evaluations, promotions, salary determinations and other employment issues, appointment, recruitment or Co-optation decisions at objectivity and fairness.
- Those working for PRIF must not coerce or force anyone – for example, students, employees, interviewees, colleagues, supervisors, or clients – into sexual, professional, or other accommodation. In particular, any form of sexual harassment or violence shall be considered serious misconduct.
- Those working for PRIF who perform training and teaching duties or supervise student assistants or interns agree to exercise diligence in providing supervision through the nature and extent of their assignments and demands.
- Those working for PRIF must not coerce students or staff and colleagues into making themselves available as research subjects or deceive them about such use.
- Those working for PRIF shall refrain from making untruthful allegations of scientific or other misconduct.
- Persons who raise complaints in reliance on this Guideline shall not be discriminated against because of the exercise of this right.

Third-party funds

The scientific freedom and independence of research, as well as the principles PRIF's constitution, oblige the institute to align its fundraising and capital management in a comprehensible and credible manner with the goals of the institute's work. In practice, this can mean difficulties in evaluating possible research funding.

The following criteria should generally guide an evaluation of fundraising for research funding:

- Care must be taken to freely define the specific research question and approach.
- The rights to the publication of the research results must remain with PRIF. Suppression of the results or only partial publication by third parties must be rejected.
- Contract research that contradicts at least one of these criteria is only permissible in exceptional, well-justified cases.

Furthermore, even with maximum research freedom, third-party funding from potential donors whose conduct systematically violates legal standards or international conventions (such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights or ILO standards) should generally not be accepted. This also applies to a gray area of possible donors whose presumably strong self-interests (e.g. in improving their image), business practices, fields of activity or other practices relevant to peace policy make it necessary to weigh up the situation in each individual case. Regardless of the amounts that flow to the PRIF from such sources, it may cause harm for the institute to cooperate with sponsors whose practices or areas of business are contrary to PRIF's goals and principles.

Fees and gifts

The area of personal benefits, gifts and honoraria is already covered by the state's anti-corruption guidelines. Even in the field of science, where often no direct consideration is granted as in other areas of public administration, favors, honoraria or expense allowances may involve an attempt to exert influence. Therefore, even beyond the anti-corruption guidelines, it must always be asked whether, for example, the acceptance of an invitation to an expensive "working dinner" or a luxurious hotel room by a conference organizer can be justified or whether alternatives should be chosen, even if they cause (higher) costs for PRIF.

Political commitment

Scientific research and political engagement or a public political positioning are not mutually exclusive. This is particularly true for PRIF, which not only analyzes peace and conflict conditions, but also develops options for action. The tension between the role as a scientist and the individual positioning in the political public must always be reflected. The maxim should be that public statements by scientists carry weight and are connected with responsibility for society and the functioning of democratic and social coexistence.

Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee acts as a purely advisory body. It may be asked for advice at any time by anyone working for PRIF if questions arise in the course of their own activities that touch on the topics covered by this guideline, or if the activities of others raise such questions. The suggestions of the Ethics Committee do not relieve employees of their own responsibility.

In the case of suspected scientific misconduct, as defined in this guideline, the responsible ombudsperson is to be called in. In the case of other suspected violations of ethical principles, employees are free to refer the matter directly to the Ethics Committee or, in the sense of a preliminary clarification, to first contact persons or instances of their choice (e.g. department management, equal opportunity officers, PhD student representatives, staff council). Those who wish to involve the Ethics Committee should contact the ombudsperson for this purpose, who will then convene the committee. The Ethics Committee does not take over the tasks of the Ombudsperson for Scientific Misconduct, and it does not interfere with the responsibilities of the Executive Board, the Research Council and the Research Council Chair as defined in PRIF's Constitution and the Research Council Rules of Procedure.

Ethical aspects of planned research and transfer projects and other important ethical issues must always also be negotiated in the Research Council and/or the Executive Board, depending on their responsibilities. They may not be delegated to the Ethics Committee alone. However, the Executive Board and/or the Research Council may instruct the Ethics Committee to prepare a recommendation for a decision. Together with the Research Council, the Ethics Committee assumes the tasks of the Committees for Ethics in Safety-Relevant Research (KEF) required by the National Academy of Sciences and the DFG.

The Ethics Committee shall consist of four members of the following bodies:

- one representative of the employees on the Executive Board, selected by these two representatives,
- a deputy of the Research Council Chair, determined by the entire Research Council Chairmanship,
- the Ombudsperson for Scientific Misconduct or her or his alternate, as determined by themselves,
- a representative of the Staff Council, as selected by its members.

As a rule, the Ethics Committee takes decisions by consensus. If it does not reach a consensus, it decides by a majority of those present. It records its recommendations in a protocol of results, which is only accessible to the members of the Executive Board, the chair of the Research Council and the ombudspersons for scientific misconduct as well as to the person seeking advice.

The Ethics Committee may adopt rules of procedure.

Entry into force

This guideline was discussed in a staff meeting on April 19, 2018 and adopted by the Board on May 15, 2018. It comes into force on May 16, 2018, is published in the staff handbook as well as on the PRIF website and is handed out together with the employment contract, internship contract or the award of doctoral student status when starting work for the PRIF.