HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

CHARTER RELATING TO THE SCIENTIFIC INTEGRITY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTPELLIER

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Preamble

The University of Montpellier (UM) brings together a community of researchers from a wide range of disciplines who are committed to conducting high-quality research based on the fundamental values of ethics and scientific integrity.
This commitment to these higher values can be observed at every stage of the research process, from the development of fundamental or applied research to its exploitation, sharing and dissemination.
Scientific research is undergoing changes, such as internationalisation and the use of digital technology, as well as the pressure of evaluations, publication constraints and the selectivity of project funding applications. Researchers are therefore facing situations that have become complex.
The open science movement, driven by national, European, and international bodies and implemented within the UM, is also a part of the scientific research. The UM is placed at the heart of society, as a vector for innovation and progress, and maintains relations with public and private partners in terms of funding.
It therefore aims to promote the implementation of reproducible, transparent and responsible scientific practices, based on the compliance with respect for the fundamental values and principles of scientific integrity.

The statement of these values and principles derives, in particular, from Law no. 2016-483 of 20 April 2016 on the ethics and rights and obligations of civil servants, the European Charter for Researchers, the Singapore Declaration on Integrity in Research, the European Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, the National Charter of Ethics for Research Professions, the "Recommendations for the investigation of misconduct in research" of the European Network for the Scientific Integrity of Research Institutions (ENRIO) of March 2019, the European Commission Recommendation of 17 July 2012 on access to and preservation of scientific information, Law 2016- 1321 of 7 October 2016 for a Digital Republic and the 2018 National Plan for Open Science, and European Directive 511/2014 of 16 April 2014 and Law 2016- 1087 on the restoration of biodiversity, nature and landscapes.

The values and principles promoted are in line with the principles of the European "HR Excellence for Researchers" label and are part of the framework set by the European Horizon 2020 programme for research and innovation.
This Charter is part of this ethical and responsible approach. It sets out the rules and principles for conducting scientific research with integrity.

Title 1. Best practice in scientific integrity

1.1. Objectives

This Charter has several objectives:

- to promote the fundamental values of ethics and integrity in scientific research, in compliance with the legal standards, customs and professional practices in force both at national and international level;

- to promote open science practices, while protecting sensitive results and data, in compliance with the legal norms, customs and practices of each scientific discipline within the UM perimeter;

- to maintain the confidence of third parties in scientific research by adopting an attitude of individual and collective responsibility

- to prevent potential risks of breaches of integrity in scientific research ;

- to support the establishment and implementation of an internal procedure to address cases of alleged breaches of scientific integrity that is effective, fair, open to all parties and respects, on the one hand, the fundamental rights of all parties concerned and, on the other hand, the standards relating to the protection of personal data (GDPR, Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data) (see 1.4).

1.2. Definitions

1.2.1. Scientific integrity

In this Charter, scientific integrity is defined as follows:

- compliance with legal standards and current professional practices and customs relating to scientific research, both at national and international level;

- intellectual honesty in the development and implementation of a research project and at all stages of its development, dissemination and exploitation;

- fairness in access to sources, in citing sources, in determining the intellectual property, anteriority and authorship of research work, and in protecting, conserving, using and sharing the potential benefits of the data collected;

- respect for the rights of all those who contribute to the production, dissemination or re-use of research work, and for ethics in the conduct of research on humans and animals, or in the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity, in both basic and applied research, taking into account the environmental protection;

- the proper management of research funds and the guarantee of objectivity, independence and impartiality vis-à-vis funding bodies and partners;

Scientific integrity means that those involved in research have an obligation to take responsibility for the reliability of their work.

1.2.2. Types of breaches of scientific integrity

This list is only indicative and the types of breaches may change depending on the situation.

The following constitute breaches of scientific integrity:

- data fabrication;
- data falsification;
- plagiarism.

Breaches of scientific integrity may include:

- inappropriate or dubious research practices: violation of research protocols concerning experiments on human subjects, failure to preserve primary sources, in particular;
- inappropriate or dubious practices concerning publications: wrongful addition of an author's name or unjustified deletion of an author's name, deliberate or negligent refusal to mention the name of one of the publication's authors, in particular.

1.2.3. Conflict of interest

In this Charter, conflict of interest refers to any situation likely to create, for a person falling within the scope of the Charter (Cf. 1.2.4), directly or indirectly (in particular through a third party, a legal entity), a conflict or a risk of conflict between his personal, professional or financial interests and his obligations to the UM or to the funding partners, subject to the application of express legal provisions, in particular those arising from intellectual property law, the Research Code or any other special legislative or regulatory provisions.
The existence of a conflict of interest undermines the requirement for objectivity, independence and impartiality on the part of those involved in the research. It may undermine confidence in the reliability of the conduct of the research project, both in terms of the protocols followed and the results communicated.
Independence is understood in an objective sense, emphasising the absence of any legal, statutory or contractual relationship leading to subordination, whereas impartiality refers to a subjective absence of bias.
The conflict of interest may be real, where the person has a personal interest, direct or indirect, of which he is aware or should be aware and which, in the eyes of a reasonably informed person, is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality or objectivity which the member is required to exercise in the performance of his duties.
The conflict of interest may be apparent, where the person appears to have a personal interest, direct or indirect, of which he should be aware and which, in the eyes of a reasonably informed person, is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality or objectivity which the member is required to exercise in the performance of his duties.
The conflict of interest may be potential, as there is a risk that the person may have a personal interest, direct or indirect, of which he is aware or should be aware and which, in the eyes of a reasonably informed person, is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality or objectivity which the member is required to exercise in the performance of his duties.

1.2.4. Research activities concerned

In this Charter, research activities are understood to mean any activity involving the creation, elaboration and development of a project or work through fundamental or applied work, the dissemination and transfer of knowledge or technologies, and the protection, communication,

promotion or evaluation of a project.
This also includes UM activities related to research training, creation and development.

1.2.5. People concerned

Hereinafter referred to as "persons involved in research". This Charter applies to:

- persons employed by the UM;
- UM users;
- persons accommodated in facilities for which the UM is the administrator or joint administrator.

1.3. Principles of scientific integrity governing the University's research policy

All persons subject to this Charter (see 1.2.4) assume responsibility for acting in full compliance with it, while ensuring that the legal and regulatory standards, customs and professional practices in force in the relevant research discipline are applied.
They must also respect the principles set out below, which govern the UM's scientific policy with regard to the requirements of scientific integrity.

1.3.1. Intellectual honesty

When preparing a research project and at all stages of its development, dissemination and exploitation, those involved in the research must respect intellectual honesty, which is reflected, in particular, in the obligation to:

- ensure transparency in the methods used to conduct the research, the involvement of all stakeholders and the way in which the data will be collected, used and stored;

- present the protocols followed and the results of the research in a fair, accurate and open manner, objectively, and to make them available and accessible, subject in particular to the respect of intellectual property rights and the rules of confidentiality with regard to national and European legislation on the protection of personal data (European Regulation on the Protection of Personal Data);

- rigorously and transparently organise the way in which the data collected and used are archived and stored (practical procedures and storage periods in particular), so that they can be verified if necessary (for example, by using and keeping laboratory notebooks).

1.3.2. Loyalty

When preparing a research project and at all stages of its development, dissemination and exploitation, those involved in the research must comply with a requirement of loyalty, which is reflected, in particular, in the obligation to:

- guarantee access to all sources;

- faithfully and accurately cite all sources consulted and used, including those collected on the Internet, and obtain the author's permission if, for example, a previously unpublished document or work is involved, or if a legal or regulatory provision so requires;

- ensure that the intellectual property, priority and authorship of the research work are established and undertake to cite in the publication the names of all persons who have made a significant contribution to the content of the research and who assume responsibility for it, in accordance with the customs and best practice in force within the scientific community and the research discipline concerned;

- use plagiarism detection software, especially before doctoral theses are defended, and interpret the results in the light of the customs and best practices in force within the scientific community and the research discipline concerned.

1.3.3. Respect for rights and ethics

This Charter stipulates that the advancement of knowledge through research must never prevail over the well-being and integrity of the individual.
The person involved in the research must therefore respect the rights of all those who contribute to the production of the research work which is reflected, in particular, by the obligation to:

- treat all employees with dignity, respect and courtesy, even if they express different opinions, regardless of their respective hierarchical positions, and make every effort to ensure that any disputes are settled fairly;

- exclude all forms of discrimination based on age, gender, ethnic, national or social origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, language, disability, political opinion, social or economic situation, in the recruitment or management of employees;

- take all reasonable steps to assess the risks and hazards that may arise in the conduct of a research project and adopt all necessary precautions to protect the health and safety of those who participate in research, whether they contribute to its implementation or participate as subjects (particularly with regard to the Helsinki agreements).

Researchers must adopt an ethical attitude when conducting research on human subjects and using animals in basic or applied research. This means, in particular, respecting human dignity and all the provisions relating to research on human subjects by obtaining the opinion of an ethics committee and strictly complying with the requirement for free and informed consent, and, on the other hand, respecting the regulations on animal experimentation.
They must refrain from disclosing confidential information and protect any personal data they may collect for research purposes, particularly when using biobanks, which must be declared to the CNIL under the terms of Law no. 78-17 of 6 January 1978 relating to information technology, files and freedoms.

All persons involved in biodiversity research must adopt an ethical attitude and take all the necessary steps to carry out their work (declaration, authorisation, sharing contract, etc.) prior to any research and development activity, in particular in compliance with the International Conventions on Biodiversity and the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and/or Associated Traditional Knowledge and Benefit Sharing, both in France and internationally. They must therefore adopt preventive or corrective measures where necessary.

1.3.4. Open Science

The UM is firmly committed to the open science movement, which aims to create the conditions for responsible, reproducible and shared science. This commitment aims to facilitate the widest possible use of open science by all those involved in research and innovation.
The approach will be applied throughout the UM by adopting its open science plan at the Board of Directors meeting on 16 December 2019.

Those involved in the research undertake to:

- apply the requirements to make their publications and data available to the public and, in particular, when this is required by the funding agreements for the projects from which they originate;

- encourage the sharing of publications and data on the platforms recommended by the UM and in particular the HAL-UM portal for scientific publications, in accordance with the applicable legal standards , by allowing or prohibiting sharing;

- encourage any action that will enable published data to be widely re-used, in particular by setting up data management plans and adopting the FAIR principles for research data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable);

- protect any results or data requiring protection, in line with the open science principle of working "as open as possible, as close as necessary" and in accordance with the terms of the legal standards in force (GDPR, rules relating to intellectual and industrial property law in particular).

1.3.5. Objectivity, independence and impartiality

The UM intends to guarantee the reliability of the research for which it is responsible. In order to achieve this objective, those involved in research must demonstrate objectivity, independence and impartiality.

They are free to make their own decisions objectively and without prejudice, which is reflected in particular in the requirement, where they find themselves or could find themselves personally in such a situation, to:

- disclose and declare any real or apparent conflict of interest or any risk of potential conflict of interest to funding bodies and partners;

- disclose and declare any real or apparent conflict of interest or any risk of potential conflict of interest to any body or institution seeking its expertise in their area of competence.

Under the terms of Article 6 of Law 2016-1691 of 9 December 2016 on the transparency, the fight against corruption and the modernisation of economic life, a whistleblower is a natural person who discloses or reports, disinterestedly and in good faith, a crime or offence, a serious and obvious violation of an international commitment duly ratified or approved by France, a unilateral act of an international organisation taken on the basis of such a commitment, the law or regulations, or a serious threat or harm to the general interest, of which he or she has personal knowledge.

Under the terms of Law no. 2016-483 of 20 April 2016 on ethics and the rights and obligations of civil servants, Article 6 ter of the amended law of 13 July 1983 protects civil servants who disclose a situation of conflict of interest concerning a third party or issue a warning within the meaning of Article 6 of Law no. 2016-1691 of 9 December 2016. The civil servant cannot be penalised or be the subject of a direct or indirect discriminatory measure for having disclosed a situation of conflict of interest or made a report constituting a warning within the meaning of Article 6 of Law 2016-1691 of 9 December 2016, under the reporting conditions laid down by Article 8 of Law 2016-1691 of 9 December 2016 on the transparency, the fight against corruption and the modernisation of economic life.
However, any member of staff who witnesses or reports facts relating to a conflict of interest situation or any fact likely to result in disciplinary sanctions, in bad faith, with the intention of causing harm or with at least partial knowledge of the inaccuracy of the facts made public or disseminated, is liable to have the matter referred to the Disciplinary Department competent for lecturers or users by the President of the UM, and to the imposition of disciplinary sanctions, all without prejudice to legal proceedings, since they are exposed, in particular, to the imposition of the penalties provided for in Article 226-10 paragraph 1 of the Penal Code.

In order to prevent conflicts of interest for UM staff, the UM Scientific Integrity Officer may be required to work with the institution's Ethics Officer, appointed pursuant to Law no. 2016-483 of 20 April 2016 on ethics and the rights and obligations of civil servants and Decree no. 2017-519 of 10 April 2017 on the Ethics Officer, or with the UM Ethics Commission, created pursuant to Law no. 2019-486 of 22 May 2019 on the growth and transformation of businesses and Law no. 2019-828 of 6 August 2019 on the transformation of the civil service.

1.4. Mission relating to scientific integrity

A Scientific Integrity Officer is appointed by the UM President, after consultation with the Academic Council and approval by the Board of Directors.

He is the entry point for the procedure for dealing with allegations of breaches of scientific integrity within the UM.

This procedure has been drawn up in application of circular letter no. 2017- 040 of 15 March 2017 on the scientific integrity policy within higher education institutions and their groupings, research bodies, scientific cooperation foundations and institutions contributing to the public higher education and research service and the handling of cases of breaches of scientific integrity.

This procedure is also based on the Guide for collecting and processing reports relating to scientific integrity adopted by the Network of Scientific Integrity Referents on 27 November 2018, as well as on the *Vade-mecum* for handling breaches of scientific integrity for the use of heads of institutions distributed by the French Council for Scientific Integrity in June 2019.

The Academic Integrity Officer chairs the UM's Scientific Integrity Committee.
This committee is responsible for investigating procedures relating to the handling of allegations of breaches of scientific integrity in cases where the Data Protection Officer is unable to provide a response.

It is composed of three ex officio members, a Chairman and two assessors, after approval by the Research Committee and then the Board of Directors. The ex-officio members must be lecturers at the University or researchers attached to a structure for which the University of Montpellier is the principal supervisor.
They may be assisted by independent experts appointed by the Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Scientific Integrity, depending on the scientific fields investigation.
The Scientific Integrity Officer may also be consulted if requested by another university or an organisation outside the UM to take part in an investigation of an alleged breach of scientific integrity.
In general, he can be consulted at any time when a question relating to scientific integrity is likely to arise.

The UM ensures that the information collected during the procedure remains confidential.

Section 2. Final provisions

2.1. Dissemination

The UM aims to promote a culture of scientific integrity in research, applicable to all those involved in research.

For this purpose, it wishes all those involved in research, training for and through research and development activities to be involved in the dissemination of this Charter.
The UM ensures that the provisions of this Charter are made available and circulated to all those concerned, and conducts an information policy relating to scientific integrity. This information and awareness-raising is relayed across all departments via their directors.
The Charter must be appended to the internal regulations of all research-related structures.
The heads of teams, research structures, doctoral schools and platforms disseminate training and information on scientific integrity within their units. Doctoral students are made aware of and receive specific training in the prevention of conflicts of interest and research integrity.
All persons engaged in research (see 1.2.4) have an obligation to inform themselves about the rules relating to scientific integrity when they are involved in a process of creation, dissemination or exploitation.
The Charter does not replace the legislative and regulatory texts in force or the UM's internal regulations; it supplements these provisions.

2.2. Application of the Charter

The Vice-President in charge of research is responsible for applying this Charter and updating it.

2.3. Entry into force of the Charter

Effective following their adoption by the Board of Directors on 30 January 2017 after consultation with the Academic Council, these revisions and amendments to the Charter will come into force following their adoption by the Board of Directors on 16 November 2020 after consultation with the Academic Council.

I, the undersigned,.....hereby declare that I have read the terms and conditions and undertake to
respect the various provisions of the Charter relating to scientific integrity at the UM.

Date and signature: