



Academic integrity and good academic practice

Bern University of Applied Sciences Guidelines

Approved by the University Executive Board on 19 November 2019.

Research at the Bern University of Applied Sciences (BFH) develops innovative solutions for society and contributes to the discussion of social values. It is therefore important that the BFH communicates to researchers and society its expectations with regard to academic integrity and good scholarly practice. The Guidelines were developed in conjunction with other Swiss universities and the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.

Fundamentals

Freedom

Researchers are free to select their research objectives and methods within the constraints of the guidelines on content and strategy of the relevant research institutions which in turn observe the ethical boundaries of research freedom.

Transparency and openness

Research is based on the development and exchange of knowledge; for this reason, it must be reproducible and capable of withstanding close scrutiny. Transparency and openness both within the research community and outwardly towards society in general are essential for honest and good research.

Social responsibility

Researchers are aware of the social framework within which they act. They consider the potential consequences of their research work for society and the environment. They are prepared to take part in discussions with the public at large.

Centres of learning

As a learning organisation is part of good scientific and scholarly practice in the BFH for research to be linked to teaching, further education and service.

Do's...

Research projects

Compliance with legal and institutional regulations



Researchers comply with the relevant provisions of law as well as all with additional regulations and instructions issued by the BFH¹ and any funding agencies. These provisions and regulations include the Swiss Human Research Act² (*Humanforschungsgesetz*) as well as data protection regulations³.

The Project Managers' obligations

Project Managers play an active part in the management and encouragement of the next generation of scientists and academics. They ensure that all persons involved in the project are aware of the relevant guidelines.

Rights applicable to externally funded projects

Rights to the research results are defined before the start of research projects which receive external funding. Contractual agreements are concluded with the project partners for this purpose.

Conflicts of Interest

All researchers investigate the possibility of conflicts of interest before embarking on a project. Conflicts of interest relating to the content of the research and their personal interests are disclosed to the project managers, the project partners and funding organisations as well as to the persons in charge of research in the departments involved.

Data management

Data collection and documentation

Researchers are responsible for the accuracy of the data they collect. They document all process steps relating to the primary data (statistical analyses, conversions, etc.) in a form commensurate with the discipline in question (e.g. laboratory journal)⁴. This ensures that the results obtained from the primary data can be reproduced.

Archiving

Researchers file and protect data⁵ in such a way that access to it is assured if it is needed for later use or verification. Data which may only be accessed by a restricted group of people must be marked as such and archived in a suitable manner.

Responsibility

Project Managers are responsible for all data management. They also ensure that after the end of the project data and materials remain archived for the period which is standard for the area of expertise and, if applicable, are destroyed within the period stipulated by law.

Publications

Publication requirement

Research results are made publicly accessible unless interests of confidentiality or contractual obligations dictate to the contrary. It is customary to make the necessary information available after publication if third parties wish to repeat and review the scientific investigations.

Open access

¹ These can be found at <https://intranet.bfh.ch/BFH/de/Dienste/Rechtsdienst/Rechtsgrundlagen/Seiten/default.aspx>

² <https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/20061313/index.html>

³ <https://www.admin.ch/opc/de/classified-compilation/19920153/index.html>

⁴ Cf. the FAIR principles for scientific data: <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

⁵ E.g. in data repositories, see <https://www.re3data.org/> or <https://www.openaire.eu/opendatapilot-repository-guide>.



BFH researchers publish their work on the BFH's own repository as far as possible using open access principles, while also complying with the requirements defined in the BFH's open access policy.

Integral publication

Research results are published as integral publications, i.e. publication does not take the form of several partial publications if the sole purpose is to achieve an increase in the number of published titles.

Naming of authors

All persons are named as authors⁶ in the scientific publications if they made a material scholarly contribution to the planning, execution, control or evaluation of the research work, were involved in the preparation of the manuscript and approved the final version of the manuscript. The importance of authors must be apparent to outsiders from the sequence in which the authors are presented. If this is not governed by the rules of the journal, footnotes or the acknowledgement can be used for this purpose⁷.

Vested interests and funding

Scientific publications which are the result of contract research must clearly disclose all the vested interests and sources of funding of the relevant research mandate.

Responsibility

The Project Manager is responsible for the accuracy of the content of the publication. The additional authors are responsible for the accuracy of the conclusions which they can verify by virtue of their position in the project group.

Reviewing

Readiness to act as reviewers

BFH researchers are prepared to act as reviewers for grants of external funding, peer review, selection processes and other evaluations. In such cases they treat all the information they are called on to review as confidential if the process is not one of open peer review, and do not make personal use of the research information in question. Assessments must be free from prejudice, scientifically based, constructive and completed on time.

Conflicts of Interest

Enquiries relating to the review of research work which is in direct competition to the potential reviewer's own work, and enquiries requesting the review of work of persons with whom the potential reviewer has a close relationship, must be declined (bias). If need be, the conflict of interest represented by the enquiry can be disclosed to the client so that the latter is in a position to withdraw the enquiry.

DON'TS...

Falsification of research results

⁶ In this context "authors" also includes editors or editorial boards.

⁷ Cf. "Authorship in scientific publications – analysis and recommendations" (*Autorenschaft bei wissenschaftlichen Publikationen – Analyse und Empfehlungen*), Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences



Good research is based on transparency and openness. Therefore, research results may not be fabricated, enhanced, concealed or edited in any other way to obtain the required outcome of the research in place of the actual knowledge gained.

Misrepresentation of research efforts

Research normally also means competing for limited resources in a situation of intellectual rivalry. Therefore, research results, ideas, data, etc. may not be presented as the work of a single person if the results were generated by others. This includes both plagiarism, courtesy opinions or the inclusion of names of persons in the list of authors who have not made a significant contribution to the publication.

Waste of research funds

Research is financed by third parties; these may be the public purse or scientific interests. The funds available must therefore not be used in a wasteful and inappropriate manner.