

CODE OF ETHICS AND CONDUCT

Institució CERCA



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2. INTRODUCTION

The Fundació Institució dels Centres de Recerca de Catalunya (I-CERCA) and the CERCA centres are committed to promoting research excellence, with the ultimate aim of transferring this knowledge to society. For this to be possible, research must be grounded from the outset in the guiding principles of respect for human rights, equal treatment and non-discrimination, a gender and intersectional perspective, scientific integrity and the improvement of society's quality of life.

Furthermore, the entire CERCA system forms part of the public sector of the Generalitat de Catalunya. This requires higher self-imposed standards regarding conduct and compliance with ethical principles, to ensure the advancement of society as a whole through knowledge, science and respect for democratic principles.

This Code of Ethics and Conduct also draws on the principles established in the European Charter for Researchers, the European Commission's Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers and Law 9/2022 of 21 December on science. These provisions, together with the entire body of applicable Catalan legislation and this Code of Ethics and Conduct, establish the legal, working and behavioural framework that must guide and inspire the activities of professionals at the CERCA centres and I-CERCA, as well as the overall activities of these centres and institutions.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This Code of Ethics and Conduct applies to all staff and collaborators of the CERCA centres and I-CERCA, regardless of their category or professional field.

The obligations inherent in this Code of Ethics and Conduct shall be assumed by each centre through the signatures of its directors and managers, and this commitment shall be understood to extend, on a subsidiary basis, to all staff of the relevant centre.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

I. Protection and safeguarding of human and democratic rights.

I-CERCA, the CERCA centres and all their own and affiliated staff are committed to protecting, safeguarding and extending human and democratic rights. The entire CERCA system also undertakes to incorporate the safeguarding of these rights as a cross-cutting perspective in its work duties and responsibilities.

All members of the CERCA system have the right not to be discriminated against on the grounds of place of birth, racial or ethnic origin, ideology, language, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, age, disability, socioeconomic status or any other personal or social circumstance, subject only to respecting democratic rules.

The conduct of all members of the CERCA system must comply with democratic rules, with the utmost respect for differences and acceptance of disagreement in interpersonal relationships at the CERCA centres.

Those responsible for the centres and members of the CERCA system must protect and safeguard the right to equality and respect for diversity, and take the necessary measures to prevent discrimination, intolerance or obstacles to free debate within the CERCA centres.

II. Scientific integrity, good practice and research ethics.

The principal purpose of the CERCA centres is research excellence and its impact on society. Under no circumstances may these objectives conflict with respect for and protection of democratic rights and principles.

Research staff at the CERCA centres shall work to conduct research with the integrity required of a centre of international excellence, avoiding any form of scientific malpractice. They must also ensure that all research data and results are accurate, verifiable and honestly presented.

In carrying out their activities, the CERCA centres and their research staff shall ensure the application of good practice based on the fundamental principles of research integrity set out in "The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity",

published by ALLEA¹ and adopted, among others, by the European Commission. These principles include:

- Reliability in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in its design, methodology, analysis and use of resources.
- Honesty in developing, conducting, reviewing, presenting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, complete and impartial manner.
- Respect for colleagues, research participants, research subjects, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- Accountability for research from conception to publication, for its management and organisation; for training, supervision and mentoring; and for its wider societal impacts.

All scientific research at the CERCA centres shall strictly comply with applicable legislation on industrial and intellectual property.

All management and research staff shall declare any potential conflicts of interest that may influence research or the performance of their leadership or management duties.

¹ The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Revised Edition 2023. ALLEA | All European Academies, Berlin 2023.

II. Equal treatment and non-discrimination.

I-CERCA and all CERCA centres must ensure equal opportunities for all their own and affiliated staff and uphold equity in the treatment of individuals and the distribution of resources.

The entire CERCA system shall promote respectful work without discrimination in an environment free from abusive, hostile or offensive behaviour, tolerating no discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity, nationality, social origin, age, sex, sexual orientation or gender identity, marital status, political opinions or trade union membership, religion or any other personal, physical or social condition.

All professional malpractice involving abuses of power shall also be avoided, such as expressing an interest in establishing sexual or romantic relationships with people in subordinate positions, whether in academic or management settings.

The governing bodies and those responsible for the CERCA centres must establish appropriate measures to prevent discrimination and ensure equal respect for the merits and competence of each of their members.

IV. Gender equity and incorporation of a feminist perspective.

I-CERCA, the CERCA centres and all their members must work to incorporate a feminist perspective into their work and their relationships with all internal and external staff working at the centres. Activities and training shall be promoted to incorporate a feminist perspective and foster gender equity within the organisations.

The entire CERCA system shall work to introduce appropriate measures to ensure workplace health and safety, offer safe and stable working conditions, and promote shared responsibility for care through measures supporting work–life balance, by establishing reasonable working schedules that support a balance between personal and family life. In particular, work–life balance measures must adopt a gender and feminist perspective, including respect for maternity, paternity and breastfeeding leave.

All these measures shall be developed with the aim of removing glass ceilings, also eliminating gender bias in the remuneration of professional categories and implementing affirmative action and positive discrimination measures aimed at reducing pay gaps, vertical and horizontal segregation and the gender scissors effect.

Those responsible for I-CERCA and the CERCA centres shall work to implement and raise awareness of the strategy for gender equality in science.

V. Safeguarding linguistic rights.

As members of the public sector of the Generalitat de Catalunya, I-CERCA, the CERCA centres and all their own and affiliated staff shall promote Catalan as the normal and habitual language of the centres, as Catalonia's own language.

The entire CERCA system undertakes to manage multilingualism in research centres appropriately and sustainably, safeguarding linguistic rights at all times in accordance with applicable legislation, with particular attention to protecting Catalan as Catalonia's own official language, Occitan as Aran's own language and an official language in Catalonia, and Catalan Sign Language (LSC) as the language of Catalonia's signing communities.

The CERCA centres and I-CERCA itself shall work to safeguard linguistic rights, also with the aim of democratising access to scientific output in different languages and promoting citizen science.

Those responsible for I-CERCA and the CERCA centres undertake to publicise and comply with the objectives and measures established in the Plan to strengthen the Catalan language in Catalonia's university and research system and the Guide for developing criteria for managing multilingualism in research centres.

Those responsible for I-CERCA and the CERCA centres undertake to promote the learning and use of Catalan, as well as awareness of the country's linguistic context.

VI. Transparency, open science and improvement of society's quality of life.

I-CERCA, the CERCA centres and all their affiliated and own staff are committed to improving the quality of life of Catalan society, enabling citizens to be producers, subjects and users of the knowledge generated.

To achieve these objectives, the CERCA centres and their own and affiliated research staff shall work to ensure the generation of data aligned with the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable), promote citizen science and help build society's capacity to participate in the research process.

The entire CERCA system shall promote transparency and accountability throughout the scientific process and across all its activities as principles and tools that promote and facilitate knowledge transfer and dialogue with society.

The entire CERCA system shall work to implement and apply the measures and objectives established in Catalonia's Strategic Plan for Innovation and Knowledge Transfer and the Catalan Open Science Strategy, always in accordance with the principles upheld by the UNESCO Recommendation on Open Science.

VII. Ethics in the use of artificial intelligence.

I-CERCA, the CERCA centres and all their own and affiliated staff must be aware of and comply with the obligations arising from the Artificial Intelligence Act and Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC.

All members of staff in the CERCA system who use artificial intelligence tools shall work to understand, incorporate and raise awareness of the guiding principles of existing legislation, particularly regarding transparency and explainability, justice and equity, safety and non-maleficence, responsibility and protection of intellectual property, accountability, privacy, autonomy and sustainability.

All members of the CERCA system shall work to pay particular attention to protecting human rights, equal treatment and non-discrimination in the development, supply, marketing and use of artificial intelligence.

Those responsible for I-CERCA and the CERCA centres shall work in collaboration with the competent bodies and experts to train and build the capacity of their staff in the development, supply, marketing and ethical use of artificial intelligence.

5. IMPLEMENTATION AND COMPLIANCE

The leadership of I-CERCA and the directors and managers of the CERCA centres must sign their own and their organisations' commitment to this code when they take up their responsibilities.

Management staff at the CERCA centres and I-CERCA, together with staff responsible for training, where such staff exist, shall work to raise awareness of this code of ethics and the principles that inspire it.

Each centre's governing body and the signatories to this Code of Ethics and Conduct shall ensure compliance with it.

This code of ethics shall be reviewed periodically to ensure its applicability and effectiveness in response to current challenges and circumstances in Catalonia's research system and, specifically, in the CERCA centres system.

CERCA's 7 commitments to ethics and good conduct.

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II. Scientific integrity, good practice and research ethics.

III. Equal treatment and non-discrimination.

IV. Gender equity and incorporation of a feminist perspective.

V. Safeguarding linguistic rights.

VI. Transparency, open science and improvement of society's quality of life.

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