

Guidelines on Issues of Academic Integrity and Research Ethics

Version: September 2025

1 General Information

- ABU is committed to the standards of academic integrity as set out in the BMBWF's [Best Practice Guide for Research Integrity and Ethics](#).
- ABU is accountable to society. Research funds are used exclusively in accordance with the research objective, and their use is documented in full. Research processes and results are made publicly available and published via appropriate media in the interests of societal integration.
- Researchers treat the subjects of their work with respect and care. They recognize and take into account the idiosyncrasies of people of different ages, genders, ethnicities, and religious affiliations and cultivate a climate of social inclusion.
- ABU is committed to promoting young talent and ensures appropriate conditions in teaching and research. The principle of equal treatment practiced at ABU explicitly extends to the field of research.
- The standards of academic integrity are communicated to young academics in teaching and are strictly enforced. The university as a whole promotes a climate of academic integrity by not trivialising breaches of integrity principles, even at lower academic qualification levels, by investigating substantiated reports of such breaches, and by not tolerating manifest academic misconduct or deliberately false accusations in this regard.
- Academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, feigning academic achievements, fabricating and falsifying data and results, and obstructing and sabotaging research activities) will not be tolerated among researchers associated with the ABU.
- For extensive research projects, ABU ensures appropriate data management and the storage and curation of data and materials as well as their accessibility for an appropriate period of time, or enables corresponding services to be provided by third parties. Access to research data

and materials is ensured (while guaranteeing the necessary data and privacy rights) in accordance with the FAIR principles (findable, accessible, interoperable, re-usable). Possibilities and conditions for the use of research data and materials, as well as any restrictions, are openly disclosed and handled consistently (i.e. without distinction of person).

2 Information for Researchers

2.1 General Guidelines

- Research takes into account existing relevant knowledge and expands upon it using state-of-the-art methods.
- Researchers ensure the greatest possible transparency with regard to the sources used, the methods and procedures applied, and the research results. All of these are documented, published or stored appropriately and made accessible in such a way that the results are comprehensible to third parties and the research process as a whole is in principle repeatable.
- In research projects that involve data collection from test subjects and study participants, it must be ensured that the implementation, evaluation and interpretation are carried out independently of any influence by the experimenter. The study must be replicable and the data collected must correspond to the research questions (or, conversely, the conclusions must correspond to the significance of the data). Randomised procedures should be preferred when obtaining samples. If randomisation is not possible or appropriate, the reasons for this must be explicitly stated and the consequences for the generalisability of the study must be reflected upon.
- All newly collected research data and materials (provided they are relevant to the research question and are not purely exploratory in nature) shall be documented and disclosed in accordance with subject-specific conventions. Research data and materials are recognised as (partial or interim) results of research work; upon publication, authors transfer their sole right of access and use to the research community.
- Arguments and interpretations, as well as their positioning within the current discourse, are presented precisely, transparently and as unambiguously as possible. Where applicable, approaches that contradict one's own research should also be taken into account.

- The discursive reference to the current state of research is ensured in the presentation of the research work by means of citations and references in a manner established in the respective discipline. In the interests of fairness and transparency, the originators of texts, data, images, notes, audiovisual media, etc. are acknowledged and the respective independent contribution of the researcher is made clear.
- In particular, texts and results, as well as research procedures and ideas of others, are identified by citing the original publications, insofar as they are relevant to one's own work. The same applies to the use of one's own previously published (or submitted to academic institutions) works, the texts of which are used exclusively in the form of self-citations, which are identified accordingly.
- Publications that are not used are not cited (or, at most, are cited in the sense of further references). References that are not necessary for the argument (in particular unnecessary self-citations) are avoided.
- The use of third-party material is carried out within the scope of the freedom to quote (§ 42f Par. 1 (1) and (5) *Urheberrechtsgesetz* [Austrian Copyright Law]) in compliance with applicable copyright, ancillary copyright, personal rights and data protection regulations.

2.2 Information on Cooperative Projects

- In cooperative projects, agreements on the application of academic integrity policies and dispute resolution procedures in the event of conflicts are concluded in advance. In the case of cooperation between different institutions, these agreements are set out in writing, whereby the stricter policies are generally to be applied and, in particular, justified deviations from this principle require the most unambiguous agreement possible.
- In the case of publications resulting from collaborative projects, all those involved who have made conceptual contributions to the research design, played a decisive role in the collection or procurement of research data and materials, and/or contributed substantially to their analysis or interpretation should be named as authors. Agreements on the order of the contributors or the additional naming of other collaborators (e.g. in the area of editorial assistance) must be concluded in accordance with the principle of fairness and, if possible, recorded in advance. Authors are named in the title pages, other contributors are named in the title pages or imprint; mere mentions in forewords and the like are not sufficient as acknowledgements in the sense understood here.

- Project leaders shall ensure that all authors agree to the publication (in its final version). All authors thus assume responsibility for the published content. Any distancing of individual authors from individual content must be explicitly stated in the publication.

2.3 Information on Research on and with Third Parties (Ethics Guidelines)

- Enumeration Research at ABU on and with human subjects is committed to the fundamental ethical principles of *voluntariness*, *non-maleficence*, *care* and *fairness*.
- In the spirit of *voluntariness* and respect for self-determination, study participants' involvement is based on the principles of *informed consent*. Study leaders are responsible for providing appropriate information and obtaining qualified consent. The relevant participant information follows a specified basic pattern, but must be adapted to the specific requirements of the respective study.
- The decision made in the context of the respective study as to how individual results, data from surveys, interviews, experiments and the like will be handled must be communicated to the respective study participants before the start of the study in order to avoid misunderstandings in advance.
- Study leaders are responsible for ensuring that no harm (the principle of *non-malevolence*) is done to humans, animals or the environment. Psychological and physical risks that exceed those expected in everyday life (e.g. in the field of dance) must be weighed. Potential social risks arising from a violation of privacy must be prevented. Data must be anonymised or pseudonymised, and strict compliance with data protection regulations must be ensured for the future through appropriate data management.
- In accordance with the principle of *care*, the effort and risks involved for study participants should ideally be compensated in the form of a concrete benefit for the person concerned. In addition to financial compensation for study participation and other extrinsic rewards (incentives), there may be the following potential benefits of participation: the satisfaction of (1) curiosity or (2) individual altruistic needs, (3) self-insight and self-knowledge, and (4) improved understanding of science.
- Participation in a research study does not necessarily mean that participants will derive any directly usable benefit from their participation; there is no legal entitlement to such benefits. Participants must be informed in advance and honestly about the expected ratio of effort to

benefit; disinformation in this regard and the fuelling of unrealistic expectations regarding individual benefits for participants must be forborne.

- The relationship between effort and compensation must also be considered from the standpoint of *fairness*. In order to satisfy this principle, (a) equal treatment of participants within a sample, (b) equal treatment of groups of study participants, and (c) fair potential use of the research must also be observed and documented.
- Methodological decisions (such as the type of sampling and its representativeness) must be presented transparently. Inclusion and exclusion criteria for study participation must be documented explicitly, as must the type and method of sampling.
- Particular attention must be paid to the fundamental equal treatment of intervention and control groups in intervention studies. Therefore, members of untreated control groups must be given access to the intervention (waiting control group). Allocation to intervention or control groups should be randomised wherever possible in order to promote fairness and minimise selection effects. The procedure for allocation to the intervention and control groups must be clearly communicated to the study participants in advance during the explanatory session. Any questions from study participants must be answered accordingly. Study participants have the right to withdraw their consent to participate in the study at any time and to discontinue their participation without suffering any negative consequences.

3 Information for Students (BA-/MA- Degree Programmes)

- Student papers and theses in Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes are subject to the same rules of good scholarly practice (as mentioned above). When assessing their mastery and application, the expected learning progress at the respective qualification level is taken into account.
- The working techniques necessary for compliance with good scholarly practice are taught in the "Wissenschaftliches Arbeiten [Academic Work]" proseminars, practised in seminars and deepened in the colloquia for Bachelor's and Master's theses with regard to self-selected questionings.

- In academic works, essential data, facts and arguments are substantiated by precise and specific references so that they are comprehensible and verifiable. General references or mere lists of sources do not fulfil this purpose.
- All sources used, including images, sheet music, audio, video and material sources, must be cited. The use of any sources must be made transparent and verifiable by applying the citation rules customary in the respective discipline. The citation methods used must be agreed with the instructors of the respective courses or, in the case of final theses, with the supervisors.
- The literature used must itself comply with the criteria of good scholarly practice and should be as up-to-date as possible. Non-academic texts (e.g. newspaper articles, booklets, etc.) may only be used as primary sources; tertiary literature (e.g. encyclopaedias, handbooks, textbooks, etc.) is generally only suitable for use as evidence in introductory and contextualising sections of text, but not as the main source for central discussions.
- The use of third-party material must comply with applicable copyright, ancillary copyright, personal rights and data protection regulations and may only be used within the scope of freedom of quotation (§ 42f Par. 1 (1) and (5) *Urheberrechtsgesetz* [Austrian Copyright Law]) if the rules on quotation are correctly applied; otherwise, the legal protection afforded by freedom of quotation shall not apply.
- Intellectual property infringement and false attribution of authorship to third-party texts (plagiarism) constitute academic misconduct and will not be tolerated. Intentional plagiarism will result in a negative assessment of the work and a report to the relevant dean's office.
- Unauthorized presumption of authorship also occurs when assistance provided by mutual consent is not declared, provided that this assistance relates to the substantive content of the text (ghostwriting). Conceptual guidance is reserved for official supervisors (or assistants appointed by them).
- The use of AI-based electronic aids (e.g. ChatGPT) is also prohibited if they are used to generate content and texts under the pretence of one's own authorship. The use of such tools is permitted exclusively in a heuristic manner (e.g. brainstorming, research) and in a transformative manner (e.g. translation, stylistic optimisation, data analysis, etc.), whereby both uses must be disclosed. Students bear full responsibility for the authorship of texts generated under their name. Instructors and examination boards are entitled to subsequently

request proof of authorship and origin of individual specific statements. Failure to provide such proof may be considered a sign of academic dishonesty.

- The requirements for final theses are set out in the guidelines for BA/MA theses and can be found in the currently valid version of the ABU website under [Final Thesis](#). The details are to be agreed with the supervisors in the colloquium or Privatissimum. The primary supervisor shall take precedence, unless the supervisors have agreed otherwise in advance regarding the division of supervisory duties.