

# Operating Regulations of the Research Integrity Committee of the University of Córdoba



**PLiN**  
PLAN DE INTEGRIDAD  
EN LA INVESTIGACIÓN



UNIVERSIDAD  
DE CÓRDOBA

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Agreement of the Governing Council at its ordinary session of 3 March 2017, approving the Operating Regulations of the Research Integrity Committee of the University of Cordoba.

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# PREAMBLE

In its session of 20 December 2013, the Governing Council of the University of Córdoba approved the *Code of Responsible Practices and Integrity in Research of the University of Córdoba* (hereinafter, the Code). This Code has been subject to specific amendments approved by a resolution of said Governing Council adopted at its meeting of 18 December 2015. The full and current text of this Code was published in the *Official Gazette of the University of Córdoba* (BOUCO) of 19 December 2015.

The Code provides for the establishment and operation of a *Research Integrity Committee* (hereinafter, the Committee). In particular, the Committee, as defined in the Code, is a body of the University of Córdoba, associated for administrative purposes with the Vice-Rectorate of Research, constituted freely and voluntarily by researchers of the University of Córdoba, whose purpose is to assess and evaluate the ethical aspects of scientific research and the training of researchers. It acts independently, at the service of the University of Córdoba as an institution, as well as of its research staff, with the sole purpose of supporting the quality of the research carried out at the University of Córdoba and of promoting, preserving and protecting its integrity.

The basic rules of the Committee are contained in chapter F of the Code. One of them refers to the drafting of Operating Rules (hereinafter, *Rules*), a task that is the responsibility of the Committee itself, without prejudice to its subsequent approval by the University's Governing Council. Once the first Committee was established, on 4 October 2016, it set for itself the prerequisite of preparing a set of Rules that, in accordance with the Code, regulate its functions, composition, organization, operation, performance, resolutions and other relevant issues.





# Article 1

## ( FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEE

**1.1.** The Committee, which enforces the principles and best practices contained in the Code, has the general function of contributing to the good governance of research and its integrity at the University of Córdoba.

**1.2.** Specifically, the Committee:

**a) Reports** on the disputes that may arise in relation to the research aspects contained in the Code, proposing a solution to them.

**b) Facilitates** communication between the parties affected or involved in the disputes referred to in letter a) and *assists them* in achieving, in compliance with the Code, an early and amicable settlement thereof.

**c) Advises** on the interpretation and application of the Code.

**d) Promueve** la integridad en la investigación y las buenas prácticas científicas mediante la incorporación del Código a los programas de formación de investigadores y la difusión del mismo a la comunidad científica.

**e) Promotes** integrity in research and good scientific practices by incorporating the Code into training programs for researchers and disseminating it to the scientific community.

**1.3.** No son funciones del Comité las que son propias del Comité de Bioética y Bioseguridad de la Universidad de Córdoba.

# Article 2

## ( SCOPE OF THE FUNCTIONS

**1.1. Ratione personae.** Subject to the Code, the Committee exercises its functions:

**a)** With regard to the University of Córdoba as an institution, as well as to its own and affiliated centres, departments and research structures.

**b)** With regard to all the research staff of the University of Córdoba, whether they be directors of research projects, researchers linked to these projects, researchers in general, individuals in training or any other person associated with research.

**c)** With regard to any person, research structure or external organization associated with, or legitimately affected by, the research carried out at the University of Córdoba.

**1.2. Ratione materiae.** The Committee exercises the functions provided for in Article 1. Its competences are limited to research activity, and does not pertain to the choice of subjects and topics of research or methodologies, adherence to theories or currents of thought, or inappropriate or illegal behaviors involving areas other than research.

**1.3. Ratione loci.** The Committee exercises its functions with respect to the investigative behaviors that are within its competence, regardless of the place where they manifest or occur.

**1.4. Ratione temporis.** The Committee exercises its functions with respect to the investigative conduct within its competence that has manifested itself or occurred after the entry into force of these Rules.

# Article 3

## ( COMPOSITION

**3.1. Members.** The Committee consists of seven members, all of them researchers at the University of Córdoba with a proven background in research.

Five of these members have at least four six-year research periods granted by the CNEAI. Each member has expertise in one of the following five macro-areas, such that all of them are represented: art and humanities, exact and natural sciences, health sciences, social and legal sciences and engineering and architecture. However, if in any of these macro-areas there are no researchers with the required six-year terms, the *vacancies* are filled with researchers belonging to the others in proportion to the number of them in those areas, avoiding the presence of more than two from one macro-area.

The remaining two members, who do not belong to the same macro-area and who do not have the six-year terms referred to in the previous paragraph, are widely renowned within the university community.

In the overall composition of the Committee, efforts are made to ensure that there are no more than two members from each macro-area.

The University Ombudsman and the Legal Counsel may be invited to the meetings at the discretion of the Committee Chairperson, where they can speak but not vote.

**3.2. Incompatibilities.** To guarantee their independence, the members of the Committee may not hold the academic positions of Rector, Vice-Rector, Dean or Director, or be a member of the governance team of the University or any of its centers. They may also not be a member of the Governing Council of the University or of any research committee at the University of Córdoba.

When any Committee member belongs to the same department or the same research group as the person or persons involved in the matter presented, or when this may involve a *conflict of interest*, they shall refrain from participating in the case throughout its duration.

**3.3. Recusal.** Any Committee member may be challenged in accordance with the provisions of section 6.d of chapter E of the Code and the applicable administrative rules.

**3.4. Delegation and replacement.** No Committee member may delegate their functions or be replaced at the Committee meetings.

**3.5. Election.** Committee members are elected by a qualified majority of the faculty of the University, at least 60% of whom must be present and vote. The Governing Council, at the proposal of the Vice-Rector responsible for the research, proposes the appropriate procedures with the aim of building the maximum trust and credibility of the university community in the members of the Committee.

**3.6. Renewal.** Half of the Committee members shall be renewed every two years, and may be re-elected only once.

# Article 4

## ( ORGANIZATION

**4.1.** The Committee is structured into a President, a Vice-President, four Members and a Secretary.

**4.2.** The Presidency is exercised by the oldest member of the Committee, who must have at least four six-year research periods.

**4.3.** The Vice-President and the Secretary are elected by the Committee by a simple majority of its members. In the event of a tie, the President has a casting vote.

**4.4.** The Rectorate of the University provides the Committee with the technical and administrative support necessary for the proper exercise of its functions.

# Article 5

## ( OPERATION

**5.1.** The Committee meets whenever required to fulfill its functions, or at the request of the Vice-Rectorate responsible for research.

**5.2.** Attendance at Committee meetings is a non-delegable and non-transferable right and obligation of each of its members.

**5.3.** The ordinary and special meetings of the Committee are convened, at the request of the President, through the Secretary of the Committee. Ordinary meetings, held at least once a year, are convened at least four working days in advance, and special meetings, 48 hours. The latter are convened for urgent matters related to compliance with the Code and may be requested from the President by at least three Committee members, in which case the President is required to convene them.

**5.4.** The meeting announcement contains an *agenda* of the matters to be discussed. The agenda for ordinary meetings includes the approval, if appropriate, of the minutes of the previous meeting, the report from the President, urgent and procedural matters, if any, and a last point dedicated to motions and questions, and it indicates the maximum duration of the meeting. The Secretary sends out the announcement and a copy of the relevant documentation. If its volume prevents it, it specifies a place where said documentation can be consulted.

**5.5.** The Committee operates in plenary and in subcommittees, although all its decisions are adopted by the plenary. The existence and specific mandate of the subcommittees are decided by the plenary. These subcommittees consist of at least three members. The plenary may at any time request information on the matters being handled by the subcommittees.

**5.6.** When warranted by the subject in question, the Committee is advised by the individuals it deems appropriate, especially those who have expertise in the subject. If no Committee member belongs to the macro-area affected by the issue, this advisement is mandatory.

**5.7.** The quorum for plenary ordinary and special meetings of the Committee is at least four members, which must necessarily be attended by the President (or Vice-President, as appropriate) and the Secretary. However, if the Secretary is unable to attend or must be recused due to an incompatibility or disqualification, they are replaced in their functions by the youngest member of those present.

**5.8.** Committee members who, for justified reasons, are unable to attend a meeting, may express their opinions in writing on the items on the agenda so they can be relayed to the plenary for its information.

# Article 6

## ( ACTIONS

**6.1. Preliminary actions.** The Committee, insofar as possible, strives to establish communication between the parties affected or involved in the conflicts that arise, assisting them to arrive, in compliance with the Code, at a prompt and amicable settlement thereof without the need to formally adopt a resolution in this regard.

**6.2. Confidentiality.** The deliberations and outcome of the Committee's votes are secret. Both the Committee members and any experts it may call upon are committed to confidentiality, which will be confirmed in writing at the start of their involvement.

**6.3. Impartiality.** As established in Article 3, when any Committee member belongs to the same department or same research group as the person affected by the matter presented, or when this may involve a *conflict of interest*, they will refrain from participating in the case throughout its duration. Any possible conflict of interest is reported to the President or the Secretary so the plenary can deliberate on it in order to guarantee the Committee's independence.

**6.4. Anonymity.** The personal data used by the Committee, the people who communicate with it and the persons affected by the actions taken remain anonymous.

**6.5. Rigorous information.** The Committee ensures that the information it uses when handling cases is complete and reliable.

# Article 7

## ( RESOLUTIONS

**7.1.** The Committee's resolutions are adopted by consensus. If a consensus cannot be reached, it decides by a simple majority vote expressed by a show of hands. In the event of a tie, the President has a casting vote.

**7.2.** Those Committee resolutions that affect the *disputes* that are brought before it are considered advisory, and are submitted to the Vice-Rector responsible for the research, who will communicate them to the interested parties and proceed as appropriate.

**7.3.** Committee resolutions are only modified, when appropriate, by the Committee itself at the request of the persons involved or of the Vice-Rector responsible for the research. In the request made by both these individuals and the aforementioned Vice-Rector, the reasons that support said modification will be justified.



# Article 8

## ( COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMITTEE

**8.1.** Those interested in contacting the Committee can do so through the electronic address provided for this purpose on the *website* of the University of Córdoba, which is adequately disseminated to the scientific community for its information.

**8.2.** Before formally submitting a conflict to the Committee, the person or persons who intend to do so should request a personal and informal meeting with one of its members, who are obliged, as established in Article 6, to handle the issue with confidentiality and anonymity. Failure by any Committee member to comply with this obligation implies their termination by the Vice-Rector in charge of the research.

# Article 9

## ( MINUTES

**9.1.** The Committee Secretary draws up the minutes of each ordinary or special meeting, listing the names of the attendees, the agenda, the circumstances of the time and place where it was held, and specifying the main aspects of the deliberations held, as well as the content of the resolutions adopted.

**9.2.** The minutes are approved at the next ordinary meeting, although the Secretary may issue a certification on the specific resolutions that were adopted. Any certifications of resolutions adopted that are issued prior to the approval of the minutes shall expressly state this circumstance.



# Article 10

## ( ARCHIVING AND DOCUMENTATION

**10.1.** The meeting minutes, together with all the documentation generated by the Committee's activity, are deposited in an archive provided for this purpose by the General Secretariat.

**10.2.** This archive can only be consulted by Committee members.

**10.3.** To facilitate their location, an identification record is assigned to all documents (date of receipt and order number).

**10.4.** The archiving and documentation work is the responsibility of the Committee's Secretary.

# Article 11

## ( REPORT

Every year, the Committee, at the proposal of the Secretary, approves a report of its activities, which it submits to the Vice-Rectorate in charge of research for the information, if it deems it appropriate, of the University's Governing Council.

# Article 12

## ( ENTRY INTO FORCE

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following its publication in the Official Gazette of the University of Córdoba (BOUCO).





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