

BASIC TERMS

„ACADEMIC INTEGRITY“



1) What is ‘Academic Integrity’?

A person with academic integrity acts in accordance with academic (and thus specific) standards. This means, for example, that they deal honestly with the contributions of others, make their own research processes transparent, and handle data and research objects responsibly. JGU’s mission statement chooses **good scientific practice** as a reference point for this:

„Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz is committed to the principles of academic integrity. The routine of its members in research, teaching and learning, continuing education, and academic management are to conform to the values and standards of good academic practice.“

In the German-speaking world, the term „academic integrity“ has so far been used only rarely. In the USA, for example, the concept of „academic integrity“ is, however, widely used at universities. It is often used there in an academic context as a synonym for honor and honesty. For a long time, the focus was solely on the behavior and character of students. Today, more attention is paid to the extent to which certain learning environments and conditions promote or hinder good academic practices.

→ On the history of the term „academic integrity“: TRICIA BERTRAM GALLANT, Academic Integrity in the Twenty-First Century: A Teaching and Learning Imperative (ASHE Higher Education Report, Volume 33, Number 5). New York 2008.

2) What is ‘Good Scientific Practice’ ?

Good scientific practice encompasses all practices that comply with the written and unwritten rules of the scientific community as a whole or of a specific discipline. This includes, for example, the requirements for complete documentation of research results or honest and fair dealings with other researchers.

→ Handy introduction: Fuchs, Michael, et al., Forschungsethik. Eine Einführung. Stuttgart 2010, p. 41-55.



3) When do we speak of 'Scientific Misconduct'?

Scientific misconduct is any behavior that violates these rules. Different 'types' of misconduct can be distinguished; what they have in common is that they **either damage the production of knowledge or the trust in or within science**. This means that pseudo-knowledge or even deliberate false statements are circulated under the label 'scientific' or the performance of persons or institutions is misrepresented.

→ Handy introduction: Fuchs, Michael, et al., *Forschungsethik. Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart 2010, p. 41-55.

3.1) Scientific Misconduct: **Plagiarism**

„Plagiarism (Plagiat)“ is not a legal term in German. However, the term is common for many similar phenomena. Not only **texts** and **formulations** can be plagiarized, but also **illustrations, structures, ideas or source codes etc.** It is often not so easy to determine whether something is plagiarism in an individual case. However, Teddi Fishman has at least presented a handy definition of the term:

"Plagiarismus occurs when someone

- (1) Uses words, ideas, or work products
- (2) Attributable to another identifiable person or source
- (3) Without attributing the work to the source from which it was obtained
- (4) In a situation in which there is a legitimate expectation of original authorship
- (5) In order to obtain some benefit, credit, or gain which need not be monetary."

→ Fishman, Teddi: "'We know it when we see it' is not good enough: toward a standard definition of plagiarism that transcends theft, fraud, and copyright." Conference Paper for the 4th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity (2009): *Educational Integrity: Creating an Inclusive Approach*. p. 5. Available online: <https://ro.uow.edu.au/apcei/09/papers/37/> [last access 25.02.2022].

3.2) Scientific Misconduct **Data falsification, manipulation and selection**

In science, there have long been complaints about the (deliberate) misrepresentation of empirical results, of research data. The British mathematician Charles Babbage, for example, distinguished four forms: *Hoaxing*, *Forging*, *Trimming* and *Cooking*. Currently, three basic forms are usually considered: The **free invention** of data, the **modification** of data or images, and the **selection** of desired or **rejection** of undesired results.

→ see Babbage, Charles, *Reflections on the Decline of Science in England, and on some of its Causes*. Available online: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1216/1216-h/1216-h.htm> [last access 06-12-2019].

