

Responsible Conduct of Research and the CBS Practice Committee

The Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity

CBS is committed to ensuring that the researchers at CBS abide by the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. The code has been drafted by the Ministry of Education and Science in cooperation with the universities in Denmark among others. Moreover, it builds on experience and formulations from international statements, such as the Singapore Statement.

The starting point of the code consists of three basic principles that are expected to pervade all phases of research:

- Honesty – when reporting objectives, methods, data, analysis, results, conclusions, etc.
- Transparency – concerning conflicts of interests, planning of research, applied methods, results, and conclusions.
- Accountability – concerning accuracy, reliability, adherence to all relevant regulations, maintaining a culture of research integrity and handling breaches of responsible conduct.

Furthermore, the code of conduct specifies six basic standards of conducting research. These six standards are elaborated in the code but consist of:

- a. Research planning and conduct
- b. Data management
- c. Publication and communication
- d. Authorship
- e. Collaborative research
- f. Conflicts of interest

The Practice Committee advises that all members of faculty study the code of conduct and reflect on how it can be translated into concrete practice relevant for the specific field of research. Furthermore, it is advisable that all departments continue to discuss the principles and standards of research integrity.

[Link the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(English\)](#)

[Link the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(Danish\)](#)

Research misconduct and questionable research conduct

In Denmark, the 2017 Act on Research Misconduct contains a framework for dealing with matters of research misconduct (*videnskabelig uredelighed*) and questionable research practice (*tvivlsom forskningspraksis*).¹ The Danish Code on Research Integrity is soft law, i.e. it does not have legal status as an Act. However, the code is one of the most important standards for research. These standards are closely integrated into the Act on Research Misconduct. The law defines two important and closely related concepts:

¹ Lov nr. 383 af 26. april 2017 om videnskabelig uredelighed, available at: <https://www.retsinformation.dk/Forms/R0710.aspx?id=188780>

- A) Research misconduct, which is the most serious situation of the two, is defined as fabrication, falsification and plagiarism conducted with intent or gross negligence. However, if fabrication, falsification and plagiarism has had only minor impact in relation to planning, research performance or reporting, the situation falls outside the scope of research misconduct.
- B) Questionable Research Practice – breach of responsible conduct of research

The distinction between research misconduct and questionable research practice is used to distinguish whether a case is to be handled by the National Board on Research Misconduct or the research institutions.

Basically, all complaints regarding research misconduct or questionable research practice shall be sent to the relevant research institution, which will set up a format (typically a Practice Committee) for deciding if the complaint concerns research misconduct and hence shall be sent to the National Board on Research Misconduct– or if it concerns other forms of Questionable Research Practice to be handled by the university (typically a Practice Committee).

The Practice Committee and the Named Person

In 2016 CBS set up a Practice Committee to handle cases concerning Questionable Research Practice and a Named Person-position was set up to offer advice to members of faculty. With this setup, CBS adapted a model used at Copenhagen University and other universities.

The Roles of the Practice Committee and the Named Person may briefly be described as follows:

- The Practice Committee receives and handles complaints as well as requests for being cleared of rumors and accusations. If a complaint concerns research misconduct, the Practice Committee shall forward it to the National Board on Research Misconduct. If the complaint concerns possible breaches of responsible conduct of research, the Practice Committee shall decide the complaint. The decision will be sent to the dean of research who decides if the case warrants any further actions/consequences.
- The Named Person is a senior member of faculty, who can offer advice to members of faculty who are in doubt whether their own or other members of faculty are in breach of the principles of research integrity. Some of these questions may lead to complaints to the Practice Committee, and for this reason CBS has chosen not to let the Named Person be a member of the Practice Committee.

To ensure that complaints regarding Questionable Research Practice are handled in an independent forum, which is not influenced by management, the members of the Practice Committee and the Named Person (as well as their alternates) are appointed by the Academic Council. Furthermore, it is specified in the rules governing the Practice Committee that the members of the Committee are not under instruction from any bodies, including the Academic Council.

In line with the CBS language policy, the Practice Committee and the Named Person can be contacted in Danish as well as in English. The Practice committee will in each case decide on the language to be used, with respect of Danish legislation and the needs of the involved parties.

It is worth mentioning that it is not possible to appeal a decision made by the Practice Committee to another administrative body. However, the rules of procedure of the Practice Committee procedures (see the rules of the Practice Committee) are meant to ensure due process for all involved parties throughout the procedure.

Finally, it should be mentioned that the parties involved in a case may appoint a representatives, such as their shop steward or legal council. The latter will, as a general rule, be at their own expense. However, the Named Person cannot take up this role.

[Link to the website of the Research Practice Committee](#)

[Link to the regulations for the Research Practice Committee](#)

What to do, if you wish to send a complaint

Anybody may send a complaint to the Practice Committee – including members of the public, journalists, researchers from other universities and members of CBS faculty. The CBS Practice Committee has only competence in complaints against persons who are CBS faculty, including PhD, or who were CBS faculty at the time of the questionable research practice or research misconduct.

Before sending a complaint, it is recommended to consult the Named Person in order to discuss the complaint. Members of CBS faculty may also consider discussing the matter with colleagues and possibly with the person(s) in question as well as the head of department before lodging a complaint.

The next step is to formulate the complaint. It is worth noting that the Practice Committee expects all complaints to be specific and substantiated. All complaints must thus contain the following information:

- The name of the scientific product in question
- The name(s) of the researcher(s) in question
- Specific claims regarding Questionable Research Practice (and/or research misconduct)
- Arguments relating to and substantiating the claims

Members of faculty who wish to be cleared of any accusations or rumors may also forward a request to the Practice Committee. In such cases, the name of the respondents (i.e. the persons who have spread the rumors and/or accusations) must be stated along with a specification of the accusations or rumors in question.

Furthermore, complaints to be dealt with by the Practice Committee must relate to questionable research practice cases that is no more than 5 years old or rumors and accusations that are no more than 6 months old.

What to do, if the Practice Committee receives a complaint regarding you

The Practice Committee is committed to both protecting the individual researchers and their freedom of research and to ensure responsible research conduct. The Committee shall consider any respondent innocent until proven guilty. For this reason it must be noted that the lodging of a false or a manifestly unfounded complaint, may in itself be considered a case of questionable research practice, and it may result in consequences for the complainant.

Once the Practice Committee receives a complaint, the respondent is informed of the complaint, and invited to give a written response, which must be handed in within four weeks of receiving the complaint.

To ensure equal treatment of all persons involved, both parties are asked if they think that the members of the Practice Committee (and external experts, if relevant) are legally disqualified, i.e. have any conflicts of interests that may affect the case in question. Moreover, all parties to a case must be heard before any decision is made.

The chair of the Practice Committee – supported by the secretariat – ensures that all cases are sufficiently described and that all relevant information is received by the Committee before any decision is made. The Practice Committee may decide to invite the complainant and the respondent to submit further written or oral hearings, as necessary.

If a member of faculty at CBS is the subject of a complaint, he or she could seek advice from the Head of Department, the Named Person, and/or colleagues. It is also possible to seek advice from a lawyer or another trusted person.

Finally, decisions from the Practice Committee are anonymized in the Committee's annual reports. The decisions themselves and possible consequences are thus not made public, but it may be possible to obtain excerpts of the documents in accordance with the rules regarding i.a. public access.

What happens, if a case regards research misconduct and is forwarded to the national board?

When the Practice Committee receives a complaint, its first task is to decide if the complaint lives up to the formal requirements. If the formal requirements are fulfilled, the Practice Committee will decide whether the complaint falls within its auspices. If the complaint regards research misconduct the Committee shall forward it to the National Board on Research Misconduct.

If the complaint regards a possible breach of responsible conduct of research, or a request to be cleared of rumors and accusations, the Committee shall decide the case itself.

[Link to the website of the Danish Board on Research Misconduct \(English\)](#)

[Link to the website of the Danish Board on Research Misconduct \(Danish\)](#)