



POLICY FOR SAFEGUARDING GOOD SCIENTIFIC PRACTICE

As an institution in receipt of ESRC funds, CEPR is required to have procedures in place to ensure sound scientific conduct in research, as set out in the statement "Safeguarding Good Scientific Practice", issued by the Director General of Research Councils and the Chief Executives of the UK Research Councils in December 1998.

The policy described herein explains how CEPR assures good scientific practice in research undertaken through the Centre's grants. All researchers involved in projects funded by the ESRC will be provided with this information at the start of their involvement and will be expected to adhere to it in the performance of their project duties.

Defining Good Scientific Practice

The following practices are deemed unethical and wholly unacceptable in relation to any CEPR project: fabrication and falsification of results, plagiarism, misquotation, modification or destruction of data, misappropriation of work, fraudulent use of ESRC funds (for work or purposes other than those stipulated in the grant proposal). Moreover, senior researchers have a responsibility to model good scientific practice for more junior members of research teams, thereby reinforcing CEPR's culture of high-quality, ethical research practice. Finally, CEPR supports those who bring to light possible instances of misconduct and sanctions those where misconduct is proven, so as to create a culture that encourages all researchers to take these objectives for good scientific practice seriously.

Creating a Culture of Good Scientific Practice

Senior scientists or project leaders have a responsibility to ensure that a climate is created that allows research to be conducted within the principles of good scientific practice. This means modeling good scientific practice in their own research, encouraging the questioning of results so that scientific ideas can be challenged and tested without loss of face, and taking seriously allegations of misconduct, and reporting them to the CEO.

Additionally, it is the responsibility of CEPR to ensure that researchers working on ESRC projects are not subject to commercial pressures which might compromise the normal processes of scientific inquiry.

CEPR will furnish this policy to all researchers undertaking projects funded by the ESRC, and reinforce the importance of good scientific practice for the benefit of the user community, the researchers, CEPR and the ESRC. Senior scientists are then expected to further reinforce this with their own approach to project work.

Process for Investigating Allegations of Misconduct

Any allegation of misconduct will be taken seriously, with every attempt made to protect the integrity of those stepping forward with allegations and those accused. In fairness to all involved, speedy resolution is sought. The CEO is responsible for overseeing and directing the process, in consultation with the Research Director and the President.

1. Preliminary action
 - a. Any allegation of misconduct should be brought to the attention of the CEO as soon as is practicable. The CEO will notify the Research Director and the President, and any individual affected by the allegation. All involved will be asked to keep the matter secret and not to discuss it with or disclose it to others. Only those with a specific need to be involved will be notified.
 - b. Evidence will be gathered by the CEO and/or Research Director as rapidly as possible, and with the maximum of discretion. The aim is for this process to be concluded within two weeks, but more quickly is desirable.
 - c. A file for the allegation is created and stored under lock and key.
2. Assessment
 - a. The CEO and Research Director, in consultation with the President, will establish a small, independent committee to assess the evidence. Members of this committee are selected on the basis of their knowledge of the field in question and/or their expertise in scientific good practice.
 - b. This committee is tasked with determining whether there is enough of a case to proceed further. Except in extremely complex situations, the committee is asked to render its view within one week to the CEO, who will communicate it to the Research Director and President.
 - c. Where insufficient evidence is found, the person(s) against whom allegations have been made (the “respondent(s)”) and those bringing the allegations (the “complainants”) are notified of the outcome by letter. In the case of a malicious allegation, a copy of the letter to the complainants will be kept in their file.

- d. In all cases, copies of the letters and the findings of the committee are filed in the case file, kept under lock and key.
 - e. If the committee deems there to be sufficient evidence to investigate the case, the next step is undertaken.
3. Formal Investigation
- a. The committee, having rendered a preliminary view in the Assessment stage that there is a case to answer, must now deliberate in more detail on the situation.
 - b. The respondent(s) is notified in writing that a formal investigation is to be undertaken.
 - c. A meeting, or conference call (if participants are widely geographically dispersed) is called, once the committee has spent time mulling over the evidence, in which the respondent(s) will have an opportunity to discuss them. This meeting shall be scheduled as quickly as is practicable, and definitely within one month of the formal notice of investigation. Best efforts will be made to accommodate the schedule of the respondents, however they must also reasonably adjust their schedule so as to be available and to accommodate a swift resolution to the matter. Failure to agree to meet within one month of the formal notification will result in forfeiture of the opportunity to discuss the matter with the committee.
 - d. Following the meeting, the committee will issue their finding in writing to the CEO, who will share it with the President and the Research Director. The finding must be unambiguous in the sense that it either upholds one or more of the allegations as true, or refutes them. The CEO will notify the respondents in writing of the decision of the committee.
 - e. A copy of the formal notification and the letter of finding will be kept in the respondent(s)'s file, as well as in the case file.
4. Right of appeal
- a. A respondent has the right of appeal to the Chair of the Board of CEPR. This must be made in writing within two weeks of the date of the letter of finding from the CEO reporting the decision of the investigating committee.
 - b. The Chair of the Board will either act directly or designate a person, independent of the earlier formal investigation, to review the case, evidence and finding. This person will issue a written opinion on the appeal, upholding it or overturning it. This opinion is final.
 - c. All best efforts will be made to act swiftly in reviewing the appeal, with a determination to be made no later than two weeks after the appeal is received, unless special circumstances warrant an extension, to be communicated to the respondent(s).

- d. In the case of overturning the original finding, evidence of the complaint, formal investigation and committee finding will be removed from the respondent(s)'s file, but retained in the case file.
 - e. The complainant should also be notified by letter from the CEO of the outcome of the proceedings.
5. Sanctions
- a. Where the committee deems the allegations to have been malicious, this will be communicated in writing to the complainant(s) by the CEO and, if so agreed by the CEO, Research Director and President, the person(s) will be dismissed from the project's activities.
 - b. In the event that an investigation leads to a conclusion that misconduct has occurred, sanctions may be applied, as agreed by the CEO, Research Director and President. Egregious misconduct, such as destroying data, falsifying results or misusing funds would result in dismissal of the respondent(s) from the project and termination of their affiliation with CEPR, and this would be reported to the ESRC.

Control of Primary Data

Primary data as the basis for publications should be securely stored for an appropriate time in a durable form under the control of the institution of their origin. Published reports of cases of scientific misconduct are full of accounts of original data which have disappeared and of the circumstances under which they have allegedly been lost.

The appropriate period for retaining data depends on circumstances (since in some areas the importance and relevance of data can be superseded very rapidly). Equally the means of data storage (paper, CD-ROM, etc.) should be appropriate to the task.