

# Code of Ethics of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft, DGfE (German Educational Research Association, GERA)

## Preamble

The members of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft (DGfE) assume that today there is no scientific finding or solution which would not require an ethical review of its value and its consequences. Therefore, as a result of the actions and conduct of DGfE members, integrity and purity in the scientific working process, fair dealings with colleagues, collaborators, students, pupils, practice partners, research test persons and others involved and responsible use of resources are indispensable prerequisites to ethical conduct in educational science.

The Code defines a consensus on ethical conduct within professional and organised educational science in Germany, or for the members of DGfE. The Code is to raise awareness of ethical problems in educational science theory and practice and to encourage DGfE members to critically reflect their own professional conduct. DGfE members working at universities are asked to convey the principles of ethical scientific and professional conduct laid down herein to young academics and students and to encourage them to apply appropriate practices. At the same time, the Code protects against illegitimate requirements and expectations on researchers, teachers, students and test persons which may lead to ethical conflicts. The Code names the fundamentals on which the work of the Ethics Commission of DGfE (Art. 6) is based.

Persons bringing complaints before the Ethics Commission invoking this Code must not be disadvantaged because of this. To achieve the goals specified in the preamble, the DGfE members acknowledge and support the following Code of Ethics.

## Article 1 Research

- (1) In the exercise of their scientific work and their profession, DGfE members strive for truth and integrity. They undertake to apply the highest possible standards in research, teaching and professional practice.
- (2) DGfE members observe the principle of transparency of contents and methods in their work and name the sources that finance their research activities. Details of the theories, methods and research designs which are of importance for an assessment of the research results and the limits of their validity are disclosed in all conscience.
- (3) DGfE members do not accept any benefits, contracts or research assignments which would curtail their independence and violate the principles laid down in this Code.

- (4) As managers of research projects, DGfE members conclude agreements at the start of a project as to the allocation of tasks, remuneration, access to data, copyrights and other rights and responsibilities which are acceptable to and calculable for all those involved.
- (5) In their roles as researchers, teachers and practical workers, DGfE members have a special social responsibility. Their recommendations, decisions and statements may have an influence on the lives of their fellow human beings. They are aware of the dangers and compulsions that may lead to a misuse of their influence and strive to prevent such misuse and detrimental effects on others.

## Article 2      Publications

- (1) DGfE members make their research results accessible to the general public in a suitable manner. This shall not apply to any case in which this is irresponsible or where the right to protection of confidential documents would be infringed. In cases where the duty of official secrecy or agreements with the clients restrict the right of publication, DGfE members strive to preserve the claim to publication to the extent this is possible.
- (2) The names of all persons that have made a substantial contribution to a research result and its publication have to be stated. DGfE members undertake to be strictly honest in respect of the contributions of partners, competitors, collaborators and predecessors. They respect the intellectual property rights to or authorship of scientific ideas, theories, results and data which they show correctly, completely and within the relevant factual connection if they use them. Reference to ideas developed in the work of others must not be consciously omitted. The claims to authorship and the order of the authors are to reflect their contribution in the research process and the publication. All authors named in the title of a paper are fully co-responsible for the text published.
- (3) Where DGfE members are publishers or work in the editorial department of a magazine, they undertake to fairly judge papers submitted without personal or political prejudice and within a reasonable period of time. They notify without delay of the decisions regarding manuscripts handed in and state their reasons.

## Article 3      Expert opinions and reviews

- (1) Where DGfE members are asked to appraise a person, assess a manuscript, a research application or other work or to provide an expert opinion, such inquiries have to be declined in the event of a conflict of interests.
- (2) Examinations in connection with personnel decisions are treated as confidential by all those involved and are based on the principle of highest possible objectivity. Papers and facts to be examined have to be assessed completely, carefully and fairly within a reasonable space of time.
- (3) DGfE members asked to review a book or manuscript which they already have reviewed elsewhere inform the inquirer of this. They decline to review papers to which they have made an immediate contribution.

#### Article 4 Rights of test persons

- (1) The personality rights of the persons involved in scientific studies are respected.
- (2) The involvement of test persons in empirical studies requires as a rule their consent and they shall be informed about the objectives and methods of the research project as comprehensively as possible within the framework of the study design. Special endeavours to guarantee appropriate information are required where, due to their educational capital, milieu affiliation, social class, social situation or linguistic competence it has to be assumed that without specific information the persons involved in the study cannot comprehend the intentions and modalities of the research project. Where explicit consent cannot be obtained due to the fear of a distortion of the study, other possibilities to procure approval have to be used. Where necessary, consent to the further use of the data acquired has to be obtained subsequently. Persons involved in a study as subjects or respondents or in any other way must not suffer any disadvantage due to the research. The persons affected have to be informed of all risks involved.
- (3) The integrity of the persons interviewed or watched has to be preserved. As a general rule, methods are to be used which rule out that the persons studied can be identified, i.e. their anonymity is to be preserved. Where data is processed electronically, careful precautions have to be taken against unauthorised access to the data.
- (4) Information obtained from persons studied is treated as confidential. This obligation applies to all those involved in the research process (e.g. also to interviewers, encoders and typists) who have access to the data. It is the project manager's responsibility to inform all those involved in a research project of this obligation and to control access to confidential materials.
- (5) DGfE members submit themselves to professional secrecy analogous to appropriate regulations applying to other professions.

#### Article 5 Dealings with colleagues, collaborators, students and practice partners

- (1) Teaching DGfE members undertake to provide tuition at a constant high quality and to ensure good education of the students. The rules of good scientific practice are to be an inherent part of teaching and academic training.
- (2) In respect of hiring, dismissal, appraisal, promotion, determination of salaries and other questions of employment and in the case of appeal and co-optation decisions, DGfE members strive for objectivity and justice. They do not place other persons at a disadvantage on account of their gender, a physical handicap, their social or regional background, ethnic group or nationality or religious affiliation.
- (3) DGfE members do not use the achievements of others for their own benefit and do not utilise the work of others without declaring this.
- (4) DGfE members do not force anybody, in particular test persons, clients, collaborators or students, to make personal concessions or provide a personal or career benefit.

## Article 6 Ethics Commission

- (1) The Ethics Commission is composed of a woman and a man who are members of DGfE. The Council elects them by secret ballot from a list of proposed candidates from the divisions with a simple majority of votes for a term of four years. The Ethics Commission convenes when required or at its own request. It submits a report on its work to the Council once a year.
- (2) The Ethics Commission can be appealed to in confidence.
- (3) The tasks of the Ethics Commission are the following:
  - Advise the DGfE Council and the divisions or subdivisions on general and special ethical questions of educational science;and
  - examine the accusations in the case of formal complaints about misconduct and, if applicable, hear the parties.
- (4) The Ethics Commission either affirms or negates that the Code of Ethics has been violated. If it finds that a violation has occurred, it informs all parties affected and gives a recommendation to the DGfE Council in accordance with the Constitution. Complaints against the procedure chosen by the Ethics Commission may be lodged to the DGfE Council.

## Article 7 Coming into effect

The Code of Ethics shall come into effect upon its being announced in the DGfE's bulletin called "Erziehungswissenschaft". The DGfE Council deliberates and decides on amendments to the wording of the Code of Ethics.

The DGfE Council