

# Wageningen University & Research Integrity Code

Executive Board, June 30<sup>th</sup> 2014

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## **Preface**

This Integrity Code applies to staff members and visiting staff members<sup>1</sup> of Wageningen University (WU) and the foundation: Stichting Wageningen Research (WR). These legal entities work together under the name Wageningen University & Research (WUR). WUR is aware that in its activities it has a responsibility to firmly establish within the organisation a culture among its staff members of acting with integrity. This code explains the principles behind the value of acting with integrity. It also explains the behaviour desired of everyone, staff member or student, who is part of WUR and offers guidelines for the way in which WUR presents itself to students, clients, partner organisations and society in general. Undesirable behaviour has no place in the open and learning organisation that WUR aims to be. The atmosphere in the workplace has an impact on job satisfaction and teamwork and thus on the creativity and productivity of the staff members. Undesirable behaviour such as bullying, sexual harassment, intimidation, aggression, and violence has no place here.

## **Wageningen University & Research Mission and Core Values**

WUR is an international centre of expertise with the mission 'to explore the potential of nature to improve the quality of life'. Our ambition is to distinguish the institution at the national and international levels by maintaining an excellent quality of education and research in the domain of healthy food and living environment.

WUR develops countless activities to make its mission a reality. In implementing these activities, WUR staff members follow a number of principles. These principles, which ensure that staff members act with integrity, are as follows:

**Scrupulous:** We perform our work with care and attention to detail. We utilise resources and finances and deploy people responsibly and efficiently.

WUR staff members:

- Exercise the utmost accuracy when carrying out their tasks.
- Pay attention to details and deal with them accurately and effectively.
- Provide complete and transparent information about the application of assets in relation to their work activities.

**Reliability:** We demonstrate that we are reliable and transparent. We are open and honest, as individuals and as an organisation. Acting with integrity is self-evident to us - agreements must be kept.

WUR staff members:

- Enjoy the trust of colleagues, students and clients;
- Meet their commitments;
- Cannot be bribed;
- Achieve the performance level agreed upon and do not promise more than they are able to deliver;
- Work in accordance with the standards in force and can demonstrate this upon request.

**Independence:** In our education and research, we do not allow ourselves to be influenced by third-party interests. This gives us a clear position and gives our students, clients and partner organisations the most usable results.

WUR staff members:

- Act independently of specific interests.
- Report their additional employment activities.
- Reach agreements with clients regarding the way in which and the moment at which they will publish the results of research.

**Social responsibility:** We present our performance or results with respect for social aspects and within the ecological limiting conditions. Business returns are in balance with the use of social and ecological inputs.

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this document, for the sake of ease of reading, 'staff members' is to be understood to include visiting staff members as well.

WUR staff members:

- Place importance on dealing responsibly with nature and the living environment. They are aware of the importance of animal welfare, and take this into account;
- Respect human rights in their work at all times.
- Treat test subjects and laboratory animals with integrity in their research.
- Are aware of the possible consequences of the application of research results on a higher aggregate level than the system studied.
- Are aware of the social effects of their work and act accordingly.

Inspiring and safe working environment: We offer a working environment that brings out the best in people, with respect for the cultural diversity within the organisation. Only in this way can we, as a research institute, offer the most added value to our students, clients and partner organisations. In our work, we treat each other with respect and offer each other the space to discuss conflicts of conscience. A conflict of conscience is an acceptable reason for an individual not to perform specific work.

WUR staff members:

- Offer and receive the space to develop professionally.
- Treat each other and WUR contacts with respect.
- Are aware of cultural diversity within the organisation and deal with this with integrity.

## **Implementation**

These principles describe in general terms the behaviour expected of WUR staff members. WUR staff members carry out research, teach or carry out general and/or supporting tasks. All these activities set specific demands regarding the behaviour in each of these three areas.

### **Staff member**

A WUR staff member is defined as a person who has an employment contract at WU or WR in conformity with the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (CAO-NU) or the Collective Labour Agreement for WR (CAO-WR), or who is otherwise employed by WU or WR. WUR staff members act on the basis of the principles laid out in this Integrity Code. This means that they treat each other with respect and professionalism and without prejudice. This is also true of the way in which they treat students and external contacts. There are absolutely no restrictions on discussing or reporting undesirable behaviour. The confidential counsellors within WUR are available to every staff member.

WUR staff members maintain professional relationships with the people they work with. They also avoid all situations in which one or more staff members do not feel that they are being treated with integrity. WUR is an organisation which operates internationally and in which staff members of different cultural backgrounds work together. Staff members are aware of this in their dealings with each other.

Every staff member has individual responsibility for his/her contribution to a healthy and pleasant working environment. That responsibility also applies to preventing undesirable social conduct, whether originating from himself/herself or in others. Within the organisation, various support arrangements are in place to help people to adopt a more assertive and resilient attitude, if necessary. Looking the other way or not intervening are by definition out of the question.

WUR staff members maintain a great many external contacts and are also active in other organisations. As such, it is unavoidable that staff members may find themselves in situations in which they represent not only WUR but also another organisation with which they have a cooperative relationship.

In these situations, WUR staff members avoid any appearance of a conflict of interests. In addition, WUR is transparent in communicating the additional employment activities of its staff members.

Those staff members in managerial positions have particular responsibility. They stimulate and oversee adherence to this Integrity Code. They serve as an example for their colleagues in this regard. Staff members in managerial positions ensure a working atmosphere in which it is possible for staff members to speak to each other about behaviour which is in conflict with the Integrity Code. As such, they are open to criticism from other staff members regarding their own actions as these relate to the principles of WUR. The senior management also has a particular responsibility with regard to measures relating to the prevention of undesirable conduct and dealing with any instances that do arise, as well as devoting constructive attention to the issue.

### **Education**

In education, the emphasis is on obtaining knowledge about a subject and on academic development. The skills and knowledge obtained include insight into scientific methods, cooperation, reflection and

scientific debate. Education also focuses on assisting the student to internalise the principles of good and honest scientific practice.

Many of the WUR staff members are active in teaching. It is in this context that interaction with students takes place. Students, defined as anyone who follows a course of education at WUR, have a special position within the organisation. They are the recipient of a service, and in that regard they are to be seen as a client. They have the right to expect that the education they receive has been set up in conformity with the principles of acting with integrity and that it is in line with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. At the same time, they can also be involved in carrying out WUR activities. Whenever students carry out research or embark on work placements, they must also act in accordance with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the principles laid out in this Integrity Code.

Education involves continuous interaction between staff members and students. It goes without saying that the same principles apply to this interaction as to interaction among staff members.

## **Research**

WUR is a knowledge institute. A large number of employees carry out research. They formulate hypotheses, test them, repeat and check earlier experiments and work towards ever broader generalisations on the basis of the results of their work. WUR carries out research at the request of a wide range of clients. At one end of the scale, WUR carries out fundamental research, for which the 'client' is science itself, driven by curiosity. At the other end of the scale, WUR carries out application-oriented research at the request of one or more individual parties.

### Wageningen University

The research carried out at WU emphasises the formation of theory and the acquisition of new insights and knowledge. The research is characterised by the fact that the results do not necessarily have to have a direct application. Research results are published in peer-reviewed journals and through contributions to congresses and seminars. The users of the results are predominantly scientific colleagues. The results are made accessible as soon as possible upon completion of the research, increasingly so via Open Access channels and with the inclusion of the models and data sets used in the research. There are often limiting conditions such as assets and time available for the research, but the results of the research are never defined in advance. The client does designate research topics but does not formulate the research question; once the proposal has received a positive evaluation on the basis of scientific criteria, the client provides resources and assets. Research performed at WU takes place in accordance with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Standard 12.b under chapter 3.2 of this code, and, consequently, standard 10.b under chapter 5.4 of this code will be left unapplied by WUR.

### Wageningen Research

The research carried out at WR emphasises solving a concrete problem or developing a product, method or service. The research is carried out within the limits set by conditions relating to finances and capacity, and there is a clear description of the results to be achieved. Research can be carried out at the request of a single client or within a consortium of several public and private parties. There is a close working relationship with the client. Generally, the client formulates the research question. The performance of the research and the report of the results are also the responsibility of Wageningen Research.

Research carried out by WR also takes place in accordance with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. Standard 12.b under chapter 3.2 of this code, and, consequently, standard 10.b under chapter 5.4 of this code will be left unapplied by WUR.

The safeguarding of integrity relating to the confidentiality of business information and the rights and publication of results is addressed by WUR General Terms and Conditions (specifically Article 6 paragraph 3 and Articles 7 and 8).

WUR also commissions third parties to carry out research. In this case, WUR still holds final responsibility for this research.

## **Actions in conflict with the Integrity Code**

WUR principles as laid out in this Integrity Code form the basis for how the organisation's staff members are expected to act with integrity. These principles also apply when entering into cooperative relationships with other organisations.

Circumstances may of course arise in which staff workers act - or there is a suspicion that staff workers are acting - in ways that are in conflict with these principles. In a situation of this nature, it is possible to submit a complaint or to institute proceedings. Depending on the nature of the complaint or the situation, there are a number of applicable regulations which fall within the scope of this Integrity Code. Examples include the Scientific integrity complaints procedure, the Anti-Corruption Code, the Whistle-Blowers Regulation and the Complaints Procedure Undesirable Behaviour. On the basis of these regulations, specific committees have been formed and confidential counsellors have been appointed. These committees and counsellors can be approached confidentially. These [regulations](#) are available on the WUR intranet.

WUR has appointed a 'complaints officer'. Staff members can contact the complaints officer to submit all complaints and report all situations in which they suspect that the Integrity Code has been breached. The complaints officer is responsible for passing on the complaint to the appropriate committee, which then investigates the complaint. If the staff member who submitted the complaint so requests, the complaints officer informs that staff member of the progress made in the complaints procedure. The complaints officer can be contacted by e-mail at [klachtmedewerker@wur.nl](mailto:klachtmedewerker@wur.nl); by telephone on +31 (0)317-485371, or, for students, by e-mail at [legalprotection.students@wur.nl](mailto:legalprotection.students@wur.nl).