



Rules for Safeguarding Good Academic Practice¹ **January 2008**

The following rules for good scientific practice are based on recommendations by the German Research Council (DFG) and adapted to the realities of a relatively small research centre. If you have any concern, please feel free to bring this up either with your respective research group, or with the director or ombudsperson of the Centre. All researchers based or hosted at ZMO adhere to the standards of good research practice as described below.

Organisation of Work

1. Work at ZMO is organised in research groups. The heads of the research groups organise the collaborative elements of ZMO research in close coordination with each other and with the directorate. ZMO encourages an open research culture among the researchers, both along and across regional and disciplinary boundaries of expertise. Researchers discuss each other's work regularly as part of the research group proceedings, as well as in the plenary sessions for all in-house researchers (PVs). Beyond that, ZMO encourages intellectual exchange among researchers at all levels, including the directorate, which is available for the discussion of individual research. The results of both group and individual research are documented as individual or collective publications, and in the ZMO annual report distributed to ZMO funders and other institutions.

2. The mentoring of younger scholars with regard to their professional development (advice on publications, information about posts, discussion of application strategies, mock job talks) is provided by senior colleagues at ZMO, including the director.

3. Research excellence, and especially the originality and quality of publications, is the major criterion for evaluation of academic work at ZMO (for selection and promotion procedures). Selection committees for new fellows may also consider how new projects fit into the research groups, and the anticipated input into the overall research programme. The promotion process will additionally involve reviewing the active participation of fellows in events organized by the Centre.

4. In the case of conflict regarding the organisation of research, individual researchers may turn to the heads of their research group or, should this prove difficult, to the ZMO director and deputy directors. If conflict resolution is problematic, mediation can be sought from the ZMO ombudsperson.

¹ These rules are based on recommendations by the German Research Council (DFG) and adapted to ZMO realities. For a full version of DFG rules, see:
http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/reden_stellungnahmen/download/self_regulation_98.pdf.

5. Published work should acknowledge funding sources and the link to ZMO.

Good academic practice and its violation

6. Where data is collected on the assumption of trust between persons or institutions, the rights, interests and sensitivities of those under study must be safeguarded.

7. Primary data collected by researchers and used as a basis for publications is to be securely stored in a durable form at ZMO for ten years. Researchers who leave ZMO and still need the material they acquired with ZMO funds during their stay are requested to produce duplicates. Data can be stored under three different categories:

- open to users of the library and the archive;
- permission for use to be given by the researcher who originally collected the data;
- not accessible (with a possible stipulation that material is to be destroyed after ten years).

A secure store for restricted material is provided and rules of access (or lack thereof) must be laid down with the librarian and the directorate to ensure the right of primary use of original material and to protect informants.

8. Co-authors of scientific publications are jointly responsible for the content. A so-called "honorary authorship" is inadmissible.

9. Reviewers of submitted manuscripts are bound to respect confidentiality and to disclose conflicts of interest.

10. The most severe cases of scientific misconduct are the fabrication and falsification of data, plagiarism and the individual use of jointly collected data without acknowledgement, as well as breach of confidence as a reviewer or superior. Knowledge of any such violation of good research practice by a researcher at ZMO, or allegations thereof, must be brought to the attention of the directorate and will be investigated according to the procedures laid down below.

11. Individuals who feel that their rights have been affected by the actions of another person, or who have observed malpractice, may turn to the heads of their research group or, should this prove difficult, to the director or deputy directors of ZMO. If neither the directorate nor the ombudsperson can resolve the dispute, the latter will ask two scholars accepted by both parties as trustworthy to investigate the claims, taking into account the relevant legal regulations, including the law on disciplinary action. In the case of continued disagreement, members of the Advisory Board will be asked to recommend appropriate action.

The basic points summarised here constitute a minimum framework for good academic practice and ethical conduct. Subscribing to them does not lessen the responsibility of the researcher in all cases and in all research dimensions to conduct their research according to the accepted rules and standards of their discipline. In this respect, researchers should read up regularly on the guidelines for academic research practice published by the relevant professional organisations and public funding bodies.

Further information on academic conduct can be found, *inter alia*, at:

<http://www.aaanet.org/stmts/ethstmnt.htm> (American Anthropological Association)

http://www.africanstudies.org/?page=guidelines_2005 (African Studies Association)

<http://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.htm> (Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth)

http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/reden_stellungnahmen/download/self_regulation_98.pdf (DFG, English)

http://www.dfg.de/aktuelles_presse/reden_stellungnahmen/download/empfehlung_wiss_praxis_0198.pdf (DFG, German)

<http://www.ilit.org/air/files/bera.pdf> (British Educational Research Association)

http://www.concernedhistorians.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=section&id=21&Itemid=148 (Network of Concerned Historians)