

Tutorial for a New Employee

Ethical Principles Applicable at IBB PAS

Introduction

Welcome to the Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The scientific and organizational activities of the Institute are based on the principles of honesty, integrity, responsibility, mutual respect, and compliance with applicable laws and internal regulations.

The purpose of this tutorial is to familiarize new employees with the basic ethical principles applicable at IBB PAS and to indicate available pathways for action in the event of doubts or problems.

Upon completion of this tutorial, the employee should:

- know the basic principles of research integrity;
 - understand the principles of publication authorship;
 - know how to handle research data properly;
 - recognize potential conflicts of interest;
 - know the principles for the responsible use of artificial intelligence tools;
 - know where to report concerns or breaches of ethical principles.
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1. Core Values

All IBB PAS employees are required to comply with the following principles:

- honesty in conducting research and presenting results;
- scientific and professional integrity;
- objectivity and impartiality;
- responsibility for the quality of their work;
- transparency of research methods;
- respect for colleagues, doctoral students, students, and scientific partners;
- responsible management of Institute resources;
- compliance with applicable laws and internal regulations.

Each employee is responsible for their actions and should contribute to creating a safe, friendly, and development-supportive working environment.

2. Research Integrity

Research integrity constitutes the foundation of research activity.

Any form of research misconduct is unacceptable, in particular:

- fabrication of research results;
- falsification of data;
- manipulation of results to obtain a desired outcome;
- selective concealment of data without scientific justification;
- plagiarism;
- self-plagiarism;
- unauthorized appropriation of the results or ideas of others.

Example

A researcher obtained results that differ from the expected hypothesis. Such results must not be removed solely because they do not confirm the research assumptions. Any decision to exclude data should be scientifically justified, documented, and verifiable.

In case of doubts concerning research integrity, employees should consult the Committee for Ethics in Science.

3. Publication Authorship

Authorship of a scientific publication entails responsibility for its content.

Only a person who has made a substantial contribution to at least one of the following areas may be listed as an author:

- development of the research concept;
- acquisition or analysis of data;

- interpretation of results;
- preparation or substantial revision of the manuscript.

All authors should approve the final version of the publication.

The following practices are considered unethical:

- adding persons who did not participate in the work (“guest authorship”);
- omitting persons who made a significant contribution;
- forcing co-authorship due to one's position;
- claiming the results of others as one's own.

Authorship disputes should be clarified as early as possible, preferably at the research planning stage.

4. Management of Research Data

Researchers are responsible for the proper management of research data.

They should:

- store data securely;
- document the course of research;
- ensure the reproducibility of results;
- comply with personal data protection and confidentiality requirements;
- follow applicable data archiving procedures.

Any modifications to data should be traceable and properly documented.

Data storage should allow subsequent verification by authorized persons.

5. Use of Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools may support scientific, teaching, and organizational activities; however, they do not replace human responsibility.

Employees using AI tools should:

- critically assess and verify generated content;
- disclose the use of AI in accordance with publishers’, funders’, or applicable regulatory requirements;
- not transfer confidential information, personal data, or information protected by secrecy obligations to external AI systems without appropriate authorization and safeguards;
- remember that full responsibility for publications, reports, and other documents rests with the author.

AI tools may not be listed as authors of scientific publications.

6. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when private, financial, or professional interests may influence, or appear to influence, an employee’s impartiality and objectivity.

Examples include:

- participating in the evaluation of a project involving a close collaborator;
- making decisions concerning entities with which the employee has financial ties;
- engaging in external activities that may affect research independence.

In the event of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, employees should:

- disclose it to their supervisor or the competent body;
- withdraw from decision-making processes when necessary.

Transparency regarding conflicts of interest protects the credibility of research and trust in the Institute.

7. Respect and Workplace Culture

IBB PAS strives to create a working environment based on mutual respect, cooperation, and respect for the dignity of all members of the Institute community.

The following behaviours are not accepted:

- workplace bullying;
- discrimination;
- harassment;

- unequal treatment;
- abuse of authority;
- psychological or verbal violence;
- intimidation, humiliation, or isolation of colleagues;
- other behaviours violating the dignity, rights, or well-being of members of the Institute community.

Each member of the Institute community should be treated with respect regardless of position, academic degree, age, sex, origin, beliefs, or other legally protected characteristics.

8. Where to Seek Help?

In the event of doubts regarding ethical principles, workplace relations, or suspected violations of applicable standards, employees may contact the appropriate Institute body.

Academic Ombudsperson

The Academic Ombudsperson may be contacted regarding:

- interpersonal conflicts;
- organizational problems affecting the working atmosphere;
- situations requiring mediation;
- other informal issues concerning the functioning of the Institute community.

The Academic Ombudsperson provides advice, conducts mediation, and helps identify the appropriate course of action.

Committee for Counteracting Bullying and Discrimination

Cases involving bullying, discrimination, harassment, unequal treatment, or other undesirable workplace behaviour should be reported to this Committee.

Committee for Ethics in Science

The Committee should be informed about matters concerning:

- research integrity;
- plagiarism and self-plagiarism;
- publication authorship;
- manipulation of research data;
- conflicts of interest related to scientific activity;
- other breaches of research ethics.

Disciplinary Ombudspersons

Suspected disciplinary offences may be referred to:

- the Disciplinary Ombudsperson – for scientific and research-technical staff;
- the Disciplinary Ombudsperson for Doctoral Students – for doctoral students.

If an employee is unsure which body should receive a report, they may first contact the Academic Ombudsperson.

Detailed information on the operation of these bodies can be found in the applicable legislation and the internal regulations of IBB PAS.

Short Knowledge Check

1. Can research results be removed solely because they do not confirm the hypothesis?

- Yes
 No

2. Should a team leader automatically be a co-author of every publication?

- Yes
 No

3. Does the use of AI tools relieve an author of responsibility for the content of a publication?

- Yes
 No

4. Which body should be notified about suspected plagiarism?

- Academic Ombudsperson
 Committee for Ethics in Science

Disciplinary Committee

5. Whom can an employee contact if they are unsure which procedure is appropriate?

Only the Director

The Academic Ombudsperson

Only the Committee for Ethics in Science

Correct Answers

1. No

2. No

3. No

4. Committee for Ethics in Science

5. The Academic Ombudsperson