



CODE OF CONDUCT

of the Research Training Group “Sustainable Hydrogels”

A shared foundation for good scientific practice, mutual respect, and successful collaboration

Preamble

This Code of Conduct describes the shared values, behavioral guidelines, and expectations within our research group. It applies to all members - regardless of position or career stage. It aims to create a working environment, in which excellent research, personal growth, and respectful collaboration can all thrive together, pursued with the passion and intensity that great science deserves.

1. Purpose

This Code of Conduct serves as a binding framework that ensures ethical, professional, and responsible behavior among all participants, providing the foundation for decision-making, day-to-day interactions, and conflict resolution. It applies equally to every member of the research group and is actively upheld by everyone. At the same time, each of us takes responsibility for our own work, for shared data and resources, for joint projects, and for the well-being of the group as a whole. However, in addition to these high standards of quality, diligence, and responsibility, curiosity and enthusiasm for research as well as the joy of discovery should remain at the heart of what we do - doing science should be fun.

2. Welcoming Environment

We aim to create an environment, in which all members feel comfortable, safe, and valued, regardless of their cultural background or field of expertise. This starts with working closely together, sharing ideas freely, and making sure everyone feels part of the group. We promote interdisciplinary exchange between different fields and perspectives to generate new ideas and approaches and generate understanding. We welcome and actively support collaboration.

A welcoming environment also depends on safety and support. Every member should be able to ask questions, admit mistakes, and voice differing opinions without fear of negative consequences. We pay attention, together, to maintaining a good and motivating atmosphere, and we support one another.

Diversity and mutual respect are integral to our group: We value different academic backgrounds, disciplinary perspectives, and ways of thinking as a genuine strength, and we do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

3. Values

Our collaboration is built on a shared set of values that guide our daily actions, our decisions, and how we treat one another.

Good Scientific Practice and Integrity

Good scientific practice lies at the core of our work: We adhere to recognized standards at every stage of the research process, from data collection to publication, and we do not tolerate scientific misconduct.

Open Communication and Dialogue

Our everyday interactions are shaped by open-mindedness: We approach new ideas, perspectives, and methods with curiosity. We build trust and understanding by treating one another with respect and by making an effort to understand viewpoints that differ from our own. We rely on transparency and open communication so that decisions, expectations, and the status of work are always comprehensible to everyone involved. When we disagree, we talk it through constructively and without pressure, so that every voice is heard.

Fairness and Resource Management

Finally, fairness underpins how we work together: Credit for research contributions is attributed openly and in proportion to each person's contribution, and we manage shared resources carefully, efficiently, and in the interest of the whole group.

4. Career Development

We support the professional and personal development of every member, both individually and as a team. We encourage everyone to build expertise that is both broad and deep - specializing in their own field while developing knowledge beyond it - and to treat constructive feedback as an opportunity to grow. Just as important as technical skills are resilience, self-reflection, and personal growth.

We support members develop their soft skills and build their professional networks beyond their own institution, for example, through conference participation and collaborations.

Scope and Further Development

This Code of Conduct is a living document: We will review it regularly as a group and every member is invited to suggest changes and improvements.

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