

SDU 

Code of Practice for

Research communication
at Danish universities



Assuring responsible research communication

Universities are obliged to share their research results with society – which we do with pleasure. At the same time, we have to be sure that we do so honestly and openly. In an age where concepts such as “alternative facts” and “fake news” appear all too often in the public debate, and where both international studies and national media give rise to risks of exaggeration in press releases, etc. about research results, it is crucial that universities publish the truth.

In the spring of 2018, Universities Denmark therefore took the step of setting up a working group for responsible research communication. In early 2019, the group – which comprised representatives from the Danish universities – received approval from the Danish Rectors’ Conference for its proposal entitled “Universities Denmark’s principles for responsible research communication”.

Research carried out by Danish universities has long been accompanied by a high degree of trust and confidence, and we are keen to reinforce and continue the tradition of trustworthy research communication that has helped us earn this confidence. We have therefore prepared seven principles for the responsible communication of research carried out at Danish universities. These principles are based on the Danish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, which has been ratified by all Danish universities.

The seven principles for research communication do not impose restrictions on the freedom of each individual researcher to pursue his/her own research, nor on their freedom of expression. They are intended solely to underpin the quality of the research conducted.

Seven principles for responsible research communication

1. You must be correct

When communicating research, the contents must be correct and provide the target group with an accurate understanding of the relevant factual conditions pertaining to both the findings themselves and the research that produced them.

2. You must be relevant

Research communication should include all the conditions that can be assumed to be relevant to the recipient's understanding of the research findings.

3. You must mention any uncertainties

There is always a degree of uncertainty attached associated with scientific findings. You must make sure to mention this in your presentation.

4. You must mention the scientific status of the research

Do the findings enjoy broad backing in the scientific community, or do they deviate from the general consensus in the field? Are they provisional findings? Have they been published in scientific channels – and what is the status of these channels?

5. You must state the source of the research

Who is the source of the knowledge that is being communicated? Is it you/a researcher at your institute, or other researchers elsewhere? There must be no doubt about this.

6. You must clarify the perspective

You must make clear whether the researcher is speaking as an absolute expert in the field, or on the background of general knowledge, or is expressing an opinion regarding a broad field that may not necessarily fall within his/her own area of research.

7. You must take conflicts of interest into account

There may be conflicts of interest linked to aspects such as the financing of the research, patent applications, royalties, working relationships with companies and other grounds for disqualification. These must be included in the description.



Want to find out more?

If you would like additional information about the Code of Practice for Research Communication at Danish Universities, contact:

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