Code of Ethics*

*Disclaimer: These Code of Ethics has been drawn up in Italian. A non-legal binding English translation has been provided for information purposes only. The Italian version shall prevail over the English translation.

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Art. 1
Legal and ethical basis
The Code of Ethics has its legal and ethical basis in the laws listed in the appendix to this text and in the cited ethical documents. The binding nature of the principles set out in this Code derives from the fact that it is signed by all those who join the community of Università della Svizzera italiana (hereinafter USI).

Chapter 1
Definitions and general principles

Art. 2
Code of Ethics and intended recipients
This Code identifies, promotes and disseminates the general principles of behaviour of the entire university community and governing bodies, at both individual and institutional levels, in the everyday life of USI, in learning, teaching, continuing education activities, working relationships, scientific research (in the sense of production, transfer and dissemination of knowledge, innovation, design) and in the Third Mandate.

The principles of this Code address the personal and institutional conduct both within and outside USI, when its departments are represented, the academic body (including visiting and contracted teaching and research staff), the academic intermediate body (including visiting and contracted teaching and research staff), the student body (including those in mobility), administrative and service staff, and governing bodies.

Chapter 2 of this Code identifies the principles related to the interpersonal behaviour of members of the university community in the course of learning, teaching, continuing education, working relationships, scientific research and the Third Mandate; Chapter 3, in the light of the same principles, specifies and details the expected behaviour and best practices in scientific research activities.

Individual and institutional commitment to adherence to these principles in ensuring fair interpersonal relations at all levels and in all activities is the foundation of the university community.

Art. 3
Integrity
The integrity of individual and institutional behaviour both defines and epitomises the general principles that inspire the life of the university community in all its activities and duties. Integrity means that all conduct is inspired by the principles that the university community decides by this Code to recognize, adopt and respect.

Integrity expresses the bond of both reciprocity and complementarity between individual (each member of the university community) and institutional (all governing bodies and organs) commitment and responsibility. Conduct detrimental to these principles undermines both every member of the university community as well as the Institution.

By signing this Code, every member of the university community undertakes to recognize, adopt and respect the principles around which the university community is built and exists.

USI is actively committed to promoting, educating, maintaining and ensuring a safe, healthy and peaceful environment for study, teaching, research and work.
Art. 4  
Concept of integrity

Integrity is embodied in the basic principles of respect, honesty, reliability, and accountability. The principles should be understood as mutually interrelated and complementary, general in nature, continually evolving, and specified by the values that enable their proper interpretation and application.

Respect - the fundamental principle of recognizing the value and uniqueness of every other member of the university community and the university community as a whole. The principle of respect underpins the values of inclusiveness, diversity and freedom of thought.

Honesty - the principle that requires every member of the university community to behave, in carrying out their activities, in a fair and transparent manner toward others and towards the institution. Honesty builds trust and expresses respect for oneself, others, the institution, and one's role and activities within USI.

Reliability - the principle that governs the creation and maintenance of mutual trust among all members of the university community. Mutual trust is generated in an atmosphere of respect and honesty.

Accountability - the principle that establishes a sense of commitment and recognition of the consequences of one's behaviour towards every other member of the university community and the institution itself. This same principle also commits the institution to monitor and ensure compliance with the standards, establishing procedures to remedy violations of them in order to restore mutual trust among members of the university community and towards the institution.

Although the need to promptly remedy behavioural shortcomings makes the adoption of corrective measures inevitable, this Code primarily bases its observance and force on the natural sharing of the most appropriate behaviour and practices to ensure the harmonious and respectful coexistence of the university community and the best working and study conditions.

Restorative measures are always accompanied by the implementation of means enabling offenders to gain a different and proper awareness of their actions.

Chapters 2 and 3 of the Code clarify and specify the principles in relation to their areas.
Chapter 2  
Integrity in interpersonal behaviour in learning, teaching, continuing education, working relationships, scientific research and in the Third Mandate

Art. 5  
Integrity in interpersonal behaviour
USI promotes a culture aimed at protecting the mental and physical well-being of all members of the university community in the areas of work and study, supporting and promoting the principles of respect, honesty, reliability and accountability.

These principles are considered essential to ensure a working and learning environment characterised by cooperation and mutual trust, credible within and outside the university community and serving the mental and physical well-being of individuals.

Each of these principles is outlined and specified by the following articles, but none are separable from the others.

Art. 6  
Respect: the value of all members of the university community
Every member of the university community is to be respected in their dignity and integrity as a person and shall show the same respect to every other member of the community.

Each member shall behave in accordance with the principles of fairness and loyalty, and shall refrain from conduct having aggressive, hostile, denigrating, persecutory or harassing connotations, potentially damaging to a person’s honour, reputation, freedom, dignity and mental and physical well-being.

Each member shall refrain from behaviour that isolates or socially excludes a person or marginalises them, even partially, in their work or study programme.

USI encourages respect for expressions of thought, values and opinions of every member of the university community, regardless of their origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, education, role, religious belief, political opinion, age, mental or physical disability, lifestyle and personal circumstances.

USI defends freedom of expression in compliance with the principles set out in this Code.
a. **Respect for diversity and inclusion**

USI recognises equal dignity for all members of the university community and promotes diversity and inclusion, recognising the potential of each person as an added value for an open and innovative working and study culture.

USI does not tolerate any form of discrimination, particularly on the grounds of origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, language, education, role, religious belief, political opinion, age, mental or physical disability, lifestyle and personal circumstances.

USI ensures, also through recognition within its legal framework, respect for equal opportunities, inclusion, equal treatment, on equal terms and in equal roles, in all institutional activities; it guarantees that there shall be no discrimination in decisions, programmes, actions and procedures, particularly in recruitment, tenure and promotion procedures, in teaching programmes or in the allocation of financial support. Appropriate measures aimed at achieving effective equality do not constitute discrimination.

b. **Respectful cooperation**

USI promotes constructive, honest cooperation based on mutual respect and openness in its work and study activities and in all interpersonal relationships in order to ensure the best possible rapport between all the recipients of this Code, regardless of their personal identity.

*Ethical leadership* practices are promoted, notably responsible behaviour, trusting and understanding interactions, valuing the individual and focusing on mental and physical well-being in the workplace and the reconciliation of work or study life and private life.

c. **Respectful, open and fair communication**

USI promotes a culture based on open dialogue and the use of sincere, transparent, respectful and constructive communication based on neutral, non-discriminatory, non-violent and solution-oriented language, even in conflict situations. USI urges its members not to use stereotypes, even in the case of compliments and humour.
Art. 7
Honesty: the quality of interpersonal relations

USI encourages a collaborative working environment oriented towards mutual trust, where the diversity of its institutions and people is seen as an opportunity for open discussion, constructive dialogue and common growth. Methods, data, workflows and results, within the sphere of both work and study, are documented transparently and truthfully.

USI rejects conduct that is in any way in breach of this Code and urges every member of the university community to bring to light any conduct that is in conflict with the principles of this Code.

Art. 8
Reliability: trust as the cornerstone of institutional operation

USI is committed to building trust and reliability in interpersonal working and study relationships within USI and with its external partners. Cooperation between all members of the university community and within the governing bodies is characterised by excellence and quality of results in every sphere, of work and study.

USI sets out in the legal basis good practices to be applied in all processes, especially in those of strategic importance to the institution, in recruitment, tenure and career advancement procedures, in teaching programmes or in the allocation of financial support; it promotes good practices through training and awareness-raising activities.

Art. 9
Accountability: personal and institutional commitment

USI fosters a responsible and supportive environment founded on mutual respect. Each person shall behave professionally, diligently and in a manner appropriate to their role.

USI opposes a corruption-oriented culture and strives to prevent it. All members of the university community act in such a way that both interests and conflicts of interest are disclosed and resolved.

Donations have a clear, recognised and reputable origin. Donations do not affect the autonomy and independence of USI and do not restrict the freedom of teaching and research.

In accordance with data protection and information security regulations, USI guarantees the proper and confidential management of all information in its possession, respecting the privacy and personal interests of all its members.

USI and all the members of the university community shall act responsibly according to the principle of sustainability in the environmental, economic and social sense.

Each member of the university community is aware of his or her responsibility to comply with this Code. Persons in management positions and governing bodies shall respect the principles of this Code and serve as role models for the entire university community. Employee (hierarchical) relationships must not be exploited.

USI is committed to encouraging and promoting young talent in the academic, administrative and service sectors.
Art. 10  
**Misconduct detrimental to integrity and dignity of the individual**

Misconduct occurs when it violates the integrity of the individual. Such violations may involve legal obligations or one or more basic principles (respect, honesty, reliability, accountability).

Misconduct is behaviour that offends the dignity and integrity of the individual, notably: bullying, cyberbullying, ableism, discrimination, racism, sexism, sexual harassment, any form of violence, disrespectful and discriminatory language.

Also relevant to the assessment of misconduct is the perception of the behaviour by the recipient, i.e., whether they perceive it as detrimental or not detrimental to their mental or physical well-being.

An aggravating circumstance is the existence of a position of hierarchical inequality or subordination or a position of power between the person engaging in the inappropriate conduct and the person subjected to it. Relationships of control and dependence derive in particular from formal hierarchical relationships but also from seniority, work, study, professional status, financial means, age, gender, race and reputation.

USI monitors and ensures that no conduct detrimental to the dignity and integrity of any member of the university community is engaged in and takes appropriate action in the event of any breach of this Code.

Art. 11  
**Procedures in the event of breach of the Code of Ethics**

USI sets out and implements transparent and effective procedures for investigating instances of possible breaches of integrity in interpersonal behaviour and for deciding on possible corrective measures, favouring dialogue and mediation.

The applications and procedures provide for the following possibilities: consultation and mediation, investigation, decision and appeal.

USI defines the procedures, applications and corrective measures in the relevant regulations. Information on consultation and procedures is made available to the entire university community.
Chapter 3
Integrity and ethics in scientific research

Art. 12
Ethical basis

Within a shared national and international framework on research integrity and ethics, the ethical basis of this Code is based on the Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences\(^1\), and The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity of ALLEA – All European Academies.

USI researchers adhere to the principles, guidelines and recommendations included in the Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity of the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences.

For areas of research specifically regulated by cantonal and federal laws (listed in Table 1 in the Appendix), namely in the field of human and animal experimentation, data protection and privacy, intellectual property, unfair competition, civil and criminal law, refer to these provisions.

Art. 13
USI Ethics Committee: constitution and role

The Statute of the Università della Svizzera italiana regulates the appointment of Ethics Committee members.

The Ethics Committee has the purpose of promoting awareness of and implementing the ethical principles to be adopted by the university community in its internal and external relations with regard to research activities.

The Ethics Committee is also subject to this Code and is responsible for its proper promotion, implementation and development through the standardisation of practices and the training of researchers.

The Committee assesses the appropriateness and compliance with the research ethics principles of this Code in relation to research projects and publications produced by USI researchers. It also issues certificates of ethical compliance for research projects funded by third parties that require an ethical certificate for their conduct. Ethical evaluations of projects by third-party organisations in specific fields do not constitute an obstacle for the Ethics Committee to formulate its analyses in relation to the suitability of the project to the principles of this Code.

The Committee deals with the ethical examination of research projects, at the request of researchers or funding agencies, and scientific publications.

Article 14
Research Integrity and Ethics: Principles

Research integrity and ethics guarantee the validity of scientific knowledge and its reliability and credibility within the scientific community and vis-à-vis society and the public.

USI promotes awareness and provides resources to create a culture of research integrity in support of its commitments. The principles of respect, honesty, reliability and accountability are recognised as the foundations of research integrity and ethics. Each of these principles is outlined and specified in the following articles, but none is separable from the others. The good scientific practices in which these principles are expressed are constantly evolving and depend on disciplinary frameworks.

\(^1\) Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (2021): Code of conduct for scientific integrity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Art. 15</th>
<th>Respect: the value of everyone involved in research</th>
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<tr>
<td>The University community promotes mutual respect and the values of diversity, fairness and inclusion.</td>
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<td>USI guarantees respect for everyone involved in research, both human and non-human (animals), also in compliance with the specific legal provisions governing human and animal experimentation.</td>
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<td>USI promotes and guarantees research that respects health, the environment and ecosystems, also with regard to the principle of precaution.</td>
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<td>USI is committed to the promotion of two-way communication, collaborative research and citizen science relationships with the public.</td>
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<th>Art. 16</th>
<th>Honesty: research quality and scientific-methodological values</th>
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<tr>
<td>The university community conducts all stages of research with diligence, objectivity, openness and transparency, from work preparation to the production and sharing of methods and results, to their evaluation, review and publication.</td>
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<tr>
<td>USI upholds the importance of recognising the status of author and the correct and shared recognition of the contributions of all authors and those who made research possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The central role of publication and dissemination of research results is emphasised. USI researchers pursue the objectives of the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Re-usable) principles in research data management wherever possible.</td>
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<tr>
<td>USI encourages objectivity, impartiality and transparency in conflicts of interest at all stages and processes of research evaluation.</td>
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<td>USI guarantees autonomy and independence in research financed by private donations.</td>
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<th>Art. 17</th>
<th>Reliability: trust as the cornerstone of institutional operation</th>
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<tr>
<td>USI is committed to building trust and reliability in research and in the reciprocal work of researchers for higher scientific quality in all phases of conception, supervision, realisation, publication and circulation and control of methods and results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>USI promotes good scientific practices through educational and awareness-raising activities for researchers. USI provides in its regulations for the observance of good scientific practices in all processes, particularly in those of strategic importance to the institution such as the recruitment and promotion of academic staff.</td>
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<th>Art. 18</th>
<th>Accountability: personal and institutional commitment</th>
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<td>The principle of accountability refers first and foremost to the proactive attitude of care and attention, on the part of each member of USI in their role and of the institution, to anticipate and prevent potential negative consequences and impacts of scientific research, as well as to appropriately address those consequences and impacts.</td>
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<td>USI and each member of USI in their capacity have a responsibility to adequately train researchers in scientific best practices.</td>
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Scientific misconduct refers to a violation of research integrity and ethics. Such violations may concern legal standards, basic principles (respect, honesty, reliability, accountability), or discipline-specific standards. USI reiterates that: "Scientific misconduct can take a variety of forms. An act of misconduct may comprise several violations. Other comparable behaviours, while not explicitly described here, may also qualify as scientific misconduct." (Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (2021): Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity).

The following examples illustrate some forms of scientific misconduct:

- Fabrication of data or assumed results
- Falsification
- Plagiarism
- Incorrect behaviour with regard to authorship
- Inaccurate publication lists
- Mismanagement of data and materials, including misappropriation of data and research products
- Misconduct in collaboration
- Misconduct in evaluation and peer review
- Misconduct in scientific integrity procedures
- Other sources of scientific misconduct

USI sets out and implements transparent and effective procedures for investigating instances of possible breaches of scientific integrity and for deciding on possible corrective measures, favouring dialogue and mediation.

The bodies and procedures provide for the following tasks: consultation and mediation, investigation, decision and appeal, in line with the procedure laid down by the Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences (2021): Code of Conduct for Scientific Integrity.

USI defines the procedures, applications and corrective measures in the relevant regulations. Information on consultation and procedures is made available to the entire university community.

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<th>Art. 19</th>
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## Appendix

### Legal and ethical basis

**Integrity in interpersonal behaviour in learning, teaching, continuing education, working relationships, scientific research and in the Third Mandate**

- Statute of the Università della Svizzera italiana, Art. 50
- Regulations on the general working conditions of administrative, library, technical and auxiliary staff - Collective Employment Agreement, Arts. 51 and 52
- General regulations on the general working conditions of academic staff, Art. 36
- Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation, Arts. 7, 8, 15 and 16
- Employment Law (LL), Art. 6 para. 1
- Ordinance 3 on Employment Law (OLL3, Arts. 2 and 26)
- The Code of Obligations, Art. 328
- Gender Equality Act Arts. 3, 4 and 5
- Swiss Criminal Code, in particular: Arts. 122, 123, 126, 173, 174, 177, 179, 179septies, 180 para. 1, 181, 189, 190, 193, 194, 197, and 198

The application and nature of any measures and sanctions is defined, in particular, by:

- Legal basis on procedures and sanctions [to be created in 2024].
- General regulations on the general working conditions of academic staff of Università della Svizzera italiana, Arts. 25 and 36 - Diligence, loyalty and Scientific Integrity
- Regulations on the general working conditions of administrative, library, technical and auxiliary staff - Collective Employment Agreement, Arts. 51 and 52 – Personality protection
- Statute of the Università della Svizzera italiana, Art. 62 - and, consequently, the corresponding provisions laid down in the Regulations for Faculty Studies
Integrity and ethics in research:

- Statute of the Università della Svizzera italiana, in particular Article 61 Scientific integrity, misconduct and sanctions
- General regulations on the general working conditions of academic staff of Università della Svizzera italiana, Arts. 25 and 36 - Diligence, loyalty and Scientific Integrity
- Directive on the management of funded R&D projects, namely: Art. 12 - Rules of Scientific Conduct
- Knowledge and Technology Transfer Directive
- Swiss Academies of Arts and Sciences, Code of conduct for scientific integrity, 2021
- All European Academies (ALLEA), The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, revised edition 2023
- Federal Act on Research involving Human Beings (HRA; SR 810.30)
- Ordinance on Human Research with the Exception of Clinical Trials (Human Research Ordinance, HRO)
- Animal Welfare Act (AniWA)
- Animal Welfare Ordinance (OPAn)
- Federal Act on Copyright and Related Rights (Copyright Act, CopA), Art. 24d - Use of Works for Scientific Research Purposes
- Federal Act on Patents for Inventions (Patent Act, PatA)
- Federal Act on Unfair Competition (UCA)
- Federal Act on Data Protection (LPD)
- Cantonal Act on Data Protection (LPDP)