

RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE COMMITTEE FOR RESEARCH INTEGRITY (CRI)

(Approved by the Executive Board on 01 September 2023)

The Ghent University has endorsed the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity ([ALLEA-code](#)) and pursues an active policy to promote and enforce compliance with it within its operations.

The Committee for Research Integrity (CRI) primary task is to objectively investigate notifications of presumed breaches in complete independence and confidentiality and to issue advice to the (vice) rector. The CRI is also open for informative questions regarding research integrity and the handling of presumed violations of RI.

The composition, organisation and functioning of the CRI is described in this document.

Concepts/ Definitions

Actor	Every person who plays a role in the handling of the file according to the Procedure (CRI members, expert, vice-rector, rector,...)
Assistance provider	Person appointed by the Involved person who provides support during the Procedure. The Assistance provider is bound by the same regulatory conditions as the Involved Person and may accompany the Involved Person, who does the speaking, during the hearings. Each Involved Person can only appoint one person for each Procedure and informs the IC at the start of the Procedure.
CRI	Committee for Research Integrity, as defined in this document (Ghent University codex REG000096).
Involved person	Person involved in the investigation as, Presumed impaired or presumed perpetrator.
Notification	The reported presumed breach of research integrity.
Party	Persons directly involved in the Procedure: the Reporter, the Presumed Perpetrator, witness, Assistant Provider,...
Perpetrator	Person who committed the (presumed) breach of research integrity.

Personal Col (Conflict of Interest)	Spouse, legal partner or living together with an Involved Person; blood-related or second grade relationship , belonging to the same research group or being an intimist of an Involved Person. (Ghent University codex - REG000107)
Potential Col	Interests or commitments or positions of an Actor that may interfere with the objective of impartial decision-making on the dossier and thus represent a risk of conflict of interest.
Professional Col	If one is or has been in a supervisory position vis-à-vis an involved person, cooperated or cooperates in academic assignments of an involved person, belongs to the same research group for the past 3 years.
Procedure	The currently applicable Ghent University Procedure for the investigation of presumed violations of research integrity (Ghent University codex REG000095).
Regulation	This document. (Ghent University codex REG000096).
Reporter	The person, persons or institution notifying the presumed RI breach.
Third party	(In)directly involved in the Procedure, who cannot be regarded as a primary involved party (eg fellow scientists, press,...).
University management	Board of directors and all bodies to which the board of directors has delegated powers.

Composition of the CRI

Article 1 Composition CRI

The CRI consists of the chair, a permanent core with 12 UGent members and 2 permanent external members, a legal-academic expert and a research integrity secretary.

The University management appoints, six months after the appointment of a newly elected rector, the chair and the permanent core of the CRI for a period of four years.

The University management also appoints a permanent deputy for the legal-academic expert.

The CRI elects by majority a deputy chair from the Ghent University members of the permanent core.

The chair and members of the permanent core, as well as the legal-academic expert and deputy can only take up their mandate after having signed a statement in which they confirm that they have taken note of and agree with the Rules and Regulations and Procedure of the CRI, as well as being prepared to respect confidentiality as stipulated in the Rules and Regulation and the Procedure of the CRI.

If the chair, a member of the permanent core or the legal-academic expert prematurely resigns from the CRI, the University management can designate a permanent replacement for the remaining time of the 4-year period.

A 4-year mandate in the CRI can be extended two times (= maximum 12 years in total).

The secretary for research integrity is appointed by the functional domain Research , to guarantee continuity within the CRI and secure administrative expertise. The appointment is of unlimited duration. Any absences will be covered by a permanent deputy from the same functional domain. In order to assure maximum independence, the secretary for research integrity reports to the vicerector with regard to the activities carried out within the framework of the CRI.

Article 2 Nomination

Candidate CRI members should preferably meet the following criteria:

§ 2.1 The chair

- has an overarching view of research and the research community at Ghent university;
- meets the criteria for the members of the permanent core.

§ 2.2 The members of the permanent core

- are (former) ZAP members;
- the mandate is incompatible with the position of rector, vice rector, member of the University management, academic administrator, director of the University Services, dean, member of the University ZAP committee, member of the disciplinary committee, the position of an institutional and faculty ombudsperson or confidential adviser, or a member of a faculty board;
- have extensive research experience that is sufficiently recent to have the necessary feeling for the current research field and its methods;
- have an impeccable track record with regard to research integrity. If, as a candidate member of the CRI you have ever formally or informally been involved in an investigation concerning research integrity, irrespective of the capacity or status in which you were and irrespective of the period or institution to which one was affiliated at the time, this must be reported when nominated;
- have an interest in and demonstrable knowledge of research integrity;
- are able and willing to show a strong commitment and must be able to consider participation in the CRI meetings and investigation committee as a priority in their agenda.

§ 2.3 The legal-academic expert and deputy

- are lawyers affiliated with Ghent university as (part-time) ZAP members.

Article 3 Designation of the CRI members

The University management assesses the nominated candidates. For the appointment of the members the overall gender balance according to the rule max 2/3 of the same gender is taken into account and the 12 Ghent university members are divided equally among the alpha, beta and gamma faculties.

OPERATION OF THE CRI

Article 4 Plenary meetings

The chair convenes at least 1 plenary meeting per year.

If a member of the permanent core submits a reasoned request to convene a plenary meeting, the chair will comply with that request.

Every year, an annual report is made with an overview of the activities of the past year, with due compliance of confidentiality and with a view to possible university policy measures.

Decisions are preferably taken by consensus. When this is not possible, decisions are taken by majority vote and in case of equality of votes, the vote of the chair is decisive. The legal-academic expert (or deputy) and the secretary have no voting rights.

Article 5 The investigation committee

§ 5.1 Assignment

The assignment of the investigation committee is to independently and objectively examine and evaluate a notified presumed violation of research integrity, in accordance with the Procedure.

The investigation committee cannot take any measures, but draws up a final report in which the reported violation of the RI is confirmed or not. In the event of an infringement, the degree of seriousness is determined. The conclusion may contain an advice for remediation or sanction.

§ 5.2 Composition

The chair assembles an appropriate investigation committee for each notification of presumed violation of RI.

An investigation committee consists of the CRI chair, at least three permanent members, preferably one each from an alfa, beta and gamma faculty, and additionally the legal-academic expert.

The members summoned must not have any conflict of interest with the person(s) involved in the file.

The summoned CRI members must immediately report a possible conflict of interest in the file under investigation, after which the chair judges whether the conflict of interest gives rise to the replacement of the CRI member in the investigation committee. When the chair, secretary or legal-academic expert identify an impeding conflict of interest, the deputy takes their place.

§5.3 Binding meeting of the investigation committee

Meetings are convened by the chair depending on the needs of the file.

In order for the meeting to be binding, the chair, the secretary and at least 2/3 of the appointed members must be present. Members who are unable to attend will be informed about the discussions in the investigation committee.

The meetings of the investigation committee can be held physically, digital or hybrid depending on the agenda, in mutual consultation and with the approval of the chair. Minutes and reports can be approved in writing by consensus. If there is disagreement, a meeting must be held.

In principle, the reports are consensus documents. In case of disagreement, the report is approved by a simple majority. In case of equality of votes, the chair has a decisive vote. If desired, a minority opinion (with quantitative qualification) is included in the report.

The meeting reports are submitted to the members of the investigation committee for review. They can make remarks within a defined time period, upon which the report is finalized. The chair approves the final report.

Article 6 Tasks

§6.1 Tasks of the chair

- acts in accordance with the Procedure;
- arranges the activities of the CRI in collaboration with the secretary;
- compiles an investigation committee for eligible Notifications;
- decides, possibly assisted by the members of the investigation committee, on Potential Conflicts of Interest;
- determines all additional actions required for the correct handling of the file in accordance with the Procedure;
- decides, in consultation with the members of the investigation committee, at the start of the Procedure on the need to organize exploratory talks, invite witnesses or experts;
- opens and closes the meetings and, during the session, leads the decision-making on the basis of the individual interventions of the members of the investigation committee;
- finalizes the report, taking into account the comments made by the other members of the investigation committee;
- advises the rector, in consultation with the members of the investigation committee, based on the notification, whether additional preventive measures are necessary related to risks for the parties involved, the institution, third parties, animals, material and/or the environment;
- consults with the rector about a suitable communication strategy;
- provides the necessary explanation to the rector when submitting the final report;
- answers all questions from the Involved persons requesting additional information regarding the handling and outcome of their file as stated in the Procedure;
- convenes and chairs the plenary meetings;
- is responsible for drawing up the annual report of the CRI, which has to be approved by all members of the CRI.

§6.2 Tasks of the members of the investigation committee/ CRI

- prepare the meetings on the basis of the documents sent by the secretary;
- attend the meetings of the committee and provide the debates with their expert opinion on research integrity;
- advise at the request of the chair whether additional measures are necessary after a Notification to prevent further risk for the Reporter, the Involved persons, third parties, animals, material and/or the environment;
- provide the necessary input for the reporting and co-approve it.

§6.3 Tasks of the legal-academic expert

- the legal-academic expert advises the investigation committee / CRI in particular on legal aspects of the handling of cases, guaranteeing fair treatment of those involved and

the validity of the Procedure.

§6.3 Tasks of secretary

- provides advice regarding RI before and outside the formal Procedure to anyone who requests it;
- receives and follows up information and advice requests with regard to possible violations of research integrity in consultation with the chair;
- receives Notifications of presumed violations of research integrity and submits these to the chair of CRI;
- plans the activities of the CRI together with the chair;
- monitors compliance with the Rules and Regulations;
- monitors compliance with the Procedure;
- takes care of the correspondence and reporting within the Procedure;
- ensures that those involved receive each other's rebuttal and each other's reactions and replies to it;
- ensures the careful and confidential management of the documents, both with regard to the Parties involved and with regard to the members of the investigation committee;
- maintains a global overview of the Procedure, streamlines it where possible and proposes additions if necessary;
- takes care of all additional actions for the correct handling of a file in accordance with the Rules and Regulations and Procedure.

RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE CWI

[Article 7](#)

Independence, confidentiality and objectivity are the central values within the CRI Procedure. These help determine the credibility of the CRI. This means that the deontology of the CRI members is closely tied to these values. This means that the following rules must be followed:

- all information obtained from the files must be treated as confidential;
- possible conflicts of interest are reported immediately (see article 5);
- advice is formulated in an independent manner and without external influence.

[Article 8](#)

If, during the term of appointment, a member of the CRI becomes the subject of an ongoing Procedure or investigation with regard to research integrity, irrespective of the institution at which this investigation takes place, or if serious doubts have arisen within their field of expertise with regard to the integrity of their scientific work, the member must immediately report this to the chair and secretary of the CRI. The University management may then decide to withdraw the appointment and designate a new member.

[Article 9](#)

The members of the CRI must report any absences longer than four weeks timely so that the proper functioning and decision-making processes are not compromised. In the absence of the chair, secretary or legal-academic expert, the designated deputy is appointed. In the absence of a member of the investigation committee, the chair appoints a

substitute member from the permanent core, if necessary. The minimum composition (chair + 3 members + legal-academic expert + secretary) must always be ensured.

Article 10

In the event of non-compliance with the Rules and Regulation or the Procedure, the University management may decide to terminate the appointment as a member of the CRI with immediate effect. In this case, the University management will designate a deputy/new member/chair.

TRANSITIONAL MEASURES

Article 11

In order to ensure the efficient follow-up of ongoing cases, the code Rules and Regulation approved by the University management on April 29th 2022 remains applicable for all files opened prior to the final approval of this code Rules and Regulations.