

# Code of Conduct of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)

## (Code of Conduct)

*In any case of doubt or conflict the German Version always prevails*

Based on a broad participation of the KIT divisions, institutes, service units, staff units, equal opportunities commissioners and staff council, the Presidential Committee in its meeting of August 22, 2016 and the KIT Senate in its meeting of September 19, 2016 have agreed on the following Code of Conduct.

### Preamble

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) as “The Research University in the Helmholtz Association” wants to contribute to solving major societal, economic and environmental challenges through research, teaching and innovation in a highly diverse work environment.

For KIT, this objective involves a particular social responsibility which does not only consist in the observance of legal regulations and the safeguarding of scientific probity but also includes particular ethical requirements as regards the behavior of the members and employees e.g., respectful and cooperative dealings with colleagues, personal integrity, the rejection of corruption, respect for ecological issues and zero tolerance of any kind of discrimination.

These legal and ethical requirements on KIT and its members and employees are covered by the present Code of Conduct providing a binding orientation framework. In addition, the Code of Conduct is a self-commitment towards third parties and applies accordingly to the dealings with business partners of KIT.

This Code of Conduct reflects the central priority of ethical and legally compliant behavior at KIT.

## **1. Scope**

This Code of Conduct applies to all members and employees of KIT.

KIT endeavors to ensure that this Code of Conduct also applies to legal entities with KIT as shareholder, external committee members and business partners, unless these parties have their own relevant regulations.

## **2. Collaboration at KIT**

### **2.1 Mutual Respect and Appreciation**

Collaboration at KIT is based on respect, value and appreciation and is aimed at trustful cooperation. Through their behavior, members and employees work together towards trustful dealings free from discrimination, intolerance and offensive behavior.

Ensuring individual development and fair working conditions, including fair conditions of payment, fair working times, projectable career paths and the protection of the family, is an integral part of the values of KIT.

Comprehensive conflict management contributes to positive working, studying and research environments. In the case of conflicts, the managers and executive staff of KIT in particular, assume responsibility and cooperate with the members and employees to find solutions.

### **2.2 Non-discriminatory Studying and Working Environments**

Members and employees of KIT maintain non-discriminatory studying and working environments and respect the dignity of each individual in day-to-day relationships.

KIT distinguishes itself through variety and diversity. No one at KIT shall be treated less favorably on grounds of gender disability, ethnic and/or social origin, nationality, religion or conviction, sexual orientation or other grounds.

### **2.3 Information and Participation**

Responsible action and participation of all members and employees of KIT require adequate information. Internal regulations and necessary data thus are suitably communicated and made easily accessible. Members and employees contribute to ensuring that information can be provided for free and is accessible to anyone.

### **2.4 Equal Opportunities**

Equal opportunities for women and men during work and studies as well as the reconcilability of studies, work and family are essential pillars of the value system of KIT.

All members and employees, in particular those with personnel responsibility, promote the actual implementation of equal opportunities for women and men and consider equal opportunities as an integrated guiding principle in all their fields of activity.

### **3. Protection of Individual Rights**

Free development and respect for each person's personality are assigned particular significance at KIT.

#### **3.1 Health and Safety at KIT**

The physical and emotional integrity of each individual as well as the quality and safety of workplaces and working conditions are of central importance at KIT. The rules for maintaining health and safety at work, in particular the requirements of operational safety, plant safety, chemical safety, biological safety and transport safety, are observed conscientiously.

Moreover, it is understood that interaction at KIT is attentive and is based on mutual assistance in imperiling situations.

#### **3.2 Protection of Personal Privacy**

Members and employees of KIT attach high value to mutual personal privacy and are respectful in dealing with others. Such respect involves the particular responsibility of ensuring studies and work without sexual harassment.

#### **3.3 Protection of Personal Data**

KIT attaches particular importance to the right of informational self-determination and the observance of data protection regulations. Members and employees act in such a way that protection of personal data is ensured. Suitable processes and IT systems are available for that purpose and are being developed and improved continuously. KIT ensures effective implementation of safety measures through appropriate regulations and processes.

#### **3.4 Protection of Intellectual Property and Confidential Information**

Members and employees of KIT observe the applicable laws for protection of intellectual property (e.g. industrial property rights and copyright). Intellectual property, including technological knowledge, i.e. know-how that is not deemed to be public knowledge, of members and employees of KIT as well as of third parties is respected and protected within the framework of research, teaching and innovation at KIT.

Confidential information, in particular company and business secrets, or information to be kept confidential due to contractual agreements are treated confidentially by the members and employees and hence are made accessible to entitled persons only. Security in handling electronically stored confidential information is given particular consideration.

## **4. Responsibility in Science, Research, and Teaching**

At KIT science, research and teaching are committed to the truth and to human well-being. In accordance with Article 5 (3) of the German Constitution (GG) members and employees of KIT hence act legally and ethically responsible within the framework of the freedom of science, research and teaching.

Within the framework of research projects, members and employees of KIT ensure a lawful and ethically responsible treatment of participating test persons and of animals, plants and other living organisms used in tests.

Moreover, integrity and probity of scientific work are of great value and represent essential principles of the community of KIT. All scientific activities of KIT are based on the principles of good scientific practice. These principles are also conveyed in teaching as the basic pillar of scientific work.

In the case of evaluations and academic examinations, all participants observe the personal integrity of the examinee or person to be evaluated and ensure objectivity, neutrality and the principle of equal treatment. In addition to respectful interaction, confidentiality as regards examination and evaluation procedures is warranted observing the general rules on avoiding conflicts of interest. Students are required to observe the relevant rules (study and examination regulations, PhD regulations, thesis regulations).

## **5. Environmental Responsibility**

Work at KIT contributes to scientific knowledge gain, is of lasting benefit for mankind and supports the protection of the environment. Members and employees of KIT treat resources sparingly. Moreover, KIT essentially takes up ecological challenges and participates in the development of new environmentally friendly technologies, techniques and methods with the objective of preserving the natural basis of life.

## **6. Business Relations with External Parties**

### **6.1 Legally Compliant Purchasing and Sales**

KIT members and employees behave ethically and thus promote a fair competition without participating in or tolerating agreements that restrict such competition.

The general procurement principles are observed when awarding contracts. Members and employees observe in particular the competition and equal treatment principles, the principle of efficiency and economy and the principle of transparency and documentation.

When exporting or moving material or immaterial research results and assets or providing technical or advisory support, members and employees of KIT inform themselves about the relevant legal regulations and observe the trade and customs law.

## **6.2 Dealing with Business Partners and Public Authorities**

Through contracts, KIT incurs various liabilities and hence participates in general legal relations. Members and employees observe the applicable legal system and deal cooperatively and transparently with the contractual and cooperation partners of KIT. Within the framework of good cooperation, business partners are requested to observe this Code of Conduct in business relations with the KIT.

Being a public corporation, KIT and hence its members and employees are obliged to work with national and international authorities and other public authorities cooperatively, constructively and transparently while considering and maintaining the legal conditions and observing the relevant official instructions.

## **7. Personal or Official Conflicts of Interest**

### **7.1 Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest**

All members and employees of KIT act in accordance with public interests, take objective decisions and are aware of possible prejudices. Conflicts due to impacts on official action by private interests are identified and avoided, if possible, or solved in accordance with the respective rules such that the interests of the general public and one's own integrity are preserved.

Anti-corruption rules are pursued with determination. When receiving presents from third parties (gifts, invitations or other benefits), all KIT members and employees, as public servants, in addition observe the corresponding legal regulations to avoid giving the slightest impression of influence being exerted on official interests.

Since, in addition, reliable business relations based on confidence are essential elements in avoiding conflicts of interest, KIT expects its business partners to apply the same standard for avoidance and control of corruption and conflicts of interest.

### **7.2 Right of Remonstrance for All Members and Employees of KIT**

Doubts as regards the legitimacy of an official order are to be communicated directly to the delegator or his/her supervisor. If the direct supervisor maintains the order and if the doubts regarding legitimacy persist, the person concerned is to contact the next higher executive officer. By request, the order shall be confirmed in written form. Basically, members and employees are obliged to execute official orders unless the mandated behavior violates the dignity of persons or is criminal or contrary to regulations and the criminal nature or regulatory offense is obvious to the respective instructed person.

For the rest, the remonstrance obligation of public officials and professors remains untouched.

### **7.3 Submission of Reports**

Should the behavior of any member or employee not correspond to the recommendations given in this codex, KIT offers various possibilities of protecting all other members and employees and reporting questionable behavior to the responsible contact persons.

If there are relevant indications, members and employees as well as third parties can contact the Compliance and Corruption Prevention Representative or other central representatives at KIT by phone, in writing or personally to obtain advice at an early stage in case of doubts. In this way, risks, statutory violations and/or damage can be avoided beforehand. Information, can also be given via the anonymous electronic whistleblower portal or forwarded to the external entrusted attorney<sup>1</sup>.

To protect members and employees of KIT from baseless suspicion, care must be taken to make true, traceable and concrete statements only.

All information and circumstances of a report, personal data and contents of discussion shall be treated confidentially by those participating in establishing the relevant facts.

## **8. Implementation of the Code of Conduct**

The reputation and integrity of KIT are determined essentially by the compliant and value-oriented behavior of the KIT members and employees. Through their behavior during their work and employment as well as through their academic or other tasks, members and employees foster and preserve the values of KIT as laid down in this Code of Conduct and in other external and internal regulations.

Within the framework of their management and teaching tasks and regarding the observance of this Code of Conduct, the executive managers and teaching staff are role models for members and employees and contribute essentially to raising the awareness of basic behavior requirements at KIT by conveying the contents and importance of this Code of Conduct as well as of further internal and external regulations.

This Code of Conduct takes effect on October 1, 2016.

Karlsruhe, 28.09.2016

signed by  
Professor Dr.-Ing. Holger Hanselka  
President

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<sup>1</sup> Email addresses and web links at: [www.comp.kit.edu](http://www.comp.kit.edu) under the heading of "*Hinweisgebersystem*".