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The German version exclusively has legally binding character.*

# **Guidelines for Ethical Principles of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT)**

Version dated July 22, 2024

In accordance with Article 10, par. 1, cl. 1 of the KIT Act (KITG), the Senate of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) adopted the following Guidelines for Ethical Principles on July 22, 2024.

## **Preamble**

*As The Research University in the Helmholtz Association*, KIT fully exploits in research, higher education, and innovation its synergy potential resulting from combining the tasks of a national large-scale research institution with those of a university of the state of Baden-Württemberg.

The present Ethical Guidelines address every member and employee of KIT<sup>1</sup>. Together with the superordinate legislation and the Joint Statutes of KIT, these Guidelines define standards and obligations for the ethically responsible acting of KIT, its bodies, and its members. They also are the basis of cooperation and communication with the society and all partners of KIT. In the individual case, these Ethical Guidelines will be further detailed and developed in open dialog and partnership exclusively.

## **1. Ethical Principles**

With the freedom of arts, sciences, research, and teaching being guaranteed in Article 5, par. 3 of the German Constitution, we, the members and bodies of KIT, are aware of the influence our work and its results have on societal, technical, economic, and ecological systems.

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<sup>1</sup> As specified in Article 9 of the Act of Baden-Württemberg on Universities and Colleges (Landeshochschulgesetz) and Article 1 of the Joint Statutes of KIT.

We assume responsibility for our acting and for the consequences of our actions. Our work serves the gaining of knowledge, the sustainable benefit of humanity, the protection of the environment, and peaceful purposes exclusively.

We commit to cooperating with each other in partnership, truthfulness, and trust irrespective of our position, origin, religious denomination, gender, and other forms of diversity.

We undertake to observe the present ethical principles in word and deed.

## 2. Principles of Acting

Compliance with the legislation, the Joint Statutes, the Rules for Safeguarding Good Research Practice, the Rules for Compliance, and all other internal regulations is a major element of ethical acting.

While pursuing our activities, we, the members and bodies of KIT, are obliged in particular:

- To create knowledge, to foster education, and to contribute to mastering the challenges facing society,
- to pursue research, education, and innovation for the benefit of humanity and for the protection of our natural basis of life,
- to consciously and responsibly handle<sup>2</sup> armaments research<sup>3</sup>, security-relevant research<sup>4</sup> (of concern), and dual use goods<sup>5</sup>,
- to act in accordance with and to impart these Ethical Principles and the sense of responsibility in teaching, education, and advanced training and to promote critical reflection,
- to create transparency about armaments research, security-relevant research (of concern), and research relating to dual use goods at KIT:

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<sup>2</sup> As outlined in the current recommendations of the Joint Committee of the German Research Foundation and the National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina on the Handling of Security-Relevant Research. (<https://www.security-relevant-research.org/>)

<sup>3</sup> Armaments research is understood to be the development of weapons, ammunition, and other armaments (goods, software, and technology) as well as of goods designated for the execution of military actions, which are subject to restrictions or requirements to take action according to Article 5, par. 1 of the Foreign Trade Act (Außenwirtschaftsgesetz, AWG).

<sup>4</sup> Definition of the Joint Committee on the Handling of Security-Relevant Research (DFG/Leopoldina): "Security-relevant research includes scientific work that has the potential to produce knowledge, products, or technologies that can be misused by third parties to harm human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, the environment, or peaceful coexistence. This is designated as "of concern" if the misuse can be immediate and the potential damage is significant."

<sup>5</sup> Definition of the Joint Committee on the Handling of Security-Relevant Research (DFG/Leopoldina): "As a rule, dual use goods are products that can be used for both civil and military purposes."

- Researchers create transparency in connection with their research projects (e.g. in the report of third-party funding acquired or when responding to parliamentary inquiries, etc.), about armaments research carried out by them, cooperation with third parties active in armaments research, the execution of security-relevant research (of concern), and potential dual uses of their research products and methods (among others, potential military use of research results and methods by the customer and/or cooperation partner must be notified).
- KIT provides general transparency on the issues above (e.g. in case of inquiries by the BMBF (Federal Ministry of Education and Research), MWK (Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Science, Research, and the Arts) or parliamentary bodies, etc.).
- to not have armaments research and its results as well as military uses covered by mandatory courses, mandatory internships, and similar mandatory study programs to ensure that students have the choice of not having to deal with it; critical evaluation of research results with respect to dual use and use for military purposes, however, is desired in mandatory courses,
- to always consider and weigh potential applications, including opportunities, hazards, and risks of misuse, of our work and to make to an accompanying technology assessment, if applicable,
- to reconcile potential consequences of publication of security-relevant research results with the principle of transparency and, if necessary, to restrict or refrain from the publication, if the latter may entail concrete hazards or damage to the public,
- to minimize hazards and the risks of misuse by an adequate selection of our means, methods, customers, and cooperation partners as well as by an appropriate dissemination of information,
- to keep in mind the problem of frequently unforeseeable applications of our research results (e.g. dual use) and to keep this awareness alive throughout the complete research process,
- to ultimately abstain from research activities that are associated with risks that cannot be restricted,
- to make the results and findings obtained accessible to the scientific community and the society in general within a reasonable period of time and in compliance with the legislation and contractual regulations under careful consideration of potential risks and to exclusively support research meeting these requirements by our activities and the supply of resources,
- to participate in public discourse and in particular in the further development of societal framework conditions for science and engineering, e.g. by the co-

development of standards and laws as experts, members of commissions, or as advisors of politics,

- to use our competencies for and to make generally understandable contributions to the information of society in dialog,
- to responsibly use the personal, temporal, financial, and material resources available to us, and
- to pursue the development of science and engineering in the own realm and in neighboring disciplines for the continuous update and further development of our expertise.

Mutual cooperation and partnership in trust as a basis of the KIT culture is achieved by

- honesty, truthfulness, and truth in dealing with each other,
- respect, recognition of equality, and tolerance irrespective of the position, origin, religious denomination, gender, and other forms of diversity,
- promotion of the personal and professional development of all members of KIT for present and future tasks within and outside of KIT, and by the
- participation of students and employees in decision-making and organizational processes at KIT.

We are aware of the fact that disputes and conflicts are part of our life and work together. As the rankings of values are not the same for all KIT members, conflicts of values cannot be excluded. If these cannot be resolved by the parties concerned, they must be discussed by the parties in the presence of an arbitrator with a view to find solutions or a compromise.

### 3. Responsibilities

In a first step, all members and employees of KIT are requested to align their daily acting to the present Ethical Principles and principles of acting derived from them to the best of their knowledge and belief. All persons having staff management tasks act as role models and have a special responsibility for compliance with these Ethical Principles in their areas of competence.

Many questions, also of ethical character, require the competent or collectively agreed upon bodies and commissioners to be consulted first (see Annex). In addition, the KIT Senate appoints two Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles and an Ethics Commission.

## **Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles**

The Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles are:

- Experienced researchers with integrity, of which at least one person belongs to the group of university professors of KIT as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 1 KITG in conjunction with Article 14a KITG; the second ombudsperson may also be a researcher with leadership experience of the group of academic employees of KIT as outlined in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 2 KITG in conjunction with Article 14b KITG.
- No members of the Executive Board, the KIT Supervisory Board, and no Division Heads during their terms of office.

The Ombudspersons are elected by the KIT Senate for a term of four years. A second term of office is possible.

The Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles have the following tasks:

- Advising employees, members, and bodies of KIT and arbitrating in cases of conflicts (also by calling in expert arbitrators),
- coordinating their activities with other ombudspersons and commissions of KIT and acting wherever ethical principles are concerned,
- appealing to the Ethics Commission of KIT in case of problems of fundamental character or in individual cases of conflicts that cannot be settled amicably, and
- reporting annually to the KIT Senate.

The Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles represent each other in cases of apprehension of bias or absence.

## **Ethics Commission of KIT**

The Ethics Commission of KIT consists of:

- Four persons from the group of university professors of KIT as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 1 KITG in conjunction with Article 14a KITG,
- two persons from the group of academic employees of KIT as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 2 KITG in conjunction with Article 14b KITG,
- one person from the group of doctoral researchers as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 4 KITG in conjunction with Article 60, par. 1, cl. 1, b of the Act of Baden-Württemberg on Universities and Colleges (Landeshochschulgesetz, LHG),

- a doctoral researcher pursuing full-time employment at KIT and belonging to the group of academic employees of KIT as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 2 KITG in conjunction with Article 14b KITG,
- two persons from the group of students as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 3 KITG in conjunction with Article 60, par. 1, cl. 1, a LHG,
- two persons from the group of other employees as specified in Article 3, par. 7, cl. 2, No. 5 KITG (administrative and technical staff),
- a member of the Staff Council,
- a member of the Executive Board according to Article 5, par. 1, cl. 1 KITG,
- the two Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles as guests with advisory votes, and
- the KIT Commissioner for Compliance as guest with an advisory vote.

If necessary, the Commission has the right to call in external guests with advisory votes.

The Ethics Commission members entitled to vote are elected by the KIT Senate for a term of two years. The term of office of the student members is one year. Repeated reelection is possible. In agreement with the Executive Board, the Ethics Commission elects a chairperson.

The Ethics Commission has the following tasks:

- Promoting the dissemination of these Ethical Guidelines and their discussion,
- initiating interdisciplinary discourse on new and ethically sensitive research areas in particular,
- further developing the present Guidelines for Ethical Principles of KIT, if necessary,
- discussing matters of fundamental importance and making final recommendations upon request by an Ombudsperson for Ethical Principles, a member of the Ethics Commission, the KIT Senate, or the Executive Board,
- reviewing and assessing the ethical permissibility of research projects - in particular of projects involving test subjects - upon invocation by the Executive Board, an Ombudsperson, a member of the Ethics Commission, or the responsible head of the respective research project. The Ethics Commission must be informed immediately about any modification of an already positively assessed research project. The Ethics Commission reserves the right to change its assessment of the research project in case of ethical concerns caused by changes of the research design,
- discussing the risks of security-relevant research at KIT, in particular when a research project might be associated with major risks for human dignity, life, health, freedom, property, or the environment, or with the disturbance of peaceful coexistence; risks of concern of security-relevant research exist in particular when scientific work may be

assumed to give rise to knowledge, products, or technologies that may be misused directly by third parties; the Ethics Commission investigates such research projects upon request by the Executive Board, an Ombudsperson, a member of the Ethics Commission, or the responsible head of the research project; the Ethics Commission can actively inform itself about cases of security-relevant research at KIT,

- making a final recommendation for the Executive Board in cases of individual conflicts, and
- addressing the Senate in ethical matters of fundamental importance.
- The Ethics Commission of KIT sets up rules of internal procedure.

#### 4. Entry into Force

The present Guidelines for Ethical Principles of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology enter into force on the day of adoption by the KIT Senate. On that same day, the Guidelines for Ethical Principles of Karlsruhe Institute of Technology dated October 17, 2016 cease to be in force.

Karlsruhe, July 22, 2024

Signed by Professor Dr. Oliver Kraft, Acting President of KIT

## Annex

List of competent or collectively agreed upon bodies, ombudspersons, and commissioners according to Section 3, par. 2.

### Higher-level Commissioners and Ombudspersons

- Animal Protection Commissioner
- Biological Safety Commissioner
- Commissioners for Cases of Sexual Harassment of Men
- Commissioners for Cases of Sexual Harassment of Women
- Commissioner for Exports/Commissioner for Export Control
- Commissioner for the Needs of Disabled Persons
- Commissioner for the Needs of Disabled Students and Students Suffering from Chronic Illness
- Company Physicians
- Compliance and Corruption Prevention Commissioner
- Data Protection Commissioner
- Fire Protection Commissioner
- Gender Equality and Equal Opportunities Commissioner
- Hazardous Goods Commissioner
- Immission Control Commissioner
- IT Security Commissioner
- Ombudspersons for Doctoral Researchers and Supervisors
- Ombudspersons for Ethical Principles
- Ombudspersons for Safeguarding Good Research Practice
- Radiation Protection Officer
- Risk Commissioner
- Safety Commissioner
- Safety Officer according to SÜG (Non-disclosure Protection Commissioner)
- Security Commissioner (Large-scale Research Responsibilities)
- Specialists for Occupational Safety
- Waste Management Commissioner
- Water Protection Commissioner



## **Commissioners at the Organizational Units or in Certain Projects**

- Commodities Control Commissioner
- IT Commissioners
- Laser Protection Commissioners
- Operations Commissioners for Large-scale Research Responsibilities
- Project Managers (Genetic Engineering)
- Quality Management Commissioners
- Radiation Protection Commissioners
- Safety Commissioners (occupational safety according to SGB VII)