



“la Caixa” Foundation’s research integrity policy

As a minimum common frame of reference for good research practices (notwithstanding other frameworks), “la Caixa” Foundation adopts the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity \(ALLEA\)](#), which all research and innovation activities conducted with funding from our organization must respect.

As set out in this code, good research practices are based on fundamental principles of integrity. They guide researchers in their work as well as in their engagement with the practical, ethical and intellectual challenges inherent in research.

These principles are:

- **Reliability** in ensuring the quality of research, reflected in the design, the methodology, the analysis and the use of resources.
- **Honesty** in developing, undertaking, reviewing, reporting and communicating research in a transparent, fair, full and unbiased way.
- **Respect** for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment.
- **Accountability** for the research from idea to publication, for its management and organization, for training, supervision and mentoring, and for its wider impacts.

Research misconduct is traditionally defined as **fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism** (known as the FFP categorization) in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results:

- **Fabrication** is making up results and recording them as if they were real.
- **Falsification** is manipulating research materials, equipment or processes or changing, omitting or suppressing data or results without justification.
- **Plagiarism** is using other people’s work and ideas without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author(s) to their intellectual outputs.



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These are just three of the most usual forms of misconduct, but unfortunately there are many others that must also be avoided, in particular the violation of professional, legal and ethical responsibilities. Examples of such unacceptable practices include bias in the independence of studies, exaggerating findings, lack of scientific rigour, collaborating with abusive publications, breaching duties of confidentiality, misuse of personal data, violating the rights of people and/or animals in research and failure to respect the environment, etc.

The collaboration of all agents involved is essential in detecting and combatting cases of misconduct. Consequently, anyone having knowledge of improper conduct in research of any nature must report this, in the first instance, to the heads of their centre who in turn will notify "la Caixa" Foundation, should the project have received or be receiving support from our institution. The "la Caixa" Foundation contact person will be the corresponding project manager. If "la Caixa" Foundation receives information about possible misconduct carried out within the framework of a project receiving support from the Foundation it will inform the research performing organization.

PROCEDURE IN THE CASE OF MISCONDUCT

In the event that a possible case of misconduct is detected, the research performing organization must carry out an internal investigation of the case and present the corresponding report to "la Caixa" Foundation.

The research performing organization must have a procedure established for cases of potential misconduct and must also:

- 1 Assign a member of staff to act as contact person for any "whistleblower" who wishes to raise issues related to research misconduct in the organization.
- 2 Carry out an impartial, fair and timely investigation of all reports of misconduct made against its employees, students and/or collaborators (including project partners) employing internal or external resources, according to its procedure.
- 3 Confidentially notify "la Caixa" Foundation about any report of misconduct made against its employees, students and/or collaborators (including partners) on any project which has the support of or for which funding has been requested from "la Caixa" Foundation. Such notification must provide information on the category of misconduct and the investigation process being undertaken. It must be sent as soon as possible and in any case no later than the moment the decision is made to perform an investigation. If there is to be a full investigation, the organization must confidentially advise "la Caixa" Foundation of the name of the person being investigated.



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- 4 Keep "la Caixa" Foundation informed of the progress of the investigation and of the misconduct allegations. "la Caixa" Foundation may decide to send a representative as an observer at any point in the process. Investigations must be concluded no later than one year following receipt of the allegation, unless a duly justified reason is given to extend the term.
 - 5 Notify "la Caixa" Foundation of the outcome of the investigation as soon as it is reached and submit the final report, which must include details of the disciplinary measures that will be applied within the organization.
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Should "la Caixa" Foundation consider that the report submitted by the organization fails to duly clarify the situation of potential misconduct, or that the gravity of the act jeopardizes the reputation of the organization, "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to undertake its own investigation using independent experts.

MEASURES IN THE CASE OF MISCONDUCT

If the investigation concludes that there has been a case of research misconduct, "la Caixa" Foundation reserves the right to adopt one or more of the following measures:

Suspension and/or full or partial cancellation of the funding awarded.

Request to reimburse the funding awarded.

Restrictions on future funding by "la Caixa" Foundation.

Specific oversight of any future or potential project.

Publication of retractions or corrections where necessary, or other corrective actions.

The extent to which these measures will be applied to the organization, the project and/or its members will be based on the characteristics of each case.

The foregoing is applicable without prejudice to the disciplinary measures which will be adopted by the organization.



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