



ELEMENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT

This Code of Conduct incorporates and is meant to voice a common understanding of basic principles of ethical behaviour and standards of conduct for respectful cooperation and communication and for conducting research within ELEMENTS.

It contains guidelines that must be understood as a guide for thought and action aiming at the highest standards of conduct that are expected of all ELEMENTS members, regardless of their location, grade, or academic rank, in order to reflect the collaboration's ethical principles.

ELEMENTS members are therefore required to implement and comply with the values of the Code of Conduct within the collaboration. They are also encouraged to transmit these values beyond ELEMENTS within their working groups, research departments and institutes.

Note that this Code does not attempt to list all the ethical challenges ELEMENTS members may possibly face and it also does not address or cover the implications and consequences that members might be accountable for if they act in violation of related clauses in their work contracts. It rather serves as a statement to define and set out our principles.

Respect for the dignity, worth, equality, diversity and privacy of all persons

ELEMENTS enjoys a rich, multicultural workplace marked by a high level of professionalism and a wide diversity of individual backgrounds. The diverse mix of personalities, experiences, perspectives, and talents across the collaboration, makes for a stronger ELEMENTS. Therefore, ELEMENTS places much value on the diversity of its members and is committed to equality as well as to fostering an inclusive culture. The latter must be expressed in the dignity and exemplarity of the way its members interact, esteem, and respect each other's worth and individual contributions.

ELEMENTS expects its members to always behave ethically and with utmost mutual respect, without regard to gender, sexual orientation, race or ethnicity, religious belief or background, political preference, physical appearance, citizenship, national origin, age, marital, parental or career status or choices, family responsibilities, or physical or mental impairment.

Therefore, ELEMENTS encourages and acknowledges the importance of diversity in its research team by:

- Encouraging staff with different individual backgrounds to bring in diversified experiences, methods, research ideas, perspectives on scientific questions, ways to organise work and communicate.
- Supporting an open exchange of individual ideas and the development of diverse practices to improve the cooperation between scientists and advance research.
- Banning any discrimination on the basis of personal qualities or choices listed above.

Zero Tolerance for Unjust Treatment and Harassment

Within ELEMENTS:

- Everyone is treated equally and fairly with respect to enjoying their rights and exercising their duties.
- Specific individual requirements, different levels of experience, various contract situations, and family obligations are taken into consideration in our dealings with and expectations of each other.
- Discrimination, bullying, and (sexual) harassment are under no circumstances tolerated. The privacy and safety of all members is always respected.
- Everyone is free to speak up about inappropriate and unjust behaviour. Any member who wishes to report a violation of this policy is asked to speak, in confidence, to the Equality Officer.

Everyone is respected as a person, prone also to fallability and mistakes. Misbehaviour, in contradiction to this Code of Conduct, will be addressed openly. If someone has been confronted with accusation of misbehaviour, a mediation process will be initiated. ELEMENTS encourages a reasonable forgiving attitude amongst its members after a successful mediation process and in case of sincere apologies with respect to any misbehaviour.

Welcoming Working Conditions

ELEMENTS believes that members perform best in a positive, respectful, safe, and secure work environment, where the dignity and diversity of individuals is embraced, where every colleague is treated fairly, where trust, responsibility, accountability, mutual respect, and open communication are highly encouraged. All ELEMENTS members are expected to contribute to maintaining this standard:

- All ELEMENTS members are committed to establishing a respectful and open culture of discussion. Offensive, exclusionary, disrespectful comments, behaviours or display, jokes, threats, or violent language are deemed not acceptable. When speaking to or about others, members must make themselves aware of their preferred pronouns, in order not deliberately misgender them. They must be tactful and considerate of how their wording may impact others: communicating in a cultural sensitive way and refraining from any offensive behaviour or comment, as well as general statements or attitudes regarding the diversity of human beings and their worth. Members must always allow their colleagues to finish speaking without interrupting them, as well as never address them in an angry, intimidating, humiliating, insulting, disparaging, or demeaning manner.
- All ELEMENTS members are committed to delivering results in an accountable and professional manner. To this end, and acknowledging the importance of an appropriate work-life balance, ELEMENTS supports a healthy workforce and has an open attitude to issues that can affect individual work life balance. This entails that everybody is free to, while nobody must feel obliged to, work outside standard working hours. Meetings outside standard working hours and travel during weekends should possibly be avoided. Support is provided for those with family obligations to the best possible extent.
- Principal investigators, supervisors, and scientists in leading positions are role models, so they are responsible for setting a good example for younger scientists and for never abusing their authority or power. They must provide feedback on performance in a fair and respectful way, and discuss with their team members ways of improving working conditions. They are also expected to encourage an ongoing dialogue about ethical conduct issues, allow staff to express their concerns and needs, and foster a healthy team atmosphere based on mutual trust and the principles stated in the present Code.

Career Development

- ELEMENTS actively promotes career development by supporting professional training and personal development at all career stages.
- Career development support is also expected from supervisors, mentors, principal investigators and all other scientists in leading positions.
- Willingness to actively develop their careers in the best possible way is, in turn, expected from all members of ELEMENTS.

This code of conduct and the appended glossary are based on: the "Code of Conduct" of the CRC-TR211 and the "Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct" of the WHO.

GLOSSARY

Discrimination includes actions, made either directly or indirectly, based on distinctions or prejudices which have the purpose or effect of treating individuals or groups unfairly or unjustly.

Equality means that the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of all individuals are considered, valued and favoured equally and that they will be treated equally in respect of their rights, responsibilities and opportunities.

Harassment is an unwanted behaviour directed at another identified person that:

- is repeated or pervasive (although a single incident may be viewed as harassment), and
- has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person.

Harassment may be present in the form of words, gestures, or other actions that alarm, threaten, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, or cause personal humiliation, embarrassment or emotional distress to another person. Harassment may not necessarily happen face to face, but may also occur in written communications, email, phone, and supervision methods.

Sexual harassment is understood as any unwelcome, unsolicited and unreciprocated, sexual advance, request for sexual favour, verbal or physical conduct or gesture of a sexual nature, or any other behaviour of a sexual nature (including sexually-coloured remarks) that has or that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to offend, humiliate or intimidate another person.

Work-life balance is defined as the positive relationship between work and other equally important activities in life, such as family, leisure or other activities. The positive relationship varies from person to person according to their life and work-related demands.