
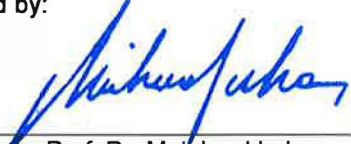



Guideline on the Ethics Committee of JKU	
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1. Objective

In its mission statement, the Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU) is committed to the freedom and responsibility of its scientists to attain unbiased knowledge, combined with a high level of social responsibility. Moreover, the mission statement determines that the actions of people at the JKU are characterised by honesty, transparency and fairness, and that integrity in research, teaching and administration as well as in the transfer of knowledge is a high priority.

People working at scientific universities shall enjoy the highest degree of freedom in research and decision making, while respecting the principles of scientific ethics.

The JKU is committed to the principles of scientific ethics as stated in the *Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU*, the *WMA Declaration of Helsinki - Ethical Principles for Medical Research Involving Human Subjects*¹, and the *Annotated Model Grant Agreement*² among others:

Main ethical principles:

- *Respecting human dignity and integrity*
- *Ensuring honesty and transparency towards research subjects and notably getting free and informed consent (as well as assent whenever relevant)*
- *Protecting vulnerable persons*
- *Ensuring privacy and confidentiality*
- *Promoting justice and inclusiveness*
- *Minimising harm and maximising benefit*
- *Sharing the benefits with disadvantaged populations, especially if the research is being carried out in developing countries*
- *Maximising animal welfare, in particular by ensuring replacement, reduction and refinement ('3Rs') in animal research*
- *Respecting and protecting the environment and future generations*

An Ethics Committee is installed at the JKU, which, when requested by scientists of the JKU including those entrusted with tasks of the JKU according to Section 29 paragraph 9 Austrian university law (referred to below as "scientists of the JKU"), prepares reports regarding the ethical integrity of planned research or publication activities (e.g. *ethics approvals* for project proposals as part of Horizon Europe), **for which Certificates of Integrity are required**. When preparing the reports, the Ethics Committee may also make recommendations on how to handle any ethical problems that arise during the proposed research or publication activities. The Ethics Committee report forms the basis for a Certificate of Integrity, which is subsequently issued by the member of the rectorate responsible for research providing the requirements have been met. This is intended to give scientists of the JKU the optional possibility of being able to provide any Certificates of Integrity that might be required for funding or publication.

The responsibilities of the Ethics Commission of the Faculty of Medicine at the Johannes Kepler University Linz and of the Animal Ethics Council of the Faculty of Medicine at the Johannes Kepler University Linz are not affected by the instalment of the Ethics Committee.

2. Scope & period of validity

This guideline shall apply to all scientific staff at the JKU and for an indefinite period.

¹ [Microsoft Word - WMA DoH Übersetzung DE Rev 190905 \(bundesaeztekammer.de\)](#)

² AGA - Annotated Model Grant Agreement, Version 5.2, 26. June 2019, H2020 > Chapter 4 > Section 4 > Article 34, Page 270-271

3. Responsibilities

The rectorate at the JKU, the Ethics Committee at the JKU and the scientists of the JKU are responsible for ensuring that this guideline is adhered to.

4. Ethics Committee

4.1 Scope of responsibility and tasks

- (1) The Ethics Committee is responsible for research and publication projects that are carried out by scientists of the JKU and for which funding bodies or journals request a Certificate of Integrity because the research or publication project involves ethical issues (referred to below as "research or publication project").
- (2) The Ethics Committee has no jurisdiction in matters that are covered by the Ethics Committee according to Section 30 of the Universities Act 2002, Section 8c of the Federal Act on Hospitals and Sanatoria and other applicable federal and state laws, or are covered by the Animal Ethics Council. However, if such a matter is brought to the attention of the Ethics Committee, they will inform the applicant that they are not responsible for the matter and refer the applicant to the relevant body.
- (3) The Ethics Committee performs its activities independently. Its members act voluntarily, in an honorary capacity and free of instructions, and they are subject to the duty of confidentiality. The duty of confidentiality is unlimited in time and does not end when a member no longer holds a function on the Ethics Committee.
- (4) Members are not liable for reports compiled by the Ethics Advisory Board and they are not liable for decisions made on the basis of the reports.
- (5) The Ethics Committee compiles reports regarding the ethical integrity of planned research and publication activities within its scope of responsibility and can make recommendations on how to handle any ethical problems that arise in the process.
 - a. The application for a Certificate of Integrity must be submitted by the person responsible for the research or publication project (project leader) to the office of the Ethics Committee (Vice Rectorate for Research, Gender and Diversity / Department of Research Services and Knowledge Transfer) using the form "Application for Review of the Integrity of a Research or Publication Project to the Ethics Committee of the JKU" with all the necessary documents.
 - b. The Ethics Committee advises on the ethical integrity of the research or publication project. The Ethics Committee will inform the applicant in writing of any conditions or requests for changes to the research or publication project they require with regard to ethical integrity.
 - c. If the Ethics Committee compiles a positive report, the member of the Rectorate responsible for research issues a Certificate of Integrity, which is then sent by the office of the Ethics Committee to the applicant.

4.2 Appointment and composition

4.2.1 Composition of the Ethics Committee, term of office, standing down

- (1) The Ethics Committee consists of five members from among the members of the University of the JKU. Their term of office is four years from the date of appointment. Members of the Rectorate cannot be appointed as members of the Ethics Committee. The members should be researchers from different departments of the JKU with relevant research experience and an ability to handle research ethics problems. Each member is assigned a substitute member who represents the member if they are prevented from attending. The composition of the Ethics Committee is to be as balanced as possible with regard to gender and affiliation to the scientific groups of university staff.
- (2) Four members are appointed by the Rectorate with the consent of the persons concerned when they are proposed by the respective faculty assembly, with each faculty of the JKU proposing one member. Following their appointment, these four members are to choose the fifth member by mutual agreement - and with the fifth member's consent. Multiple reappointment is possible for all members.
- (3) Before the end of the four-year term of office, the term of office of a member ends if:
 1. the member dies,
 2. the member declares to the Rectorate that they are withdrawing from their function
 3. the member is dismissed early from the function by the Rectorate due to a serious breach of duty, a criminal court conviction, poor health or a proven loss of confidence.
- (4) The appointment of the members and the constitution of the Ethics Committee is announced in the JKU bulletin.

4.2.2 Chair of the Ethics Committee

At their first meeting, the members of the Ethics Committee elect a Chair and a Deputy Chair for the duration of the four-year term of office by secret ballot with a simple majority of votes. Multiple re-election is permitted.

4.2.3 Advisory members

The Ethics Committee can ask other people who have experience in a particular matter to attend its meetings as advisory members on a case-to-case basis.

4.3 Rules of procedure

- (1) The rules of procedure for university organisations (referred to as the GO-KO in German) also apply to the Ethics Committee unless otherwise specified in these guidelines, in particular below.
- (2) Meetings of the Ethics Committee shall be convened as needed. Applications for a report regarding a Certificate of Integrity in accordance with 4.1.(5) of this guideline are to be decided by the Ethics Committee within eight weeks of the office receiving the application documents.
- (3) Reports on research or publication projects with ethical issues contain a statement on the ethical integrity of the research or publication project in the form of one of the statements listed below, a justification and, if necessary, recommendations for handling possible ethical problems.

The reports have to give one of the following explicit statements:

- a. "The research or publication project has ethical integrity."
 - b. "The research or publication project can raise ethical problems, but appropriate actions will be taken to ensure that it has ethical integrity."
 - c. The research or publication project has ethical integrity only if additional remedial actions are taken to ensure that it is carried out with ethical integrity. Here, the Ethics Committee must recommend and list suitable actions.
 - d. "The research or publication project, in its current form, does not have ethical integrity."
- (4) If the Ethics Committee votes for item 4.3 para. 3 lit. c, the applicant can submit an adapted application for the research or publication project addressing the recommendations of the Ethics Committee. When the adapted application is submitted, it is sent to all members of the Ethics Committee so the Ethics Committee can vote by circulation on whether the recommendations of the Ethics Committee have been adequately addressed. The circulated document provides for the possibility of voting explicitly for or against the ethical integrity of the adapted research or publication project, and is sent to all members of the Ethics Committee with notification of a period of at least one week in which their vote must be returned.
- (5) If the revised research or publication project is found to have ethical integrity on the basis of the remedial actions having been taken by the required majority, then the Ethics Committee issues a corresponding report. The text in the report is prepared by the Chair of the Ethics Committee.
- (6) Reports issued by the Ethics Committee are immediately forwarded to the member of the Rectorate responsible for research; positive reports serve as the basis for issuing the Certificate of Integrity.

4.4 Proceedings

- (1) When an application for a Certificate of Integrity is received, the office of the Ethics Committee verifies it is within the scope of responsibility of the Ethics Committee in accordance with 4.1 of these guidelines. If the Ethics Committee is not responsible for an application, it is rejected and applicant is informed accordingly with reference to the relevant provisions of the guideline.
- (2) The office of the Ethics Committee makes sure that the application documents are complete and requests any documents that are missing. The deadline in accordance with 4.3 (2) runs from the time all the application documents are available. The office of the Ethics Committee immediately sends the complete set of application documents to the members of the Ethics Committee.
- (3) Having received the complete set of application documents, the Chair of the Ethics Committee convenes a meeting of the Ethics Committee, taking into account the deadlines specified in the rules of procedure for university organisations (referred to as the GO-KO in German). The applicant is then informed about the date of the meeting.
- (4) Following the decision of the Ethics Committee, the office of the Ethics Committee sends the written report - and, if applicable, the Certificate of Integrity issued by the member of the Rectorate responsible for research - in digital form to the applicant. If the Ethics Commission give a positive report, there must be no delay in issuing the Certificate of Integrity and sending both the written report including the Certificate of Integrity to the applicant.

5. Miscellaneous

The proceedings at the JKU do not replace any legal, judicial or official proceedings relating to the facts regulated here.

6. Contact

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Department Research Service and Knowledge Transfer
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4040 Linz
Extn: 3396