

A Code of Ethics for the Verein für Socialpolitik

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The immediate societal relevance of economic issues has placed high demands on the professional behavior of economists and related social scientists. In particular, the production and propagation of scientific knowledge presumes the following principles: 1) transparency in all professional activities; 2) objectivity and independence in analysis and in the generation of economic policy recommendations; 3) fairness to whom it may concern in the generation of academic research as well as the assessment and use of research findings.

The members of the *Verein für Socialpolitik* support the efforts of national and international professional associations and research funding bodies to implement and maintain good scientific practice. Members are held responsible for following these rules in both letter and in spirit. In particular, members of the *Verein* are committed to follow the rules of good ethical behavior detailed below:

II. Code of behavior for economists and related social scientists

1. Research should be transparent and reproducible. Assumptions should be stated clearly. Empirical work should, legal strictures notwithstanding, make data and methods available for the purpose of replication.
2. Good scientific practice recognizes the current state of knowledge and in particular the existing research of others according to the norms of good scientific practice. All relevant sources used in research should be cited. This also applies to work of the researcher him- or herself.
3. In scientific papers (including discussion papers), researchers should list in a footnote or in a more extensive description on a website all external sources of financial or other forms of support including research infrastructure.
4. Researchers are expected to disclose in scientific papers all relevant factors which might lead to real or even potential conflicts of interest. Wherever possible, this rule should also apply to publications in nonprofessional media.
5. Economic policy advice should be given in accordance with professional standards. Scientists should differentiate between opinion, value judgment and factual findings.
6. Expert opinion should be given in an unbiased and open fashion. The conclusion of consultancy reports should be independent of the interests of the contractors.
7. Should a scientific paper, a report or an expert opinion require prior approval by third person before publication, this fact should be made explicit.
8. Potential conflicts of interest should be weighed carefully when refereeing or assessing the academic research output and funding proposals of others. In case of doubt, scholars should recuse themselves from the particular.
9. Members of the *Verein* are expected to behave according to the code of ethical behavior, and should demand the same behavior of fellow members.

III. Implementation

1. The Code of Ethics of the *Verein für Socialpolitik* will be published on the association's website.
2. Editors and referees of the *Verein's* journals are bound in particular by the conditions of the Code of Ethics. Research accepted for publication in these journals must satisfy the conditions set out in the Code.
3. The *Verein* will endorse the implementation of its standards for all scientific journals published in countries where its members reside.
4. A standing Ethics Commission (*ständige Ethikkommission*) and an Ombudsperson or person of confidence (*Vertrauensperson für ethische Angelegenheiten*) will advise the executive board on questions of research ethics:
 - The *Verein*, acting through its governing board (*Erweiterter Vorstand*), shall appoint an Ombudsperson. This person will enjoy the exceptional confidence and trust of the *Verein's* members. The Ombudsperson serves in a consultative capacity in all issues related to the Code, and should mediate in adversarial matters. He or she is nominated by the executive board (*Engerer Vorstand*) and elected by the governing board for a term of two years.
 - The *Verein* shall appoint a standing Ethics Commission of three members, who are nominated by the executive board and elected by the governing board. Members serve a term of three years. The Ethics Commission will meet when the need arises, in particular when called into session by the Ombudsperson. The Ethics Commission deliberates over issues brought to it and prepares recommendation for action for the Executive Board.
 - The ethics commission and the ombudsperson will report annually to the governing board on its activities.