Code of Practice for Research

Researchers at the ZSL Institute of Zoology (IOZ) are expected to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the conduct of their research, outlined in the IOZ Code of Practice for Research.

Background

The Institute of Zoology (IOZ) is the research division of the charity Zoological Society of London. The IOZ conducts world-leading research directly addressing global challenges in the field of conservation science.

Researchers at IOZ are expected to observe the highest standards of ethics and integrity in the conduct of their research, outlined in the IOZ Code of Practice for Research. The Code applies to all IOZ staff, including consultants and affiliated staff, registered and affiliated students, research technicians, and Honorary Research Associates (henceforth 'IOZ researchers').

Standards of research integrity

IOZ researchers are expected to follow best practice guidance outlined in the UKRI Code of Practice for Research and The Concordat for Research Integrity. They must carry out research with honesty, rigour, transparency and openness, and with care and respect for those involved in research.

Honesty

IOZ researchers must be honest in all aspects of research, including submission of grant proposals, reporting methods and procedures, collecting data, reporting results, making justifiable claims based on research findings, and in acknowledging the contributions of others. IOZ researchers must not misrepresent their credentials, qualifications or experience.

Rigour

IOZ researchers must exercise care, thoroughness and rigour in their research by using appropriate methods, adhering to agreed protocols and when communicating results.

Transparency and openness

Research should be openly discussed and questioned, in so far as permitted by data protection requirements and intellectual property rights. Confidentiality must be observed where information is sensitive, and care must be taken when discussing work that is incomplete or has not been published. Once results have been published, relevant data and materials must be made available to other researchers on reasonable request, provided that it is consistent with ethics approvals and consents that cover data and materials, and any intellectual property rights pertaining to them. IOZ researchers must comply with UKRI open access policies and must consult the funders' latest requirements in this respect.

IOZ researchers must also comply with the ZSL Data Protection Policy in relation to their work.

Care and respect for those involved in research

IOZ researchers must be mindful of their duty of care for all participants in and subjects of research, including humans, animals, the environment and cultural objects. They must not disclose the identity of human individuals or groups involved in the research without their consent or place anyone involved in research at risk of harm or danger.

Research involving partners and collaborators

IOZ researchers must develop and maintain respectful and ethical relationships with partners and collaborators based on mutual respect for academic traditions and institutional and local circumstances without compromising research standards or legal obligations. Where the research is led by a partner organisation, the project may be managed primarily through the research governance and ethics processes of the lead institution. However, IOZ researchers involved in projects governed by the policies and procedures of external partners must ensure that all ethical aspects comply with this Code of Practice.

Research involving animals

Approval must be sought from the ZSL Ethics Committee for Animal Research (ECAR) or the ZSL Animal Welfare Ethical Review Board (AWERB), as applicable, if the research may have implications for the safety or welfare of animals. Researchers must observe Home Office requirements and regulations in accordance with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 Amendment Regulations 2012 (ASPA), the Veterinary Surgeons Act 1966, the Animal Welfare Act 2006, and the Zoo Licencing Act 1981. All research regulated by ASPA requires Home Office project and personal licences and must comply with ZSL's Use of Animals in Research Policy.

Research involving human participants

IOZ researchers are expected to ensure the safety, dignity, wellbeing and rights of those associated with research, as well as observe legal and/or ethical requirements for human subjects involved in research. IOZ Researchers must adhere to Data Protection Law and comply with ZSL's Data Protection Policy. Informed consent of participants must be obtained. Where research involves human participants, or involves data relating to identifiable human subjects, IOZ researchers must consult the ZSL Human Ethics Committee (HEC) for approval. PhD and MSc students must follow the ethical approval processes of their registered university and inform the ZSL HEC of the project.

Regulated Professions

IOZ researchers who are members of a regulated profession must follow the requirements and guidance of the body regulating their profession, i.e., Veterinary Surgeon.

Conflicts of Interest

IOZ researchers are expected to declare and manage potential or actual conflicts of interest (see ZSL's Conflicts of Interest Policy. Conflicts of interest include a personal or familial affiliation to, or financial involvement with, any organisation sponsoring or providing financial support for a research project, including personal financial interest, receipt of personal benefits or receipt of material or facilities for personal use. Conflicts of interest also include personal or familial affiliation to research partners and collaborators, where the relationship may compromise judgement or bias a critical assessment of the research, including peer review.

Intellectual Property

IOZ researchers must not infringe on any existing intellectual property rights in the conduct of their research or in its dissemination. In collaborative projects all parties must ensure that there is clarity and agreement regarding the ownership and use of intellectual property prior to the start of the project. This includes the results of the research, data and samples used or created during the research, as well as questionnaires, interviews and transcripts, recordings and images. Responsibilities and procedures for the storage and disposal of data must be made clear at the start of any project. Prior to leaving IOZ researchers must discuss and agree an appropriate plan for retention of research data, including photographs and specimens, with their supervisor and/or line manager.

Equality and Diversity

IOZ promotes equality in all aspects of its activity and IOZ researchers are expected to understand and apply ZSL's Equality and Diversity Policy and ZSL's Dignity and Respect at Work Policy.

IOZ provides support and supervision for researchers so that they can carry out research to the required standards and provides development opportunities and training to achieve the necessary skills.

The IOZ Code of Practice for Research will be included in the induction of new IOZ researchers. Failure to comply with the Code of Practice for Research may lead to an allegation of Misconduct in Research and may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Relevant ZSL Policies and Procedures

Institute of Zoology Misconduct in Research Policy
ZSL Conflicts of Interest Policy
ZSL Data Protection Policy
ZSL Dignity and Respect at Work Policy
ZSL Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
ZSL Equality and Diversity Policy
ZSL Global Code of Conduct
ZSL Global Safeguarding Policy
ZSL Global Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure

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