

# EGU Code of Conduct

## 1. Preamble<sup>1</sup>

The European Geosciences Union (EGU) is the leading organisation for Earth, planetary and space science research in Europe. The EGU is a member-led organisation dedicated to the pursuit of excellence in geoscience research, upholding and promoting the highest standards of scientific integrity, open science and open access research. The EGU facilitates dialogue and the exchange of information between scientists, the media, policymakers and the public and is recognised as a trusted source of impartial, evidence-based geoscience information.

Guided by a diverse scientific community, the EGU provides a means to share, publish, promote and collaborate on the latest geoscience research. The EGU is committed to, and is a leader in, open access scientific publications. The annual EGU General Assembly provides the largest and most prominent forum in Europe for sharing geoscience knowledge and building a collaborative community of scientists.

The EGU is committed to the development of the next generation of geoscientists through the provision of world-class education, training and resources to secondary school teachers, university geoscience educators and early career scientists. The organisation is committed to ensuring that these professionals have equitable access to the latest scientific knowledge and expertise.

This document presents the principles and code of conduct adopted by the EGU. The aim is to promote ethical integrity and an inclusive, constructive and positive approach to science within the broad scope of the EGU activities. The standards set out in this document are intended to guide members, officers and participants in EGU activities on the expected and required behaviour and conduct. They are guidelines and do not imply a legal obligation on the part of EGU with respect to its members.

EGU encourages the reporting of any misconduct by following the guidelines outlined in the following sections of this document. The EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust are reachable year-round at the email address [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) to address any unresolved issue related to ethics and misconduct. EGU officers dealing with misconduct reports are committed to strict confidentiality.

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<sup>1</sup> The EGU Code of Conduct benefitted from the following sources:

- The AGU Policy on Scientific Integrity and Professional Ethics;
- The Code of Conduct of the European Research Council;
- The Code of Conduct for expert evaluators of the European Research Council;
- The Code of Conduct of the Society for Sedimentary Geology;
- The Code of Conduct of the AdvanceGEO Partnership; and
- The Joint EGU-AGU statement of principles for a code of ethics for the geosciences.

## **2. Code of conduct – general principles**

The EGU is committed to providing an ethically correct, equitable, safe, open, and respectful environment for scientific activities. The EGU encourages all geoscientists to pursue integrity, honesty, respect, courtesy, responsibility, rigour and equity in their professions. In particular:

- The EGU values diversity and equality as essential values to ensure an ethically correct and respectful approach to scientific research. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, intimidation, censorship and plagiarism are considered unethical behaviors.
- The EGU requires that its members carry out research and draw their conclusions based on critical analysis of the evidence. Findings and interpretations are expected to be reported fully, accurately and objectively, along with the related uncertainties.
- The EGU encourages the use of reporting methods that ensure verification and reproducibility by others. Making data findable, openly accessible and interoperable, and allowing data exchange and re-use between researchers, are encouraged, as are making software and codes accessible.
- The EGU emphasises that author credit should only be given to those who have meaningfully contributed to research. The names and roles of all people who made significant contributions should be properly acknowledged.
- EGU members and other people involved in EGU activities are required to disclose any conflict of interest that could compromise the trustworthiness of their work.
- The EGU encourages officers, members and people taking part in EGU activities to clearly distinguish professional, scientific-based comments from their personal opinions when publicly presenting their work and/or engaging in public discussions related to EGU activities.
- The EGU encourages members to take responsibility to act or intercede, where possible, to prevent misconduct. It also recommends that any case of misconduct be promptly reported (see Section 7 for more details).
- EGU members are required to self-report if they are currently under investigation or have been convicted of misconduct or a criminal activity when they are nominated or apply for an EGU committee or office, or they are selected to receive an EGU award.

## **3. Misconduct in research**

Misconduct is defined as a violation—proven by evidence—of the standard codes of scholarly conduct and ethical behavior in scientific research. Misconduct also includes the unethical and/or biased treatment of people in a professional setting and while participating in scientific activities. Misconduct includes actions such as discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, intimidation, censorship and plagiarism. Misconduct does not include errors of judgment; honest errors in the recording, selection, or analysis of data; or differences in opinions involving the interpretation of data and results.

The EGU may undertake an investigation and decide to take action when misconduct is reported by any person and is directly connected to an EGU activity. EGU may also investigate cases that may have an impact on the reputation or integrity of the Union. The EGU may also sanction its members

when misconduct related to Earth, space and planetary sciences is sanctioned by other judicial bodies, including scientific associations, research bodies and academic institutions.

#### **4. Code of conduct for publication of scientific research**

The EGU publishes scientific journals according to the principles of peer review and transparency of the review process. The EGU also adheres to the highest ethical standards in terms of open access and open review.

In particular, the EGU subscribes to the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and adheres to the COPE's Code of Conduct and Best Practice Guidelines for Journal Editors as well as the Ethical Guidelines for Peer Reviewers. The EGU also adheres to the principles of transparency and best practices in scholarly publishing set out by the Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association (OASPA).

The EGU is committed to:

- guaranteeing editorial independence;
- respecting the privacy of all stakeholders in the research and publications process; and
- ensuring author copyright and a liberal distribution license.

An allegation of misconduct related to EGU publications should be addressed first to the relevant editor, who will assess whether the case can be informally resolved through a discussion between the interested parties. If the issue is not resolved, or the reporting person feels that the issue cannot be resolved through an interaction with the editorial board, a formal complaint may be addressed to the Chair of the Publications Committee at the email address [publications@egu.eu](mailto:publications@egu.eu). The EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust are reachable year-round at the email address [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) to address any unresolved issue related to ethics and misconduct (see Section 7 for more details). EGU officers dealing with misconduct reports are committed to strict confidentiality as outlined in Section 7 below.

##### ***4.1 Code of conduct for editors of scientific journals***

EGU editors are expected to provide unbiased consideration to all manuscripts offered for publication by avoiding any conflicts of interest. They are expected to process manuscripts promptly with full respect for authors, reviewers and other editors.

Information about a manuscript under consideration cannot be disclosed to anyone other than the professionals who are involved in the peer-review process.

Editors are required to adhere to the workflow adopted by the Publications Committee and each journal to process the manuscripts submitted for publication.

#### ***4.2 Code of conduct for authors and contributors***

Authors are expected to carefully document methodology, assumptions and uncertainty in order to present a precise and accurate account of the research performed and its results and conclusions. Manuscripts are expected to include appropriate, but not redundant, referencing and information to ensure reproducibility. Data and other information have to be made available according to the best practices adopted by the EGU. Authors are expected to only submit original material that is not under consideration for publication elsewhere and that was not published before, except in the form of an abstract, an electronic preprint, or a discussion paper or similar format. Manuscripts based on conference proceedings should include a significant amount of new material compared to the conference paper, and the proceedings publication should not make out more than 60% of the manuscript content. Authors are expected to avoid fragmenting the publication of results in order to ensure that new findings are presented with clarity and appropriate synthesis.

All authors listed on a scientific work must have contributed significantly to it, and vice versa—all persons who contributed to the work need to be named in the list of authors. Corresponding authors are required to inform all co-authors of the changes that are made to the submitted manuscript when preparing revised versions. All co-authors share responsibility for the quality and integrity of the submitted and published manuscript. In addition, sources of financial support, if any, must be clearly disclosed.

The EGU reaffirms that plagiarism—defined as the use of any material and ideas developed or created by another person without acknowledging the original source or the use of previously published text without proper attribution—is an unethical behavior. Self-plagiarism—defined as the use of one's own previous work in another context without proper attribution, and the use of one's own previously published text without proper attribution—is also considered unethical by the EGU. To avoid any form of plagiarism, each manuscript newly submitted to the EGU will be properly checked. The decision on whether a manuscript should be rejected because of fraud or should proceed to the peer-review process rests with the handling editor. The similarity reports for manuscripts are also made available to referees.

Any manipulation of citations (e.g., including citations not contributing to a manuscript's scientific content, or using citations solely aiming at increasing an author's or a journal's citations) is also regarded as misconduct by the EGU.

Authors are expected to disclose to the editor any potential conflict of interest related to a submitted manuscript.

Authors of contributions published or broadcasted in the media, including the web and social media, are expected to adhere to the same high ethical standards as for journal publications.

#### ***4.3 Code of conduct for reviewers***

Reviewers are expected to provide a brief, clearly written, constructive and unbiased feedback in a timely manner. Reviewers are required to avoid any conflict of interest and to adhere to the highest ethical standards set out by the relevant scientific community and journal.

Each paper should be judged based on its merits without any personal bias. Reviewers are required to adhere to the review criteria set out by the relevant publication venue. Reviewers are expected to support their statements with appropriate citations whenever possible. They are also expected to report to the editor any knowledge they have of any significant similarity between the manuscript under consideration and any other published paper or submitted manuscript. Reviewers may never use or disclose unpublished information, arguments, or interpretations contained in a manuscript under consideration and should never include personal criticism of an author in a manuscript review.

## **5. Code of conduct for nominations and candidates' selection**

The EGU issues calls for nominations for officer positions, scientific medals, awards, fellowships and other forms of funding. The EGU adheres to the highest standards in terms of transparency of the related selection process. The ethical basis is absolute trust and honesty among nominators, candidates, committee members and EGU officers. To this end, medal and award committee members are publicly disclosed on the EGU website. Written information on the assessment of candidates and minutes of the committee meetings are exchanged between committee members through the dedicated EGU Forum, which is set to ensure the highest confidentiality.

The EGU is committed to equal opportunity for all persons and therefore seeks as diverse a pool of award nominations as possible with regard to gender, disciplines, institutional types, geographical locations and other considerations.

An allegation of misconduct related to an EGU call for nominations may be first addressed to the relevant committee chair or the EGU Medals and Awards Committee Chair. The EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust are reachable year-round at the email address [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) to address any unresolved issue related to ethics and misconduct (see Section 7 for more details). EGU officers dealing with misconduct reports are committed to strict confidentiality as outlined in Section 7 below.

### ***5.1 Code of conduct for nominators***

EGU members submitting nominations are expected to summarise the merits of the candidate fairly and rigorously. Because candidates are expected to be EGU ambassadors and role models for the community, nominators should put forward persons who adhere to the highest ethical standards. Nominators are expected to disclose any past allegations or institutional proceedings against the candidate resulting in a finding of professional misconduct, or any pending formal complaints related to the candidate's professional conduct.

### ***5.2 Code of conduct for committee members***

Members of the EGU selection committees are expected to disclose to the other committee members any conflicts of interest they may have with the candidates, nominators and/or supporting letters. The relevant committee chair will then consult with the relevant Union officer to determine whether the reported conflict of interest requires that the conflicted person leaves the committee or is excluded from committee discussion and/or any decision related to the matter.

Members of the EGU selection committee are expected to conduct their work with integrity, honesty, respect, courtesy, responsibility, rigour and equity.

### ***5.3 Code of conduct for EGU officers, medalists and awardees***

EGU officers, medalists and awardees are considered EGU ambassadors. They are expected to meet the highest standards of professional ethics and scientific integrity.

When submitting their candidacy, and prior to accepting a position or honor, each candidate or nominee for an EGU honor or other type of recognition or a governance position is required to disclose any past allegations or institutional proceedings resulting in a finding of professional misconduct, or any pending formal complaints related to the candidate's professional conduct. Failing to report relevant issues may be sanctioned with the exclusion from the relevant selection process or election, termination of the position, or withdrawal of the honor.

## **6. Code of conduct for attendees and organisers of EGU meetings**

The EGU is committed to providing a safe, open, accessible and respectful environment for participants at its meetings. In turn, the EGU expects professional and respectful conduct from attendees at all times. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, coercion, intimidation, censorship and plagiarism of any kind will not be tolerated.

### ***6.1 Code of conduct for meeting organisers***

The EGU strives to foster diversity among conveners, attendees and presenters at its meetings with respect to, among others, career stage, gender, geography, and scientific approaches, and encourages meeting organisers to keep this in mind during all their EGU activities.

Organisers and conveners are expected to familiarise themselves with specific meeting guidelines when they are publicly available.

EGU meetings are organised in an open and non-biased manner. Favoritism of any kind—for example, in the selection of presentations—is unacceptable.

### ***6.2 Code of conduct for meeting attendees***

An open and respectful conduct, based on basic politeness, is expected of all meeting attendees.

Presenters are asked to familiarise themselves with specific presenter guidelines for the meeting, if available. All authors on a presentation and/or abstract should have agreed to their co-authorship and have contributed to the work.

Attendees at EGU meetings should be aware that:

- It is prohibited to copy any presentation materials;
- It is prohibited to take photos or record scientific material shown in any type of presentation (e.g., oral, poster, or PICO) unless the presenter authorises it; and

- EGU follows the guidelines for consent related to pictures of a person in a public space established in the country where the activity is being held. The EGU recommends obtaining the permission of any person recorded if they appear in an identifiable way.

### ***6.3 Reporting violations during or after meetings***

Violations should be reported to the Meeting Person of Trust, if one is present at the relevant meeting. The website of each meeting specifies whether a Meeting Person of Trust is present and, if yes, how they can be reached.

If the Meeting Person of Trust is not present, issues related to ethics and misconduct can be reported to [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu), an address that reaches the EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust. EGU officers dealing with misconduct reports are committed to strict confidentiality as outlined in Section 7 below.

The General Assembly has a Meeting Person of Trust who can be reached at the meeting's Information Desk. Conduct violations at the General Assembly can be reported to the Programme Committee chair at [programme.committee@egu.eu](mailto:programme.committee@egu.eu) as well as to [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) as described above.

## **7. The EGU process for reporting and investigating allegations of misconduct**

Allegations or reports of cases of misconduct may be submitted to the relevant EGU officer as outlined in the Sections 4, 5 and 6. Furthermore, the EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust are reachable year-round at the email address [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) to address any unresolved issue related to ethics or misconduct. It is preferable that allegations of misconduct are made within 60 days of the discovery of the incident so that a timely investigation may be carried out.

The EGU Person of Trust has a different gender from the EGU President. Their names are disclosed on the EGU web site under the “About” link.

Any information and/or communications related to misconduct are treated confidentially. Messages to [conduct@egu.eu](mailto:conduct@egu.eu) are only read by the EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust, who provide confidential feedback to the reporting person within 10 business days. In their first interaction with the reporting person, the EGU President and the EGU Person of Trust may collect additional information, outline options forward, and—if it is believed that the allegation may constitute scientific misconduct—may file a case with the EGU Ethics Committee according to the rules outlined in the present document and the applicable laws in force.

The EGU Ethics Committee is composed of:

- The EGU President (Chair);
- The EGU Executive Secretary.
- The EGU General Secretary
- The EGU Person of Trust.

Involvement of the EGU Ethics Committee is necessary in order to carry out further investigation or to rule on any sanction. Further investigation is undertaken only if the alleged misconduct is directly connected to an activity conducted by the EGU.

If an investigation takes place, the Chair of the EGU Ethics Committee will notify the reporting person and any interested person and/or legal entity if appropriate. Investigation will be carried out by collecting relevant information, evaluating the allegation, and possibly by interacting with any interested person. The investigation aims to determine whether a violation of ethical principles or laws in force has occurred and to propose to the EGU Council appropriate sanctions to be taken if an allegation of misconduct is substantiated. If the EGU Council approves sanctions, both the reporting person and the person(s) reported against are informed within 5 business days.

The EGU Ethics Committee operates under the presumption of innocence until the investigation process has been completed and a ruling has been made. The above investigation is normally concluded within 120 days from the receipt of the formal complaint by the EGU.

The information received by the EGU Ethics Committee and the EGU Council is covered by strict confidentiality. The Chair of the EGU Ethics Committee is committed to listening to and addressing complaints and to confidentially guiding reporting persons through various options, including potential informal solutions.

If the alleged misconduct is directly connected to a member of the EGU Ethics Committee, they are required to leave the committee until the case has been decided.

Members of the EGU Ethics Committee must report any conflicts of interest. In particular, affiliation to the same institution, and past cooperation and/or personal relationships with either the reporting person or the person accused of misconduct, are considered conflicts of interest.

If the alleged misconduct is directly connected to an EGU officer or editor, the EGU Ethics Committee must determine whether an independent assessment is warranted. The latter would be provided by an advisory board of at least three persons nominated by the EGU Ethics Committee who are not involved in EGU management or editorial activities at the same time. Membership of the advisory board is selected based on the nature of the case or allegation. The advisory board operates independently under strict confidentiality and reports to the EGU Ethics Committee.

If the allegation received by the EGU also involves an activity that violates the code of law in the relevant countries and/or the ethical codes of other institutions where the alleged incident occurred, the EGU will work with all appropriate authorities according to the laws in force to resolve the allegation. Such authorities include—but are not limited to—relevant institutions, civil and criminal courts, police and other enforcement bodies.

If, after an investigation, the EGU Ethics Committee dismisses an allegation then the allegation is dismissed, the reporting person is immediately informed, and the related files are deleted within 120 days in order to remove any memory of the case.

If the misconduct is not directly connected to an activity operated by the EGU and is sanctioned by another authority, the EGU Ethics Committee must decide whether the EGU should take appropriate

sanctions under the same terms outlined in the previous paragraph (including, if appropriate, the formation of an advisory board).

## **8. Sanctions**

Sanctions imposed by EGU for misconduct may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Written advice or admonition;
- Removal from an official EGU position;
- Publication of errata documents;
- Withdrawal/retraction of presentations and published material;
- Suspension from publishing/reviewing/editing for an EGU journal either temporarily or permanently;
- Suspension from delivering presentations at—and convening—EGU meetings either temporarily or permanently;
- Denial or revocation of honors and awards;
- Notifying the home institution of the person responsible of misconduct; and
- Issuing a public statement regarding the scientific misconduct.

## **9. Appeals**

Once the EGU Council has decided upon sanctions, the interested person has 30 days to file an appeal to the EGU President at the email address [president@egu.eu](mailto:president@egu.eu). The EGU President will ensure that the case is reconsidered by an ad-hoc committee formed by the President, who serves as an ex-officio member, and three EGU Council members other than the EGU Executive Secretary, the EGU General Secretary and the EGU Person of Trust. The ad-hoc committee will reconsider the findings and any new evidence that may have been provided to determine whether external arbitration is needed. The final determination of the ad-hoc committee must be approved by the EGU Council. The EGU President will reply to the appealing person within 90 days from the receipt of the appeal.

## **10. Tracking of allegations and decisions**

The EGU Executive Secretary is responsible for recording allegations and decisions in a secure database that can only be accessed by the EGU President and Executive Secretary. Files are deleted after 120 days in order to remove any memory of cases where allegations have been proven to be unsubstantiated.

## **Appendix – Relevant links**

Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE): <https://publicationethics.org/>

Joint EGU-AGU statement of principles for a code of ethics for the geosciences:  
<https://www.egu.eu/news/403/joint-egu-agu-statement-of-principles-for-a-code-of-ethics-for-the-geosciences/>