Code of practice-based research for hbo

**Code of conduct for preparing and conducting practice-based research within Higher Professional Education in the Netherlands**

**Opinion of the Committee on the Code of Conduct for Applied Research in Higher Education**

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**Code of conduct for preparing and conducting practice-based research within the**

**Higher vocational education in the Netherlands**

**Opinion of the Committee on the Code of Conduct for Applied Research in Higher Education**

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**Preamble**

# Background of the code of conduct

The universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands conduct practice-oriented research. This is research that is rooted in professional practice and contributes to the improvement and innovation of that professional practice. This task is defined by law (Section 1.3.2. of the Higher Education and Scientific Research Act). Doing research at universities of applied sciences is relatively new. It received a major boost with the introduction of professorships in 2001.

In the meantime, a large number of initiatives have been taken to properly embed research in the institutions of higher education and to increase and ensure the quality of research.

A code of conduct for practice-based research can make an important contribution to promoting the quality of research at universities of applied sciences. A code of conduct describes desired behavior of a specified group of practitioners when performing a particular task. This desired behavior ultimately contributes to a higher quality of the final product.

# Content of the code of conduct

The Code of Conduct for Applied Research consists of five rules. These are rules for responsible behavior of students and employees while doing practice-based research in Higher Professional Education in the Netherlands. The code describes desired behavior when performing the "task" of research. The code of conduct does not define what constitutes a high-quality result of research, but it does define what responsible research - as an activity

- entails and what this means for the practice researcher's actions.

# Function of the code

Research in Higher Professional Education in the Netherlands is developing rapidly. Because of the phase in which research is in, the code of conduct is primarily intended as a development tool to help boost the quality of research. In doing so, the code is related to other ongoing initiatives to improve the quality of research at universities of applied sciences, such as designing a professional profile for professors, establishing substantive quality criteria for the outcome of research and developing a healthy research organization with an inspiring research climate. The connection between these three initiatives is shown in the following figure:

**Behavior**

which is shown during examination

"How am I going to do it?"

**Competencies**

What the researcher must have in order to conduct research

"What do I need for it?"

**Competencies**

that is the result of research

"What is the intended outcome?"

**Competence**

**Acting responsibly**

**Quality**

**Professional profile**

(for lecturers only)

**Code of Conduct**

(for all researchers)

**Content quality criteria**

(depending on the type of research and level required)

A healthy research organization with an inspiring research climate

The professional profile describes the competencies needed for the position of professors.

The code of conduct then describes what behavior the researcher should strive for while conducting research. Substantive quality criteria indicate what the product of that research should meet. All this can best take place within a healthy research organization with an inspiring research climate.

When the universities of applied sciences have gained experience in applying the code of conduct for practice-based research, the extent to which the code of conduct works well in practice can be examined. Then consideration could possibly be given to making the code of conduct mandatory and setting up a system for enforcement and for dealing with complaints. The Commission is of the opinion that it is still too early for this "strict" variant, but does recommend that the HBO-raad make the statement that in the HBO we conduct research in the ma- nique as described in this code of conduct. The code is not optional.

# Target audience of the code of conduct

This code of conduct applies to the behavior of employees and students while conducting practice-oriented research in the context of Higher Professional Education in the Netherlands. Employees include lecturers in addition to lecturers and staff members.

It should be kept in mind that students are still in training to become professionals. They cannot be expected to be able to comply fully with the code of conduct already during their training, but they can be expected to act in the spirit of the code. Teachers and professors are responsible for translating the code of conduct into final competencies for students and they must enable students to act accordingly. They are also ultimately responsible for the behavior and safety of their students while conducting research.

# Structure of the code of conduct

The code of conduct includes five general rules of conduct. The code of conduct is supplemented by explanatory notes that give concrete details of the rules of conduct for each step in the research process.

# Principles of the code of conduct

The following principles underlie the Code of Conduct:

* Researchers at the college bear responsibility toward the professional profession for which they develop knowledge, the people and issues they research

and society as a whole. They also have a responsibility as researchers to conduct research in accordance with methodological rules, research and professional ethics, and values within the discipline.

* Their research often has implications for the professional profession for which they develop knowledge, for the people and issues they research, and society as

whole. Research should therefore be conducted responsibly.

* The rules of conduct describe what constitutes responsible research behavior. They are based on the values and standards for research as established in comparable national and

international codes as well as on the principles for research that have been articulated over the years in policy documents of the HBO-raad.

* Rules of conduct aim to contribute to the quality of research in hbo. The rules of conduct support the substantive reflection of everyone working in higher education.

research conducted and increase the transparency of the individual researcher's thinking and actions. This makes it possible to see how researchers take into account the professional profession for which they are developing knowledge, the people and issues they are researching, and society as a whole. This helps promote stakeholder trust in research and increase quality.

* The "comply or explain" rule applies to the code of conduct. The five rules of conduct are

generally applicable. They may be deviated from, provided this is explicitly substantiated. In doing so, no harm may be done to the persons being investigated. Researchers should account for the application of the five rules of conduct in the justification section of their research report.

# Implementing the code of conduct

There is a risk that the code of conduct will remain a "paper tiger. The document "Accountability Committee for the Research Code of Conduct for Higher Education" contains recommendations on how to avoid this.

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# Researchers at the college should

**the professional and social interest.**

They contribute to the profession and the relevant professional field and are committed to the public interest. They focus on relevant themes and problems from professional practice and on creative, innovative and applicable solutions for practice. They contribute to knowledge and theory development, stimulate knowledge circulation to practice and education and strive to make results accessible according to the principles of Open Access1.

# Researchers at the college are respectful.

They take into account rights, interests, privacy, views, opinions, theories and methods of those involved and of fellow researchers. They comply with the regulations and protocols governing the conduct of research in the field. If research involving humans or animals poses any risk, the interests of the research must take care that risks are justified. In that case, external experts are sought for advice.

# Researchers at the college are careful.

They consider multiple views of science and related forms of research, the available research methods and the methodological rules associated with them, as well as the research and professional ethics and the values prevailing within the discipline. They make use of already available knowledge from practice and science. They report correctly, completely, accurately and reproducibly. They consider the desirability of carefully preserving data and ensure that the intellectual property rights of data, results and innovations are properly regulated.

# Researchers at colleges of education have integrity.

They are critical of views and problem definitions used in practice, independent in their methodological choices and honest about the sources they use. They are accountable for their behavior while conducting research, autonomous in their analyses and impartial in their reports.

# Researchers at the college justify their choices and behavior.

They account for the relevance of the chosen theme, the choice of research design and methods used and their limitations, the diligence of the execution, the justification of the conclusions, the sources used, the implementation in practice as well as the knock-on effects in education.

1. Open Access (OA) of research results means that research results are available digitally, online, free of charge and free of most copyright restrictions.

**Explanation of the Code of Conduct**

The five rules of conduct are explained for each step in the research process in the table below. The classification into steps is not based on a specific model but is grafted onto classifications common in conducting research and found in textbooks on research.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RuleActivity | 1.Serving professional and societal interests | 2.Being respectful | 3.Being careful | 4.Integrity | 5.Justifying choices and behavior |
| I focus on: | I take into account: | I consider: | I am: | I account for: |
| a. Developing theproblemand research question | 1a. Relevant themesand problems from the professional practice. | 2a. Differentinterests and views inways that exist withinthe professionalpractice around thistheme. | 3a. The possibleside effects ofthe investigationto the chosenproblem definition/research question | 4a. Criticalregarding theviews andproblem definitions used in practice. | 5a. Relevanceof the chosentheme, as well asthe way theproblemand questioning ininteraction with thepractice is established. |
| b. Making Planof Approach | 1b. An executableplan that can concretely deliver results.. | 2b. The interests ofthe client, one's own institution and the researchsubjects. | 3b. Available,useful, appropriateand high quality-worthy research methods inrelation to theresearch question | 4b. Independentin the choice ofmethods for theresearch and Imake sure that the researchthesis and planof approach notbe biasedby desired out-comings in accordance withthe agenda ofthis or that com-mercial or politicalgrouping. | 5b. The choice ofthe research design,the research method,the research subjects, the time schedule, feasibility and funding, thelimitations of the research as well as the client of the research and the relationship ofme to the client. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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| I focus on: | I take into account: | I consider: | I am: | I account for: |
| c. Exploreliterature | 1c. Documen-teched knowledge fromscience andpractice. | 2c. Severalviews expressedwithin the literaturearound this topicexist. | 3c. Existing knowledgeand research resultsavailable nationallyand internationalon the topicavailable,as well as availabledocumentedpractical knowledge. | 4c. Honest about thesources that Iusage. | 5c. The search strategyand selection ofsources usedas well as thesources useditself. |
| d. General Implementationof research | 1d. Investigatingin and of theprofessional practice inall its capriciousnessand complexity. | 2d. Interests ofthose involved, theinfluence that variousinterest groupsduring the conducton the research method can have, and the influence that I asresearcher duringconducting the research in practice. Icomply with regulations and protocols that in my field apply to conducting research.If research with humans or animals poses any risk poses, the importance of theresearch should be thetaking of that risk is justified. In that caseexternal experts shall be for advice requested, such asa medical-ethicalreview committee. | 3d. Several science conceptions and related forms of research, the methodo-logical rules governing the research methods used, as well as the methodo-logical rules, the research and professional ethics and the values prevailing within the discipline. | 4d. Accountable for my actions while conducting the study. | 5d. The way the research was conducted. |

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RuleActivity | 1.Serving professional and societal interests | 2.Being respectful | 3.Being careful | 4.Integrity | 5.Justifying choices and behavior |
| I focus on: | I take into account: | I consider: | I am: | I account for: |
| e. Collection ofdata | 1e. Collecting the data as efficiently and effectively as possible. | 2e. The privacyand interests ofrespondents andstakeholders. | 3e. The methodological rules for data collection appropriate to the research method used, as well as the desirability of careful data storage. | 4e. Careful by ensuring that the data collected is used only for research purposes. | 5e. The way data were collected, as well as the way various interest groups were involved in data collection. |
| f. Analysing data and formulating innovations, alternatives and solutions. | 1f. Developing creative, inno-vative and applicableviable solutionsfor practice. | 2f. The insights thatdifferentmethods of analysiscan provide. | 3f. Methodological rules for data analysis appropriate to the research method used.. | 4f. Autonomous in the analysis and make sure it is not driven by desired outcomes according to the agenda of this or that commercial or political group. | 5f. How data were analysed, as well as how the various interest groups were involved in validating the data analysis. |
| g. Reporting of | 1g. The practical usability and readability of the results, taking into account the knowledge level of the target group(s), as well as the contribution of the results to knowledge and theory development. | 2g. The interests and privacy of those involved and their organisations, as-well as the copyright of other authors. | 3g. That the report should paint an accurate picture that is complete, accurate and reproducible, with the under-research results accurately formulated. | 4g. Impartial in my reporting where I do not selectively omit research results without virtue argumentation, do not adapt wording to stakeholders' wishes, and do not present conclusions that are not based on the data. | 5g. The underpinning of the conclusions, in relation to the question, as well as information that may contradict the conclusions. |
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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| RuleActivity | 1.Serving professional and societal interests | 2.Being respectful | 3.Being careful | 4.Integrity | 5.Justifying choices and behavior |
| I focus on: | I take into account: | I consider: | I am: | I account for: |
| h. Disseminating results, knowledge valorisation and the knock-on effects in the rofessionalisation of staff | 1h. Documented knowledge from science and practice. | 2h. Making research results available through Open Access. | 3h. That research results should be communicated with care, and that the intellectual property rights of data, results and innovations should be well regulated. |  | 5h. The wayin which the results were implementedin the professionalpractice. |
| i. Utilization ofresearch ineducation | 1i. The usefulnessof the resultsfor education. | 2i. The quality level of teachers, students and the curriculum of the programme. | 3i. That research results are translated well into education |  | 5i. The wayin which the impact and implications are taken further in the practice. |

Design

Elan Strategy & Creation, Delft

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