

# FINNISH ADVISORY BOARD ON RESEARCH INTEGRITY

## Action Plan: 1 February 2016–31 January 2019

The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (TENK) was established in 1991 for handling ethical issues concerning scientific research and for promoting research integrity (Decree on the Advisory Board on Research Integrity, 1347/1991). The first appointed Advisory Board began its activities on 1 February 1992. The Advisory Board's secretariat works in connection with the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV) in Helsinki. Further information can be found on the Advisory Board's website, [www.tenk.fi](http://www.tenk.fi).

### Tasks of the Advisory Board

According to the decree, the task of the Advisory Board on Research Integrity, as appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture, is: 1) to present proposals and issue statements to the authorities on legislative matters regarding research integrity and other questions; 2) to work as a specialist body in examining issues involving research integrity; 3) to take initiatives in promoting research integrity and to advance discussion in Finland concerning research integrity; 4) to follow the international development of its field and actively participate in international cooperation; and 5) to provide information pertaining to research integrity issues.

In accordance with its permanent objectives, TENK will:

1. assure an operating culture that follows the principles of research integrity
2. practise awareness-raising and promote education related to research integrity
3. develop the investigation process involving allegations of misconduct
4. streamline networking on both the national and international levels, and influence international developments in the field
5. develop the interactive distribution of information
6. embed good international practices in the Finnish research integrity culture, as well as raising awareness of tried and tested Finnish research integrity guidelines

### Composition

The present members of TENK were appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture for the term 1 February 2016 to 31 January 2019. The Advisory Board will continue to be chaired for a third term by

Chancellor Emerita of the University of Tampere, Krista Varantola. The Vice Chair is University Lecturer, Docent Pekka Louhiala of the University of Helsinki. The composition of the Advisory Board is as follows:

Chancellor Emerita Krista Varantola (University of Tampere), Chair  
University Lecturer Pekka Louhiala (University of Helsinki), Vice Chair  
Principal Economist Kari Hämäläinen (VATT Institute for Economic Research)  
Senior Researcher Jyrki Kettunen (Arcada University of Applied Sciences)  
Academy Research Fellow Erika Löfström (University of Helsinki)  
Professor Rainer Oesch (University of Helsinki)  
Academy Professor Riitta Salmelin (Aalto University)  
Datacenter Manager Sirpa Thessler (Finnish Environment Institute)  
Professor Risto Turunen (University of Eastern Finland)  
Legal Adviser Meri Vannas (Academy of Finland)

The Advisory Board's secretary is the TENK Secretary General, Docent Sanna Kaisa Spoof.

## **Action Plan for 1 February 2016 to 31 January 2019**

### **1. Strategic Priorities**

TENK will promote responsible conduct of research by drawing up and revising national guidelines and recommendations, as well as influencing international recommendations in the field of research integrity. TENK will stress awareness and education in the promotion of research integrity and in the prevention of research misconduct. TENK also has a broad-based social responsibility for the quality of scientific research in Finland.

There has been a significant increase in demand for the basic tasks of TENK, such as monitoring of cases of research misconduct. TENK also wants to remain an active and valued international operator known as a pioneer in solving issues of research integrity. Resources must be updated in order to fulfil these objectives.

**As an additional objective, TENK could shift its operational focus from monitoring research misconduct to preventing it, i.e. to raising awareness of the responsible conduct of research among researchers of all ages and across all disciplines. This would help to safeguard the ethics and high quality of scientific research.**

## TENK's tasks and the impact of its activities on the scientific community and the society



TENK's most significant tasks and operational priorities for the 2016–2018 term:

- Promoting responsible conduct of research within universities, universities of applied sciences and other research institutions, by developing the RCR process and working continuously to raise awareness of it
- Formulating national recommendations concerning agreements on the authorship of scientific publications
- Creating an organisation-specific or regional network of advisory and support personnel within research integrity
- Clarifying the position of whistle-blowers in cases of misconduct and, if necessary, creating a system of protection
- Building an online “ethics library” for sharing research integrity materials and guidelines related to research life cycles, as well as teaching and information materials, in collaboration with the Committee for Public Information (TJNK)

Specific areas of focus and operational priorities will be set separately for each calendar year.

## 2. Promotion of Responsible Conduct of Research

TENK, in collaboration with TJNK, has received funding from the Ministry of Education and Culture for a project entitled *Tiedon jakaminen luo vaikuttavuutta (Information Sharing Creates Impact)*, for the period from 1 December 2015 to 31 December 2017. This project, focusing on responsible scientific communication and research, has as its main research integrity-related objective to formulate national recommendations and an agreement template for agreements on authorship of scientific publications, for use in research and publication projects. The template can also be used by individual disciplines, if they so wish, as a basis for creating their own recommendations specific to their fields. A further aim is that RCR processes will thus be avoided, but if they end up being necessary, any authorship issues can be solved based on the written agreement and the RCR guidelines. The responsibility for making agreements will lie with research team leaders and senior researchers.

Another of the project's outcomes will be the creation of an online "ethics library" for sharing research integrity materials and guidelines related to research life cycles, as well as teaching and information materials. The library will be created in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture, TJNK, and possibly the other national ethical committees. Another task for the period will be to follow and comment on specific ethical issues in open science and research.

TENK's *Supervision and examination of doctoral dissertations with a special emphasis on research integrity and responsible conduct of research*, drawn up in collaboration with Universities Finland (UNIFI), will be submitted to universities in May 2016. The recommendations have been translated into English. TENK will follow up on how they are received by doctoral programmes.

The *Template for a researcher's curriculum vitae*, drawn up in cooperation with the Academy of Finland, UNIFI and the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene), will be further publicised. The template is maintained and updated, as needed, on the TENK website in Finnish, Swedish and English.

As one of its basic tasks, TENK coordinates ethical review processes in human sciences. In April 2016, a total of 61 Finnish higher education institutions and other research organisations and networks were committed to the Advisory Board's guidelines *Ethical principles of research in the humanities and social and behavioural sciences and proposals for ethical review*. TENK will continue to organise specialist seminars and discussion events in the field to support cooperation among ethical committees. Reports on the ethical review activities of the ethical committees are included in the TENK Annual Report. During the period to which this action plan applies, TENK will initiate the updating of the aforementioned guidelines, taking into account changes that have taken place since 2009 in national and EU legislation and recommendations, as well as in the research culture (data protection; research integrity; medical research; open science and research).

## 3. Development of Education in Research Integrity

The higher education institutions and research organisations that have committed to the RCR guidelines are responsible for arranging education in research integrity for their undergraduate and postgraduate students, and are in charge of ensuring that their personnel receive similar training. Discipline-specific research integrity education and the RCR training related to researcher honesty should primarily form a part of ordinary research methodology education in each discipline, rather than

modules that are separate from other teaching. For example, it is the responsibility of all departments providing researcher education to handle special questions of responsible conduct of research specific to their fields as part of their researcher education programmes. TENK recommends the starting up of further education in research integrity for researchers and heads of research organisations, as well as teacher training in the field.

In cooperation with operators and other partners in the field of ethics, TENK arranges an *Ethics Day* for researchers and specialists every year. TENK also regularly organises other specialist seminars in its field and maintains regular contact with higher education institutions and representatives of various disciplines to find out their current needs for seminar topics. Moreover, TENK and other national ethical committees strive to prepare a joint session for the annual *Science Forum*.

TENK will continue to anonymise the cases of research misconduct it handles for use in its annual reports, educational materials and the new “ethics library”. TENK’s teaching materials can be found on the TENK website and are free for use as long as the source is properly referenced.

The TENK Chair, the secretariat and the Advisory Board’s members give lectures as part of educational events organised at many higher education institutions and other research organisations.

#### **4. Development and Monitoring of RCR Processes**

In April 2016, TENK’s current version of the guidelines *Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland (RCR 2012)*, published on 1 March 2013, had a total of 74 committed signatories: all the universities in Finland, a majority of universities of applied sciences, and almost all publicly funded research institutions, including the Academy of Finland. An up-to-date list of committed organisations can be found on the TENK website. It remains an aim of TENK to continue increasing commitment to the guidelines among the scientific community.

Research organisations must notify TENK of all alleged RCR misconduct cases of which they become aware. Additionally, TENK feels that Finland should start to collect statistics on how common plagiarism, for example, is in higher education institutions’ undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Information would also be needed on questionable operational cultures in various disciplines, the breeding ground for research misconduct, as well as the true number of violations against the responsible conduct of research in different fields of science. There is also a need for information-sharing between universities and financing bodies on, for example, fraudulent applicants applying for postgraduate studies or funding.

In the investigation of issues involving research integrity, it is important that the legal protection of all parties – including the instigator of the allegation – is guaranteed. One of the objectives for the term is to promote the smooth functioning of the RCR process by providing instructions for making RCR notifications and examining the need for whistle-blower protection. Another aim is to create an organisation-specific or regional, low-threshold network of advisory and support personnel within research integrity (so-called ethics advisors), and to start up and coordinate this system. TENK will arrange regular discussion events and seminars on the RCR process.

The RCR guidelines are in line with international recommendations on research integrity. TENK strives to have an active influence on the development of international guidelines.

## 5. Networking

TENK will take active part in discussions on research integrity in scientific and academic forums, as well as through scientific and popular presentations and articles and position papers. All European Academies (ALLEA) will initiate the updating of *The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* from 2011. TENK also actively follows the operations of other European organisations within ethics in science, such as the *NEC Forums*. A TENK representative will, where possible, be appointed to attend the annual meetings of European ethical committees.

TENK has active partnerships in place with European scientific organisations and Nordic operators. The TENK Chair serves as the Finnish representative in the Permanent Working Group on Science and Ethics that handles research integrity in ALLEA. The Secretary General attends the meetings of the *European Network of Research Integrity Offices (ENRIO)*. The Secretary General has been appointed a specialist and member of the steering group in the Council of Europe's *Pan-European Platform on Ethics, Transparency and Integrity in Education (ETINED)*. Where necessary, TENK will also take part in the ethical specialist networks of *NordForsk*. TENK is involved in the EU's ENERI project, which is run jointly by ENRIO and EUREC with the aim of creating networks between operators in research ethics, focusing on education in research integrity.

TENK will support the acquisition of EU research funding in the fields of research integrity and responsible research and innovation activities, with a view to promoting the responsible conduct of research in Finland and Europe. TENK will work, as needed, as a project partner and specialist through TSV.

Global networking will continue, where possible, in connection with study and seminar trips. TENK will participate in the 2017 World Conference on Research Integrity in Amsterdam. TENK also follows up on the further development of themes brought up at these world conferences in the EU, the OECD and other forums.

TENK will promote collaboration between operators in research ethics and research integrity in Finland and in Europe at large. Finland's national ethical committees – TENK, the *National Advisory Board on Social Welfare and Health Care Ethics (ETENE)* and the *National Committee on Medical Research Ethics (TUKIJA)*, as well as the *Advisory Board on Biotechnology (BTNK)* and the *Board for Gene Technology (GTLK)* – have cooperated for many years. The chairs and secretary generals of these committees will continue to convene regularly to exchange experiences on current research ethics and integrity issues.

In Finland, TENK will develop operating models for increasing dialogue not only with higher education institutions and research organisations, but also with data archives, foundations and other funding bodies for science, as well as scientific societies and member organisations of Akava (the Confederation of Unions for Professional and Managerial Staff in Finland). TENK's objective is to take an annual Advisory Board study trip within Finland, and to hold one meeting at a locality with a higher education institution outside of Greater Helsinki.

TENK will raise awareness of Finnish research and science, involving, for example, the internationalisation and quality of research, open science and responsible scientific communication. This will be done together with TSV and TENK's sister committees – the Council of Finnish Academies (TANK) and the Committee for Public Information (TJNK) – which also work in connection with TSV.

## 6. Communications

TENK will actively distribute information and provide advice to its interest groups and to the wider public, including foreign researchers working in Finland. TENK will organise specialist seminars, follow the media and provide information on its activities and operational models also through social media and international forums. The most important communication channel is TENK's own website, [www.tenk.fi](http://www.tenk.fi): up-to-date information is produced and collected there, and links are maintained to the websites of other operators in the field of research integrity.

Speeches, presentations, articles and media interviews of TENK members will also play an important role in raising awareness of TENK's objectives. TENK cooperates in its communications with TSV and the Ministry of Education and Culture.

TENK's new trilingual brochure and the printed version of the *RCR 2012* guidelines can be ordered free of charge from the TENK office. All TENK guidelines, as well as documents such as annual reports, are available in Finnish, Swedish and English.

TENK will promote the inclusion of a shared presentation of itself and the other national ethical committees in the "ethics library" that is under construction. The *Ethics Day* has its own website at [www.etiikanpaiva.fi](http://www.etiikanpaiva.fi).

## 7. Resources of the Advisory Board

In 2016, the Advisory Board had a Secretary General and a part-time Coordinator (working half-time). The work that the members of the Advisory Board do in addition to their regular jobs forms a significant part of TENK's activities. The project manager for the *Tiedon jakaminen luo vaikuttavuutta* project will be considered as part of the TENK secretariat until the end of 2017. The Advisory Board may also hire other temporary workers or purchase services within the bounds of its project and other funding. TENK may participate as a partner in EU projects or other initiatives, for instance in the field of responsible research and innovation activities.

TENK receives an annual budgetary allocation from the Ministry of Education and Culture. TENK will need more permanent human resources in order to complete its principal tasks, including monitoring of research misconduct and efforts in preventative activities, such as advisory services. The extent of the additional financial and human resources needed by TENK will be negotiated between TENK, TSV and the ministry.

The secretariat will maintain and increase its competence in relation to up-to-date developments in the field. The correspondence of salary levels to the demands of the job will have to be ensured.

TSV offers TENK most of the infrastructure it needs, such as office space, network connections and financial administration services, as well as secretarial services from spring 2016 onwards.

This action plan was approved at the meeting of the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity held on 26 April 2016.

Krista Varantola  
Chair

Sanna Kaisa Spoof  
Secretary General