

This document was edited by the Deans' Conferences of Medicine and Odontology Schools in November 2017. It followed the publication in January 2017 of the first scorecard of the French medical schools concerning their conflict of interest policies. This scorecard was conducted by our association, the Formindep, a non-profit NGO which advocates for independency in the formation and formation of the French health sector, and which realized this translation.

Ethical and deontological Charter of the Deans' Conferences of Medicine and Odontology Schools

Preamble

The National Conferences of Deans of Schools of Medicine and Deans of Schools of Odontology have decided to draft an ethical and deontological charter in order to formalize and homogenize their practices in this area. This Charter meets an ethical requirement, particularly with regard to scientific and professional integrity, links of interests, and societal expectations.

*The schools of medicine and odontology * found the whole of their activities on the universal values that inspire respect for Human rights, the dignity of the human person, and solidarity. Schools also share the fundamental values of University: requirement, independence, humanism, promotion of the critical thinking, openness to society. Schools comply with laws and regulations in force in our national community and, where there is no law or regulation, they base themselves on the recommendations of the works, charters, and national and / or international authorities in ethics. Schools have a public service mission in terms of training, research, guidance and professional integration of their students. In addition, academics working also in teaching hospitals have a care mission too. The cooperation between academia and socio-economic environment, particularly industrial, is essential in look at these training, research and care missions, for the benefit of students, society, and patients through medical progress.*

The concept of translational research, continuum between fundamental research and applied research, illustrates this need for cooperation. This dynamic which is part of the statutory missions of schools, must be done with respect for professional integrity and science, the transparency of the links of interest, and the fight against influence practices.

Within the framework of the teaching, the schools have for common mission of general interest to train future health professionals to the care process, the management of public health issues, the respect for dignity and the protection of the human person. This mission is based on two axes, care and research. In their educational policy, the protection of patients' interests and the community must prevail over any other consideration. For

this, the independence of medical education toward the personal interests is not negotiable, it is a public health issue. The Students benefit from institutional and academic supervision which must

*guarantee this independence during their medical curriculum taught by academics, in accordance with the principles of transparency, loyalty, impartiality and professional and scientific integrity, to which these professionals commit themselves when they are recruited.***

The pharmaceutical industry is often at the forefront when we talk about conflicts of interest, while the financial stakes of medical devices is also important. Objects and industries connected to health data and their analysis will be the issues of tomorrow. Conflicts of interest do not summarize the ethical problems to which the faculties of health are exposed: professional and scientific integrity is also essential. The respect of the commitments of this Charter aiming to promote ethical principles regarding professional and scientific integrity is necessary in the schools' operation and administration, as well as in their relations with the partners of the socio-economic and public sectors, in particular the hospital, the liberal health sector, and private actors. This Charter commits the signatories.

** The term school is associated in this text with schools of medicine, odontology, and the mixed faculties. The teaching term is associated with first and second cycle courses, as well as continuing education.*

*** A link is a situation where partners have a common interest, in this case in the field of health solutions development. Without such a link, no partnership would be possible. The link means that there is a mutual interest in acting together based on a scientific and intellectual project. A link of interest is therefore not only legitimate, but desirable for progress in health. It is imperative to distinguish this concept from that of conflict of interest. A conflict of interest arises from a situation in which a public official has a personal interest of a nature to influence the impartial and objective exercise of its official functions. A conflict of interest is proven when an organization or individual is involved in multiple interests, one of whom may corrupt the motivation to act on others.*

· Schools commit to scientific integrity

The European Commission makes scientific and professional integrity one of its highest priorities in raising the standard requirements in terms of ethics and social responsibility in the framework for teaching, research, and health practices.

The national ethical charter of the health professions adopted by schools of medicine and odontology also emphasizes the importance of respecting the principle of integrity by the health professions. Moreover, by their missions in terms of teaching and research, schools are committed to publicize and respect the fundamental rights of people in care and research practices, the rules for the protection of participants in the research, good use of health data, conditions of access and use of the elements and products of the human body, in the respect of the texts in force, as elements contributing to the concept of integrity.

This is why the schools undertake to respect the proposals of implementation of the national charter of ethics of the trades of the research, as detailed in Professor Pierre Corvol's report. (June 29, 2016). Some of these proposals are part of a national policy, or the University, while others concern directly the schools :

- Proposal 4 aims at "*the acquisition of an enlarged scientific culture including an introduction to the ethics of research and scientific integrity*".
- Proposal 5 recommends "*to ensure that each student has received ethics and scientific integrity education*". This proposal was addressed to doctoral schools. It should be extended to all health professionals and to all students.
- Proposal 6 encourages participatory training (bottom up-type) in which students trained in scientific integrity can contribute to the formation of the following generations.
- Proposal 8 is to ensure the establishment of a training on research ethics and scientific integrity.
- Proposals 9 and 10 encourage schools to have a policy of ethics and scientific integrity by conditioning the funding from the National Research Agency (ANR, like those of other national and European research) to this policy and by asking the High Council to the evaluation of Research and Higher Education (HCERES) to evaluate its implementation.

· Proposition 12 encourages Faculties to "*promote the promotion and the establishment of a research on the means of training to integrity and their effects, on epistemological issues of ethics, integrity and scientific responsibility as well as their societal consequences*".

The Faculties undertake to put in place the provisions likely to promote in its fundamental and universal character of scientific integrity and replicability, including responsible behavior in research respecting:

- A preliminary deposit of a research protocol on an accessible site.
- A statistical analysis of the results made independent from the promoters and the actors of the research.
- A scientific writing in accordance with the guidelines of the EQUATOR site (<http://www.equator-network.org/>; CONSORT, ESTROBE, STARD, PRISMA, etc.).
- A communication of the results, whether positive or negative, either in the form of a publication or in the form of a deposit in a register.
- A guarantee of accessibility to the raw data of the research.
- The transparency and openness of the methods and results of the search, allowing for its verification and replication.

Schools commit themselves to fight against all failure to scientific integrity (falsification and data fabrication, theft of results and plagiarism, non-respect of the rights of persons involved in the research such as information and informed consent, non-compliance with the regulatory requirements of research on human person or animal) and more generally against all "Questionable research practices".

Plagiarism, creating an inequality of fact, wounds the plagiarized one, the institution of the scientific and / or educational community and the public, in exposing it to damage related to theft and misuse. In the framework of plagiarism prevention, schools commit themselves to train their students and academics on the risk of plagiarism. The use of similarity detection software for theses and dissertations must be systematic. In the current regulatory context and for a purpose of efficiency, the schools should be accompanied by public authorities in the acquisition of such software and their exploitation.

Regarding the role of author in articles or works schools promote and enforce international rules, in particular those of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE, <http://www.icmje.org/>). Indeed the signature of a scientific article is a recognition of the property and the intellectual valorization of a work which supposes a significant contribution to the design or construction of the works presented with full respect for integrity. The authorship of the work should be attributed to those who meet the criteria for ICMJE. Practices concerning guest authors (because they did not participate in the research) and the ghost authors (for example the professional journalist not thanked, the student or staff voluntarily omitted) must be banned because they constitute a breach of scientific integrity. The schools condemn the double publication of the same data (auto-plagiarism) except under special conditions (different languages) and subject to the authorization of the journals concerned and the information of the readers. The editorial support for the scientific publication provided by professionals possibly paid by a third party, industrial by example, is possible, on condition that this information is clearly provided to readers and that the links of interest are made explicit in the publication. Publication of scientific works in so-called "predatory" journals is prohibited as well as the exercise of editorial activity for these journals (<https://www.councilscienceeditors.org/resource-library/Editorial-policies/cse-policies/approved-by-the-cse-board-of-directors/predatory-deceptive-publishers-recommendations-surety/>). Although editorial activities are the freedom of academics, some of these activities may require authorization to cumulate ancillary activities because of the importance of time and sometimes associated with it.

With regard to the evaluation of research work (reviewed by peers) but also for any mission where their expertise is required, teacher-researchers must provide an impartial, prompt, and rigorous evaluation, respecting confidentiality, intellectual property, and integrity.

With regard to participation in research projects, scientific communications and publications,

expertise, and activities teacher-researchers must mention the links of interests that may have influenced their work, honestly and in an exhaustive way.

In the context of communication to the general public, teachers must limit their speaking and publication to their professional expertise. Since they express an opinion (ideology, citizen point of view, political commitment, cultural, or religious), they should no longer speak in terms of their function or their institution and must explain how they express themselves.

To follow and accompany all the commitments of this Charter, the schools undertake to appoint a referent of scientific integrity and a commission of ethics within each school. This referent is correspondent of the French Office of Scientific Integrity (OFIS) and reinforces the scientific referent from each university. This referent is elected by his peers, member by right of the Ethics Committee and its absence of any link of dependence on the authorities of the school must be guaranteed. He participates in national and European networks of referents of scientific integrity to compare their field experiences and evolve research practices.

· **Schools commit to ethics**

Schools commit themselves to respect and enforce the rules ethics and integrity recommended by all the orders of the professions that compose them. Their staff should not use their prerogatives to favor or injure a third party. They must not create or abuse a situation with respect to a moral or physical person that would lead them to disregard the provisions of this Charter or to derogate from the laws and regulations in force.

As an example concerning compliance with the rules on links and conflicts of interest, the schools' members give up participating in debates and votes in decision-making bodies on subjects for which they have a personal, family, conflict of interest or professional.

To support this dynamic, the participation of a member of the Council of a professional order on the Board of the school and / or the commission of ethics is indispensable. Schools are committed to train their students in the deontology, in support with the professional Orders. It is recommended that this teaching be adapted to level of study and the degree of clinical responsibility of the students, and thus reiterated throughout the studies.

Schools are part of the general framework of the promotion of equality between men and women and the fight against discrimination any kind, and the accessibility of the handicap. Schools commit themselves to respect and enforce national decisions concerning secularism applicable to universities on the one hand and to health structures partners on the other hand.

· **Ethical training for responsible conduct**

The compulsory courses of ethics and deontology are strengthened within the schools to cover the points of this Charter and in particular: 1) professional ethics and professional conduct, collaboration with the respective Councils of the Order; 2) the principles and rules of scientific integrity (including plagiarism and the rules of communication, the declaration of the links of interest and the management of conflicts of interest (in line with the principles of the Pharmfree Curriculum of the American Medical Student Association; <https://www.amsa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/ModelPharmFreeCurriculum.pdf>);

3) more generally, the proper use of medical and scientific information, manipulations of information and the practices of influence, the means to identify them and to guard against any risk of loss of independence. This teaching is renewed during the third cycle, adapted to the specialty taught and to the particular vulnerability of the students because of their increasing responsibilities towards patients.

Training of young teachers (CCA, AHU) and new academics in the field of ethics is ensured each year by the schools, in the first months after taking office. Similar training courses are provided in the university degrees (DU and DIU) of pedagogy which are now integrated into the pre-requisites of future training in most of the sub-sections of the National University Council (CNU). In the context of

continuing training obligations, all teachers must also benefit from the same training at a steady pace.

· **Transparency and declaration of the links of interests**

The declaration of the links of interests is an important element of the conflict of interest policy and participates in the transparency of the actors of the public life. Health professionals, when requested as an expert, are already bound by the obligation to make their public declaration of their links of interests via institutions easily available.

The schools undertake to make accessible on their own site the links of interest of the members of their governing bodies and their committees which may have to deal with subjects linked to independency (Accumulation Committee on Ancillary Activities, Committee on ethics, pedagogical commission, research commission). In addition, teachers must communicate to students their links of interest in preamble to the teachings they deliver, whatever their nature (written, oral, online). Communication of the links of interest before each course is a pedagogical example on the subject of scientific integrity to students. Teachers must do proof of neutrality vis-à-vis the company or institution with which they have a connection.

· **Accumulation of ancillary activities**

Schools set up a commission to examine the applications for cumulative ancillary activity, pursuant to the laws and regulations in force and in accordance with the recommendations of the Conference of Deans of Medical Schools, National Conference Deans of Pharmacy Schools, the National Conference of Deans of Odontology Schools, the National Conference of Presidents of the Medical Center Commission (CME) of university hospitals Center (CHU), and the National Conference of General Directors of CHU. As a reminder, these committees examine the agreement with the enterprise or institution, the applicant committing to the independence of the work produced, the respect of social and fiscal obligations, and, where appropriate, the submission of the agreement to the professional order concerned. The latter examines, where appropriate, the proportionality of remuneration in relation to the work provided. The time devoted to these permitted ancillary activities is capped according to the rules in force. Authorization for accumulation of ancillary activities concerns all activities giving rise to authorized remuneration and the unpaid activities carried out for a legal entity with lucrative purpose. Authorization is only given for one mission and for a maximum of one year, renewable. The participation of teachers to the marketing / sales activities of health products is prohibited.

· **Benefits and gifts**

Industry-funded gifts are not allowed because even of low value, they are likely to influence the decisions of the prescribers, thereby directly affecting patients.

The expenses (transport, hotel, registration) to attend conferences, meetings, and scientific congresses is constitutive of an advantage, allowed under conditions by law. This advantage must give place for declaration on the site of transparency of the links of interests. Such compensation can only be accepted if it is submitted for the approval of the school or if it complies with a procedure preventing the company from select recipients (payment of unrestricted funds). In the current lack of an appropriate institutional funding source for hospitals and / or universities, the expenses for presenting a scientific paper in selective scientific events are considered to be derogatory only for the author presenting the communication. It is also the case for the participation in an event that can't be supported by the research but appearing necessary for the continuing education of the teacher. In any case, a reporting of this funding to the school is mandatory.

· **Faculties ensure that external funding doesn't influence the independence of educational content**

As a public institution for the purpose of transmitting disinterested medical knowledge, the school must render transparent the funding that they are likely to receive from the industries and other private organizations by publishing them on their public website. They make sure that they do not interfere with the independence of educational content.

Industries are not allowed to provide financial support to initial or continuing vocational training (Continuing Professional Development), directly or through a Subsidiary Agency, with the exception of Foundations. The only exceptions to this rule are the particular training actions where the industry is alone to have some of the expertise (as example, training on a specific equipment) or those contributing to orientation and professional integration of students into industrial sectors. In this case, a derogatory authorization must be issued by the Dean, after a favorable opinion from the ethics committee, and the training action must be framed by an academic without any link to the industry concerned.

Direct funding of schools by industry for research activities and pedagogy is possible according to several modalities (apprenticeship tax, various funding) extended since Law Pécresse. These funds must not interfere with the missions of the Faculty and its obligation of education and protection of students against the influence of private interests and must therefore receive a favorable opinion from the ethics committee. They must be validated by a vote in Council of the school. As public institutions aiming at the disinterested transmission of medical knowledge, schools should make transparent the funding received in ensuring that this information is accessible to the general public.

· **Good pedagogical practices in relations with health industries**

The health products mentioned in the course of the teachings are obligatorily in an international non-proprietary name (INN) without mentioning trade names or relaying marketing speeches, whatever the medium (written, oral, online). The same principles are applied for medical devices and the citation of marks in general. The same principles are applied to exam subjects and subjects of training and exam preparation, as they are for national exams.

The schools' teachings, including continuing education, do not may be provided by the industry itself or its representatives, or by any other private for-profit organization, apart from sharing experience in the actual operation of the industry or orientation and professional integration of students within these industries. Exemptions are possible when the industry is alone to have the knowledge and this derogation is then authorized by the Dean after opinion of the ethics committee.

Teaching materials distributed within the schools under no circumstances may be drafted, distributed or financed by an industry or any other private for-profit organization.

Students have the right to exercise an abstention right when they find themselves in a situation of influence. They can express themselves freely on the conditions of their training course hospitals, without exposing themselves to grievances or sanctions on the part of their superiors. The elected students of the Council of the school may refer the matter to the Ethics Committee for any situation that may concern this committee. They have the opportunity to seize ad hoc committees as soon as they become aware of such practices, their personal responsibility can't be questioned in this context.

The use by academics of educational materials provided by industry or any other private body, or their prior supervision by industry or any other private body, are prohibited, including for outdoor conferences.

· **Recruitment and promotion of staff**

Recruitment and promotion of staff (teaching, research, administration and technical support) are based on criteria and according to fair and transparent methods, without discrimination or favoritism related to sex, age, socio-economic belonging, ethnic, political, trade union, or religious in accordance with the principles of scientific integrity.

In the context of their university recruitments, whether holders, the schools undertake not to give priority to the aspects research, but to adopt a balanced approach quantitative / qualitative and a balanced approach research / teaching. The evaluation of scientific work should not rely solely on the impact factor of journals but privilege the qualitative aspects (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA): <http://www.ascb.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/07/sfdora.pdf>). SIGAPS point thresholds or SIAPS are only indicative values of a required minimum, which must be adapted and contextualized. These global quantitative variables do not allow comparison of individuals, especially when they come from different specialties. Any proven breach to the rules of scientific and professional integrity must be taken into account in the evaluation of candidates and professionals.

· **Links with care partners**

Respect for the commitments of this Charter is also necessary in the relations of the schools with their main partners and health actors, especially the hospital and the liberal sector of health. In fact, exposure to the risk of a conflict of interest in sectors of care should not be underestimated. The principles of this Charter must be shared with healthcare institutions or places of care where teachers are employed and which welcome students. Schools must promote, in connection with the institutions in partnership, procedures and recommendations to ensure quality of the teaching provided in the practical training courses, including their ethical and deontological quality, as well as a fair evaluation of the students during these courses. Ambulatory internships must be evaluated regularly.

Marketing representatives of the pharmaceutical and health products (in the broadest sense) are not allowed to meet university staff in the care zones or in the presence of students. Derogatory authorizations may be issued to non-commercial purposes where only the manufacturer has the necessary knowledge (example of training on devices or specific equipment).

· **Student listening and follow-up engagement**

Student selection, orientation, and evaluation are based on fair criteria and methods. Schools ensure equity of access to the means of learning and in the procedures for the validation of teachings. As part of their educational activities, the schools commit to a requirement on knowledge and skills acquired by its students, which they owe to future patients and students they train, who are future healthcare professionals responsible for patients in the eyes of society. They also commit themselves to a requirement of pedagogical quality and kindness to their students. The relationships between teachers, administrative staff, and students must be courteous and respectful, with respect for privacy. This also applies to inter-professional relations, which is the basis of care of patients within their care path.

· **Commission of ethics**

An Ethics Commission is set up within each school to review all topics related to ethics and scientific and professional integrity, especially breaches to this charter. Any staff or user of the school

may seize the commission of ethics. The academics of this commission are elected as well as its president. This commission includes members from outside the school, including a representative of users (students), a representative of associations of patients, a representative of the Director General of the University Hospital Center and the President of the CME of the CHU, and a representative of a Council of the Order. From the teacher members, there is at least one non-titular teacher (CCA/AHU). The referent of scientific integrity is an ex officio member of the commission. The Ethics Committee draws up an annual report of its activities which is presented to the Council of the school and communicated to the Dean, who transmits to the President of the University after consulting the Council of the school. A joint commission between several health schools of is possible.

· **Failure to comply with the charter**

This Charter is enforceable against all the actors within the school, whatever their rank, status or hierarchical level. The school undertakes to refer to disciplinary proceedings any employee of the institution or student having violated all or part of this Charter. Schools are committed to alert the supervisory authorities and professional orders concerned in cases of failure to respect the points of the Charter which fall within legislative or regulatory text.

Schools pledge to facilitate investigations on scientific and professional integrity, in particular those requested by scientific journals, learned societies, and public institutions. These investigations must be carried out in accordance with the principle of presumption of innocence and of the rights of the defense but also protection of whistleblowers and copyrights. The schools undertake to put in place a comprehensive policy to combat misconduct: process of receiving a complaint, investigative process, mediation facilities, treatment of plagiarism or fraud. Thus they undertake to support or implement several processes including: retraction of the publication, excuses, request for disciplinary sanctions, communication of sanctions, report to the competent authorities and to the professional orders. Faced with a documented suspicion of reprehensible conduct, teacher-researchers and students are invited to join the chair of the ethics committee to determine whether or not an investigation should be conducted. The schools undertake to ensure that all their members are informed about the whistleblowers and the legislation in force. They commit to apply and promote these devices. The commission of ethics is available to advise potential whistleblowers, including for situations which do not fall directly within the competence of the law.

This Charter will be voted in Council of school. All of the Faculty and students are invited to sign it. Signature of this charter by the Recruitment candidates is a prerequisite for recruitment.

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