

GPCC Code of Conduct

Working with the Knowledge Triangle

The so-called knowledge triangle represents knowledge-based value creation through the integration of research, education and innovation. GPCC is a research centre first and foremost, but drives and coordinates the translation of excellent research into education at all levels and into practical and public innovation. GPCC researchers are expected to contribute to this process by supporting the translation process, and by conducting challenge-driven research with high relevance for societal goals and for the transition to person-centred care.

Person-centred care research is highly appropriate for a knowledge triangle perspective, as the research conducted is typically close to practical implementation, and often involves significant amounts of training and education in person-centred practices. GPCC will support research groups in identifying this potential, and will also expect researchers to work actively with promoting these beneficial side effects of research. By driving the development of new academic and professional education programs, and by enabling the implementation of research results into care practice, it will be possible in turn to learn more about the realities of person-centred care and improve the research process. Researchers are further expected to consider and report potential building blocks for education and innovation in their research, and to work when appropriate with stakeholders who can shoulder responsibility for these activities.

Research at GPCC will aim to influence societal development by pursuing improvement and innovation in society at large, through close cooperation with a variety of agents in society, on local, regional, national, and international levels as stated in [the University of Gothenburg's Vision 2021-2030 A university for the world](#). Research projects will be evaluated primarily on their scientific excellence and person-centred quality, but also on their potential to contribute to major societal challenges, and to generate valuable education and innovation impact. GPCC will also support research groups in getting relevant stakeholder input on what these challenges are, and how to approach them.

Ethical Research

Ethical research is a cornerstone of excellent research, and research at GPCC shall be conducted with the highest level of ethical care and scrutiny. This obligation is aligned with the ethical requirements of our respective universities, including the University of Gothenburg and the Sahlgrenska Academy, but as research at GPCC is both multidisciplinary and often involves human research subjects and partners, researchers are expected to pay particular attention to these requirements.

The rules of ethics help us conduct our research in accordance with:

- Bio- and person-ethics: Ensuring that personal well-being, integrity, and rights, whether of care professionals or patients, are not jeopardized in the course of research, and
- Professional ethics: Ensuring that our research is trustworthy, reliable, and supports the good standing and reputation of GPCC and the University.

Ethical review

In order to help support ethical research, all GPCC-sponsored projects should be appropriately reviewed to assess the ethical implications and allow for any ethical risks or uncertainties to be cleared up before initializing the project. The Swedish Research Council notes that many research projects within the humanities and social sciences are often inadequately vetted; when engaging in multidisciplinary projects, the specific practices for good ethics of each discipline should be carefully considered. In the case of research involving human research subjects, or material directly related to persons, a formal review shall always be undertaken.

Swedish Research Council (Vetenskapsrådet) on ethical vetting

[Click here to access their Swedish web page.](#)

[Click here to access their English web page.](#)

The Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Etikprövningsmyndigheten)

[Click here to access their Swedish web page.](#)

For English, click on the link above for their Swedish page, then scroll down.

Additional guidelines

The formal review of a project is not sufficient to guarantee that the research will be ethical. All researchers financed through GPCC shall be familiar with the relevant ethical guidelines and be able to apply these consistently in their work. In addition, the involvement of stakeholders and patients in the research design process, when possible and appropriate, is encouraged to help identify ethical and other issues that are not recognized in formal documents.

Key issues in research projects that should lead to additional ethical reflection:

- Information provided to research participants;
- Consent of participants, taking into account whether they are adults or non-adults;
- Recording others in the research process, or taping interviews/conversations;
- Participant observation;

- Intervention in the care process;
- Qualitative research, and
- Storing, publishing or otherwise sharing information online.

CODEX rules and guidelines for research

[Click here to access these in Swedish.](#)

[Click here to access these in English.](#)

Swedish Research Council guidelines

[Click here to access these in Swedish.](#)

[Click here to access these in English.](#)

Organizational responsibilities

GPCC as a centre depends on the participation and organizational support of its researchers. GPCC is not a research financier, portioning out money for independent use, but is a research partner expecting all of its affiliated researchers to jointly contribute to the growth and evolution of the centre. This contribution is what allows the centre to continue driving the advance of person-centred care theory, and to continue to provide a holistic research environment for its researchers. The overall direction of the organization is led and coordinated by center management, under the direction of the University.

Responsibility to report

In order to ensure transparency and insight into the research financed by GPCC, and to help identify opportunities and obstacles, project groups are expected to report their progress on a regular basis to centre management. This will allow centre management to monitor the use of resources and the progress towards stated project goals, but also to identify valuable learnings on person-centred care theory, identify additional support needs, as well as opportunities for innovation and education. The centre management team will be responsible for providing a standardized format and interface for reporting, and the research groups will be responsible for keeping management aware of their projects:

- Financial status, including personnel and compensation;
- Research progress and intended milestones;
- Significant results;
- Partners and stakeholder involvement; and
- Key issues affecting project outcomes and the generation of valuable outcomes as well as innovation and education opportunities.

The primary goal of the reporting process is not to track the projects, but to ensure that research at GPCC is a joint undertaking, and that learnings can be easily and freely shared.

Renewal and expansion

GPCC is intended as a sustainable, long-term platform for the continued exploration and development of person-centred care. This requires that the research projects at GPCC are constantly renewed and appropriately expanded. Researchers are expected to actively support this requirement by involving young, high quality Ph D students and researchers in projects, and by forging connections and partnerships with other research teams and institutions. International projects and collaborations are also important to help drive the development of GPCC and person-centred care knowledge, and should be actively pursued when appropriate.

For support in exploring means of establishing and financing collaborative research projects, please contact [the University of Gothenburg Grants and Innovation Office](#).

Use of GPCC brand

GPCC is a brand in the University of Gothenburg portfolio, with accompanying guidelines for appropriate use. It is important for GPCC to not only follow the formal requirements on branding and graphical profiles that follow from these guidelines, but also to cultivate a strong brand that appropriately reflects the vision and quality of GPCC's research. Researchers at GPCC are expected to proactively use the GPCC brand and identity in appropriate settings, and to avoid misrepresenting the brand and the values of person-centred care.

University guidelines

The University of Gothenburg has established a policy on communication and graphical profiling to ensure appropriate interaction and representation of the University. This applies to GPCC as a centre formation within the University, and has led to the development of a graphical GPCC profile in line with the University policy. This graphical profile should be used whenever results of GPCC-financed research are presented or published, if possible, and should build on the template files established for this purpose (Microsoft Word documents, Powerpoint presentations, posters, etc). In the event that additional financiers or stakeholders should also be credited, a joint profile should be used or, if one does not exist, created under the principles of the University guidelines.

For access to the GPCC graphical templates, please contact GPCC administration.

For more on the **University policy and guidelines**, please see:

medarbetarportalen.gu.se/grafiskprofil (Swedish)

medarbetarportalen.gu.se/graphicprofile (English)

General principles

In order to develop the brand of GPCC under the University of Gothenburg appropriately, care must be taken to only use it in appropriate circumstances, and to use it consistently in those circumstances. As the reputation and profile of the centre is directly linked to the quality of research carried out, the GPCC brand should never be used in relation to research that falls short of this standard or is not yet verified, unless this fact is clear from the material, and the reason why (early stage presentations, frat material, etc) is also clear. It should also be evident that the GPCC brand should not be used to represent research which has no basis in or vision regarding person-centredness.

In the event that brands of other organizations are also represented, it should be clear what the relationship between these organizations are. If the organization is a partner of GPCC this should be conveyed, and if the two actors independent co-financiers of the research, this should also be clear. In no circumstance should the GPCC brand be used in a way that risks giving an impression of partiality, unprofessionalism, or a lack of scientific stringency.

In the event that you have questions on the legal issues of branding or attribution, you can get help from the [University of Gothenburg legal support function](#), as well as the GPCC innovation function.

In the event you have questions about the general use of the GPCC brand, or the relationship of GPCC and a specific actor, please contact GPCC administration.

Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property Rights are the ownership rights of intellectual creations, including artistic creations, research results, and new outcomes, as prescribed in law. GPCC respects intellectual property rights as an important means for enabling the creator to control and benefit from his or her intellectual effort, and as a mean for controlled sharing of knowledge. All GPCC researchers are expected to respect intellectual property rights and will be supported in identifying and contractually managing such rights.

Rights of others to their intellectual property

In general, the person contributing to an intellectual creation, or that person's employer, owns the rights to that creation and has the right to decide if and how the creation may be used. This means that in any situation where you want to make use of someone else's intellectual creation, you have to have the creator's permission, or an exception for use based in law. This applies for example to works of text that they have written, images or photographs they have taken, or presentations or technical solutions that they have come up with. Sometimes it is possible to obtain permission to freely use material simply by asking, and in other situations the creator will require economic compensation. In all events, the creator should get an acknowledgement when their creation is being used. It is the responsibility of each GPCC researcher to investigate the origin and ownership of third

party material before using it, and to avoid from infringing on the intellectual property rights of others.

In the event that it is necessary to negotiate economic compensation, please contact the GPCC innovation function, or the University of Gothenburg Grants and Innovation Office. [Click here to access the University of Gothenburg Grants and Innovation Office.](#)

Rights to research results

According to Swedish law (the so-called teacher's exemption or professor's privilege), patentable inventions created by a teacher or researcher at a university will be owned by that individual, as opposed to the situation in all other forms of employment, where the employer as a rule owns the results of employee's efforts. The University of Gothenburg has extended this right to also apply to other forms of intellectual property, and only retains a right to use such results for certain purposes.

These principles can be found in the University of Gothenburg's Policy 'för universitetets nyttjanderätt till upphovsrättsligt skyddat material' (link below). This means that the economic control over research results belongs to the researcher. The use of research results must always be in line with applicable legislation, such as secrecy, ethics and personal data.

If several researchers have contributed to the same creation, and their contributions cannot be separated into individual parts, they own the creation jointly. If a researcher and a non-university actor, such as an external company, have jointly contributed to research results, and their contributions cannot be separated into individual parts, those research results are jointly owned between the researcher and the external company, unless otherwise agreed upon in the agreement regulating the research project.

To minimize the legal risks of externally funded research and education as well as to reduce the cost of external legal advice, assure compliance with internal rules, policies and policy it is always a good idea to contact the Grants and Innovation Office with any questions regarding agreements, ownership and access rights to research results. [Click here to access the University of Gothenburg Grants and Innovation Office.](#)

The intellectual property rights of a contributor to research can be signed away or limited, through an agreement. This can be done with any and all rights to results, except for the right of attribution, i.e. the right to be known as the creator or inventor behind results. Since research at the University of Gothenburg is funded by public means, it is always important to ensure that the results are not signed away in a manner that is not supported by laws regarding State Aid and does not give unfair advantage to private companies.

In any situation involving the commercialization of research results, or transferring results to stakeholders, it will be especially important to carefully manage intellectual property and ownership. The GPCC innovation function can support this process upon request.

You can read more about copyright on the University of Gothenburg homepage:

<https://pil.gu.se/resurser/upphovsratt> (Swedish)

<https://pil.gu.se/english/resources/copyright> (English)

Here you can also find the policy for GU's right to copyright protected material:

[Policy för Göteborgs Universitets nyttjanderätt till upphovsrättsligt skyddat material](#)

Confidentiality

The general principle and goal of academic research is to contribute to open access to the public domain of quality assured knowledge. These principles are not only supported by GPCC and the University of Gothenburg, but are also a fundamental aspect of all Swedish public activity and encoded in the Swedish constitution (see [the Freedom of the Press Act](#)).

This means that any documentation or information about research at the University is as a rule to be considered a public act, and should generally be available to the public. [More information on the University of Gothenburg's page on Preserving research data.](#)

There are, however, a few exceptions to this principle which you are expected to keep in mind to ensure that you preserve the confidentiality of individuals and their affairs, collaboration partners and their commercial interests, and individuals in internet publications.

Confidentiality of health information

Information which pertains to the personal affairs of individuals should generally not be made publicly available. This pertains specifically to medical records, hospital journals, or any information that related to the health status of an individual. Such information cannot be included in research publications or treated as an act available to the public without first being completely anonymized (simply removing names is not sufficient, if the individual can still be recognized from other information in the act).

For additional guidelines on handling personal information, see: codex.vr.se/en/agande4 (English)

Confidential private information

In general there is no consideration of commercial relevance or intellectual property protection when it comes to the public nature of public authorities. However, when working with private actors (persons or companies), who would not collaborate in the research if they could not expect the results to be secret, and for whom the disclosure of the material would be harmful, it is possible for the University to claim "collaboration confidentiality" ("samverkanssekretess"). Remember that public disclosure of a new invention will destroy the chance of obtaining a patent on it, which can be quite devastating for a stakeholder's

commercial interests. The rules on confidentiality are, however, quite complex and you cannot immediately assume that collaboration confidentiality exists.

To ensure that partner interests are properly considered, contact the University Grants and Innovation Office in unclear situations:

medarbetarportalen.gu.se/forskningsochinnovationskontoret/affarsjuridik (Swedish)

medarbetarportalen.gu.se/Grants+and+Innovation+Office/commercial_law (English)

Personal integrity on the internet

In the course of certain research projects or publications at GPCC, you may want to make information available online. Be aware that specific regulations apply to this kind of publication since 1998, and that the general principle is that informed and explicit consent is required before making any personal information about an individual available in a structured format online. This includes any information that can be linked to an individual, including names, contact information, or recognizable pictures. This becomes even more strict if it is a matter of potentially sensitive information.

For more on the online publication of information about an individual in the research context, please see: codex.vr.se/manniska3 (Swedish)

The public authority in charge of regulating online publication of personal information is the Swedish Authority for Privacy Protection: <https://www.imy.se/imy>. (Swedish)

Conflicts of interest

Conflicts of interest arise whenever two sets of interests, such as for example personal incentives and the requirements of the employer, are in opposition. GPCC aims to not only avoid conflicts of interest but also the appearance of conflicts of interests, by requiring all GPCC researchers to comply with the specific rules of their employers and exercise transparency.

Secondary employment / sideline activities (bisysslor)

In the event that a researcher holds more than one employment, or has a considerable sideline activity, this could potentially be viewed as a source of conflict of interest. At the University of Gothenburg, secondary employment is accepted and to some degree encouraged, providing that it does not compete with the primary employment or jeopardize the reputation of the University. Self-reporting secondary employment is mandatory as of 2011, and more information can be found here: medarbetarportalen.gu.se/personalfragor/bisyslor

Bias

Bias is an extreme form of conflict of interest, which occurs when an individual makes or influences decisions on behalf of their employer to ensure benefits for themselves or others close to them. An example would be to influence the University to purchase services from a company that the researcher owns shares in; another example would be to recommend the University to employ their relative as a Ph D student. Bias is illegal, and should be avoided entirely. Researchers at GPCC shall not take part in any decision where the outcome could favour them financially or otherwise.

External services and procurement

Procurement is the formal process of requesting and comparing competing bids when purchasing goods or services. GPCC aims to promote healthy competition on the market among private actors, and to use public funds responsibly by always assuring a competitive and favourable price for goods or services purchased.

Research projects financed by GPCC should always observe the principles and formal processes of procurement when purchasing services and products from other actors, in order to make sure that purchasing decisions are:

- Non-discriminatory (not, for example, favouring suppliers from any one country only due to nationality)
- Non-preferential (not, for example, giving any supplier favourable treatment or a lower threshold)
- Mutually recognizing other EU nations and their certification processes
- Proportional (not establishing unreasonable requirements or specifications for suppliers to deliver on)
- Transparent.

Whenever you are planning to purchase services or products in relation to research, contacting the procurement unit is advised. Even if it is a smaller service, it is possible that the University has pre-negotiated a framework agreement with one or more relevant suppliers, which would then be appropriate to use.

[The Procurement unit's web site](#) (Swedish)

If you have learned that there is no relevant framework agreement, the procurement unit can help you determine what kind of procurement is most relevant:

- In the event that the price of the service or product exceeds the current threshold value (SEK 1 546 202 in 2024), a full procurement with a public call for proposals is required; below this amount a normal procurement is possible

- In the event that the price of the service or product is lower than SEK 700 000, a direct procurement is possible, which can expedite the process.
- If the procurement exceeds SEK 700 000 advertisement nationally in Sweden is required.
- If the procurement exceeds SEK 1 456 476 advertisement throughout the whole of the EU is required.

You should always obtain the input of the procurement unit to help you understand which procurement process is right in your case.

Information from the Swedish Competition authority:

konkurrensverket.se (Swedish)

konkurrensverket.se (English)

[University of Gothenburg information on general procurement support \(in Swedish only\).](#)

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