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1010 Wien
http://sts.univie.ac.at

Code of Conduct
March 2024

This code of conduct represents the values the Department of Science and Technology Studies sees as central to the interaction of its members. It is to be read in the context of the code of conduct[1] and the statutes[2] of the University of Vienna, the bylaws of the University of Vienna, its regulations of good scientific practice[3] and for policy advice[4].

Our department is constituted by a community of people striving to learn about and research the relations between science, technology and society. It aims to provide the best possible conditions for the production of new knowledge as well as for the intellectual, personal and professional development of all the members of the department community.

This code of conduct addresses both department staff, students as well as academic visitors and affiliates. It is understood as complementing other existing rules and regulations specific to particular groups.

A central tenet of our work and our field is that knowledge is always produced in social environments, and that the form and quality of knowledge and learning depends on the quality of these environments. In particular, a diversity of backgrounds, identities and opinions as well as the possibility to express these in open and respectful discourse is crucial.

Our aim is to create a professional, sensitive, and supportive environment, free of abuse, discrimination, or harassment of others.

No forms of discrimination are tolerated at our department. Discrimination can concern among others race, sex, gender, sexuality, age, (dis)ability, language, religion, political opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, class, birth or other status.

Though different in their backgrounds, identities and institutional positions, all members of the department community are equal in their fundamental rights to be a respected and valued part of this community and to contribute to its collective shaping in relation to their different roles.

Academia is a hierarchical environment and often frames the relations between its members as competitive. As such, it is particularly vulnerable to diverse forms of power abuse and hostile behavior. Our department aims to work against these tendencies, in particular against sexual harassment, mobbing, defamation, and the belittling of members of the department community.

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[1] https://transvienna.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/z_translationswiss/Leitbild/Code_of_Conduct_der_Universitaet_Wien_2013.pdf
[2] https://satzung.univie.ac.at/en/
[3] https://www.qs.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/d_qualitaetssicherung/Dateidownloads/RichtlinienSicherungGuterWissenschaftlicherPraxis.pdf
[4] https://wiki.univie.ac.at/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=171481946&preview=/168537396/178233240/Richtlinie%20der%20Universit%C3%A4t%20Wien%20zur%20wissenschaftlichen%20Politikberatung.pdf

Inclusivity

Our department consists of people with diverse backgrounds, experiences and expressions of life. Fostering an inclusive place of work and study not only means that people of different identities, experiences and life situations are welcome to take part in our shared space, but also that everyone is allowed and encouraged to participate in shaping it.

We believe that working towards inclusivity and equality (in recognition of difference) creates a more sustainable environment. As we strive towards this vision, we remain aware that hierarchies, different forms of intersectionality, differences in power and in the ability to contribute and to participate will always be present. Realizing this vision therefore demands that every member of the department community both reflects on their own perspective, positionality and privilege *and* acts in a way that is considerate of this and the situations of others.

We as members of the department community commit ourselves to:
- share knowledge with each other
- accept, acknowledge and respect each other's individuality, needs and boundaries
- nourish and celebrate diversity
- abstain from racist or derogatory terms
- communicate information as much as possible in the department's working language, English
- design and use all spaces in a way that they are as easily accessible as possible
- foster inclusive spaces for communication/expression and avoid aggressive communication styles
- invite and include people to be heard in processes and decisions that affect them, through representation where direct participation isn't possible or practically feasible, by documenting and communicating relevant information in an accessible manner.

Respect

We believe reciprocal respect to be the basis of a healthy and thriving working and studying environment. Communicating and interacting in a respectful way is not only necessary to make everyone feel welcome and comfortable in our shared spaces, but it is also a constituent part of any working, learning and growing process.

The form of reciprocal respect we strive for is active, intentional, caring, and rooted in an unconditional appreciation of all individuals, irrespective of positionalities. It transcends power structures and hierarchies. As such it should be the baseline of *all* relationships at our department.

We as members of the department community commit ourselves to:
- treat members of the department community as equals as far as differences in institutional positions, positionalities and other organizational constraints allow
- listen to and take each other seriously
- make each other feel welcome and appreciated
- take our commitments we make to other members of the community seriously
- respect the time and the efforts of others
- make sure critique and feedback is given in a constructive and productive way and considered as an opportunity for improvement
- stand up against disrespectful behavior and show solidarity and support.

Reflexivity and care

At our department, and in academia in general, people often inhabit multiple roles that come along with varying expectations, responsibilities, and affordances. A person can simultaneously be a student and a teacher, an employee and a co-author, and so on. These configurations and mixed positionalities demand careful handling. This entails a commitment to institutional reflexivity about our shared culture and norms as well as academia as a teaching and working environment.

The care we put into being and working together relies on the values and actions of individuals, but it also needs to be enacted in formal and institutional structures.

We as members of the department community commit ourselves to:
- creating and maintaining institutional structures and opportunities to reflect on the shared department culture
- being transparent and careful when it comes to our responsibilities towards each other and the department and make them explicit in work relations
- making tacit and implicit knowledge as much as possible transparent, by having a clear documentation of structures and procedures
- being considerate and careful in our expectations towards others and ourselves
- creating an environment where people feel able to set clear boundaries and be mindful of those of others
- fostering a culture of acknowledging and making visible each other's work (including care work); this also implies explicit attention to good authorship practices
- remaining sensitive to own and others' mental and physical health
- enabling and supporting the kinds of work needed to make and maintain spaces for positive, enjoyable and constructive interactions.

Context and continued efforts

This code of conduct was drafted in a participatory process by the department community. In a moderated process in spring 2023, which was triggered by #metoo debates in our field, members of the department expressed what they see as crucial for a positive working and learning space. Based on these inputs, a working group composed of students and department staff in different positions drafted the first iteration of this document in September 2023. It was commented by members of the department council, discussed by the department council on 14.03.2024 and adopted by the department leadership. It will be updated when necessary to reflect the evolution of our commitment to a responsible, inclusive, reflexive, respectful and caring department.

This code of conduct will be accessible for all community members through the departmental webpage. It will also be proactively shared (e.g. by handing it out to new students and staff).

The code of conduct is revisited once a year by the department council in its first summer term meeting. Smaller changes to wordings can be made by department council and leadership in this meeting. If the department council and leadership see major changes of the code of conduct as necessary, a meeting for all department members will be announced in a timely and inclusive fashion to discuss these changes.

It is recognized that the code of conduct outlines values and aims rather than concrete actions. As a living document, it is intended to be the basis for further initiatives that translate these values and aims into concrete action.

List of main contact points

Department Leadership
responsible for department staff, budget, research and public representation

Formal titles:
Head of Department
Vice-Head of Department

Please consult sts.univie.ac.at for the persons currently in this role.

Teaching Director
responsible for all teaching related matters for the master programme "Science, Technology, Society" as well as the Erweiterungscurriculum "Wechselwirkungen zwischen Wissenschaft, Technik und Gesellschaft verstehen"

Formal title:
Vice-Director of the Sociology Studies Programme (responsible for the STS teaching programme)

Please consult sts.univie.ac.at for the person currently in this role.

Student Representation

STS student council; sts-studentcouncil@riseup.net

Department Council
is a committee comprised of members representing all department groups. Its purpose is to facilitate communication between the groups and between the groups and department leadership. The Department Council is a departmental communication structure, it has no official role in university structures and no formal decision-making power. It meets two times per semester.

Composition:
- Department Leadership: head and vice-head
- Professors: 1 person
- Postdocs: max. 2 persons
- PhD students employed at the department: max. 2 persons
- PhD students non-employed: 1 person
- Master students employed at the department: 1 person
- Master students non-employed: 2 persons
- Administration: 1 person

For information on the current representatives, please contact the department administration, leadership or the student council.