

GOOD RESEARCH

INTEGRITY

Definition

“Integrity” means compliance with accepted general, professional, social and ethical standards and values.

“Independence” means compliance with accepted general and professional standards for independent working.

At TNO, both concepts are vitally important at both the individual and the organizational level. And they are closely related.

Why this topic is important for TNO

Integrity and independence are essential core values for TNO. We have to be totally trustworthy as an organization, and strive always to remain so. This is important for our staff and it directly influences our credibility and authority in the wider world.

Management approach

As of 2016, integrity has been made a Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for the entire organization. This reconfirms the fact that it is a vital factor in everything we do, and that we are managed and assessed accordingly. To a great extent, integrity is the personal responsibility of individual employees and their managers.

In support of that responsibility, integrity monitoring, awareness and advice are provided by a comprehensive internal structure consisting of the Integrity Committee, the Integrity Officer, confidential counsellors and personnel and units charged with ensuring that TNO complies with specific standards and values.

The Integrity Committee monitors all matters related to this topic, whatever their nature, and each year reviews fulfilment of the previous annual integrity plan.

Evaluation

The Integrity Committee is constantly evaluating all aspects of integrity at TNO. Both at and between its regular meetings, it is kept informed of any relevant developments. Because the majority of its members hold positions with senior managerial authority, they are empowered to take action and assume the appropriate responsibility in respect of many of the matters brought to their attention.

The annual internal risk evaluation is to be updated in 2016. Partly on the basis of these changes, the annual integrity plan will then be revised and resubmitted to the TNO Board of Management.

Developments in 2015

- A position paper on independence is being compiled to supplement the TNO Code, in support of our independent decision-making and working methods.
- There were no formal reports under the official “whistleblower” scheme. However, the Integrity Officer provided advice on numerous occasions in order to avert undesirable situations through normal management channels.
- So-called originality software, designed to detect and prevent potential plagiarism, was tested under the auspices of the Operational Excellence and Auditing Department (OE&A). This is being rolled out across TNO in 2016.
- An advisory report was written on the desirability of introducing compulsory ethical committee reviews of all research involving human subjects which is not already subject to such controls under Dutch law.
- Five new confidential counsellors were appointed after undergoing an introductory programme. All the confidential counsellors attended a two-day external training course.
- De Integrity Officer was made a third-echelon manager, and so can now report directly to the Chairman of the TNO Board of Management if necessary. With the appointment of an Internal Auditor, also at third-echelon level, integrity alerts can be included in audits.
- Work was undertaken to improve our policies for client acceptance and the management of our international agents. Both policies will be ready in 2016