

POSITION STATEMENT  
**A VALUES FRAMEWORK  
FOR THE ORGANISATION  
OF RESEARCH**  
2022

A large, stylized white graphic of a plant with several leaves is centered on the page. The background is a vibrant blue with a pattern of thin, white, curved lines that create a sense of depth and movement, resembling a stylized sunburst or a series of overlapping waves. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and professional.

SCIENCE  
**EUROPE**  
Shaping the future of research

# Colophon

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June 2022

## **Position Statement 'A values Framework for the Organisation of Research'**

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This position statement is the result of an extensive consultation within the membership of Science Europe, and with the members of its Working Group on Research Culture.

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# Introduction

**Many research policies and practices are well-established. Change requires care and is often implemented slowly and incrementally.<sup>1</sup> Over time, these policies and practices can become detached from the actions they were developed to promote and the unwritten values they were based upon. The research system now moves faster than ever before and responds to an increasing number of internal and external demands. Under this pressure, it is vital that research organisations reflect upon the values that underlie effective research systems. In doing so, organisations can foster research systems within which a diversity of people and ideas can thrive, all in pursuit of research quality.**

A key priority of Science Europe's strategy is to "contribute to the evolution of research culture."<sup>2</sup> An important element of this priority is to focus research policies on the values that lie at the centre of research systems: a recommendation that came from Science Europe's activities on Research Assessment in 2020.<sup>1</sup> Based upon initial discussions and an internal survey,<sup>3</sup> in 2021 Science Europe brought together its member or-

ganisations, national ministries, EU institutions, and research community representatives to discuss the topic of research culture.<sup>4</sup> In parallel, it published a Statement on Research Culture<sup>5</sup> highlighting a shared vision for research culture in the European Research Area (ERA) and publicly committing to a number of key actions where Science Europe and its Member Organisations can contribute to change.



## Science Europe's vision for Research culture in the European Research Area

"The European Research Area we strive for focusses on the quality of the research process, full support of scientific autonomy, and the promotion of diversity and inclusion, acknowledging that these conditions will, in turn, foster a productive research system.

We envisage a research culture in the European Research Area where a) all participants in the research endeavour are appropriately recognised for their diverse contributions, b) the broad skills and competencies of researchers are fostered and supported by suitable training, appropriate infrastructure, and responsible management and governance, c) research integrity and high ethical standards are promoted effectively, and d) careers in research are attractive and sustainable."<sup>5</sup>

1. [Science Europe Activities on Research Assessment Processes](#) (2019–2020)
2. [Science Europe Strategy Plan](#) (2021–2026)
3. [Science Europe Scoping Survey on Research Culture](#) (2021)
4. [Report of the 13th Science Europe High Level Workshop](#) (2021)
5. [Science Europe Statement on Research Culture](#) (2021)

Values underpin research culture, and influence and improve trust across all aspects of the research ecosystem. Despite this, they are often presumed and unwritten. Science Europe began exploring the topic of values as part of its work on research assessment processes.<sup>1</sup> In 2021, a scoping survey was conducted on research culture including a question on the relative support for a number of previously proposed values for research.<sup>3</sup>

An initial list of values proposed and supported by Science Europe Member Organisations was discussed and critiqued at the 2021 Science Europe High Level Workshop on Research Culture and has been further reviewed by the Science Europe Working Group on Research Culture. Building on these activities, Science Europe presents a set of shared values that may serve as a reference for the policies and practices implemented by Science Europe Member Organisations (research funding and performing organisations) and as a foundation for collaboration on actions to further embed these values as part of the research system.

By promoting these values, Science Europe and its Member Organisations, in their capacity, can further enable their support as part of the wider research activity and by the research community.<sup>6</sup> Research organisations operate within certain limits, such as those imposed by legal frameworks or funding availability. A common values perspective allows research organisations to identify areas within their capacity where positive actions can be developed. Such actions will be discussed and piloted to adapt research policies and practices to better reflect these shared values. In turn, this may help to support pluralistic notions of and pathways to research quality and build trust, further enabling research to 1) advance knowledge, 2) create relevance and impact, 3) provide services (directly and/or indirectly) to society, and 4) contribute to the development of the research community and research ecosystem. The values presented should not be viewed as requirements. Science Europe recognises the myriad of existing publications and discussions on the values/norms of research<sup>7,8</sup> and contributes the below framework as guide for the activities of research performing and funding organisations.

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6. Herein describing researchers, research support staff, research managers and administrators, policy makers, and all members of organisations that host and support them.

7. Merton, R.K.: [The Sociology of Science](#) (1942/1973)

8. Inter-Academies Partnership: [Doing Global Science](#) (2016)

# Values Framework

**This shared values framework for the organisation of research is a reference document and sets a foundation for appraisal and adaptation: in doing so, it contributes to the evolution of research culture. Definitions of the values listed below should be considered flexible to accommodate a diversity of practices and cultures, and according to the specific needs of different domains and settings.**

*The values are presented in alphabetical order to denote no hierarchy.*



## Autonomy/Freedom

Supports the self-governing nature of research and emphasises the importance of the research community and research organisations being free to pursue and express ideas and follow research processes, questions, and activities of their choice responsibly and according to their expertise, interests, and priorities.<sup>9</sup>



## Care & Collegiality

Reflects the need for research processes, activities, and the research community to care for and nurture the ecosystem that research exists within,<sup>4</sup> including responsible resource use and other social/societal considerations. It highlights the responsibility of the entire research community in creating and maintaining a supportive and respectful environment free from bullying and harassment, for all involved in the research process, facilitating individual and group growth.



## Collaboration

Relates to the importance of promoting co-operation (including reproducibility and re-use): 1) between people who have complementary expertise within disciplines (Team Science), 2) across disciplines (inter- and trans-disciplinarity), 3) for the research process in general (replication and reproduction activities), 4) with relevant education, policy, and industry sectors, and 5) with society, where relevant. Collaboration, balanced against competition, is necessary to support quality.

9. [Joint statement on academic freedom and autonomy](#) by ALLEA, EUA, and Science Europe (2019)

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion



Ensures that all roles within the research community are accessible and accommodating to all, regardless of sex and gender, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, class, faith, and other possible factors.<sup>1</sup> It highlights the importance of supporting a diversity of social categories, experiences, competencies, and merits of individuals within the research community as well as the research inputs (methods, data, tools) and outputs (communication and dissemination types) that contribute to the research process and the organisational structures that govern them. These should be accessible to any individual, research unit, discipline, or organisation within the research community and beyond.

## Integrity and Ethics



Refers to efforts by all involved to maintain and improve reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability<sup>10</sup> in the research domain through the rigorous conduct and funding of research, as well as in the communication of research processes, outputs, and outcomes. This involves acknowledgement and contextualisation of the current stage of research and of all contributions, standards/methods, continuous quality control, and includes the facilitation and recognition of all aspects of good and responsible research practice.<sup>11</sup>

## Openness and Transparency



Describes the need for all aspects of research<sup>12</sup> to be shared and accessible for examination (whenever possible), re-use, and extension (whilst respecting ethics and integrity) and emphasises the necessity that the research process (from data sharing to evaluation processes) is appropriately explained and justified to relevant stakeholders at all levels.<sup>13</sup>

These values should be considered as normal, yet they do not fully describe current conditions. Identifying, defining, and agreeing upon a foundation of values for the organisation of research is required to form an innovative and forward-looking research culture within the European Research Area, and beyond. However, shifting policy and practice requires a solid evidence base that can support change, as well as a constant dialogue with all stakeholders.

To move from a conceptual framework to organisational structures and systems where these values are fully embedded, Science Europe will promote collaboration between its members and also towards relevant external initiatives, en-

gaging the voice of the research community in all discussions. Research on research is needed to evaluate the various ways in which these values are put into practice across countries, disciplines, and types of research organisation. Science Europe will offer a platform to share evidence and exchange on best practices and lessons learned so that changes can be evolutive.

This framework is considered a living document, open for expansion and adjustment. Science Europe will engage with the research community and consult research organisations, policy makers, and others active in the organisation of research as part of the development of actions to turn these aspirational values into functional practices.

10. [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#) (2017)

11. Wellcome - [Good Research Practice Guidelines](#) (2018), as an example

12. [Open definition](#) - Open Knowledge Foundation

13. König, N., Børsen, T., & Emmeche, C.: [The ethos of post-normal science](#) (2017)



**Values lie at the centre of the research system and therefore underlie rigorous research processes and activities, outputs and outcomes, research management, and governance.**



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Science Europe is the association of major research funding and research performing organisations in Europe.

Our vision is for the European Research Area to provide the optimal conditions to support robust education and research & innovation systems.

We define long-term perspectives for European research and champion best-practice approaches that enable high-quality research for knowledge advancement and the needs of society.

We are uniquely placed to lead advancements to the European Research Area and inform global developments through participation in research initiatives where science is a strong and trusted component of sustainable economic, environmental, and societal development.

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