



# Ethics in Research I

## Conduct in research ...

**Has many facets:**

- **Plagiarism**
- **Research integrity**
- **Collaborations**
- **Peer review of papers and proposals**
- **Ethics at the workplace**

## Conduct in research ...

- What constitutes plagiarism?
  - Copying in essentially unchanged form from other sources without proper attribution or acknowledgement (copying a definition is fine if it is a common one; copying a paragraph from wikipedia or another paper because it captures a certain concept is unethical unless the paragraph is identified clearly as a quote and the source is acknowledged)
  - Self-plagiarism: copying from your own papers
  - Applies to all forms of dissemination (papers, talks, grant proposals, ...)
  - Plagiarism is unethical; self-plagiarism may not be considered as unethical by everybody but it is bad practice and may result in rejection when discovered in a submitted paper
- Respecting copyright
  - Seek permission for figures copied from other copyrighted work and attribute sources clearly (this may include your own figures depending on the copyright form you signed)

## Conduct in research ...

- **Research Integrity:**
  - **Respect speakers, visitors, collaborators**
  - **Professionalism**
  
- **Misconduct in research:**
  - **Falsifying results such as proofs or numerical simulations**
  - **Omission of contradictory data, eg in numerical simulations**
  - **Not publishing errata when discovering significant mistakes or errors in published work**

## Conduct in research ...

- How do I acknowledge contributions from others? For instance:
  - Outcomes of discussions with others, or suggestions received from others
  - Suggestions from referees
- How do I avoid conflicts when collaborating with others?
  - Who will be co-authors on a paper?
  - Who will be first author (if in non-alphabetical order)?
  - Often difficult to predict when problems arise: be aware of potential problems and handle them professionally – seek advice from advisors or mentors
- Intellectual property:
  - Who owns results?
  - Examples: graduate students working with faculty mentors, ...

## Conduct in research ...

- Peer review of papers and proposals:
  - Declare anything that can be perceived as a potential conflict when refereeing papers or proposals: examples are: the author is a former student or a close collaborator of yours; you work on exactly the same problem and may have an interest in delaying the review or giving a negative report ...
  - Peer reviews are strictly confidential: you **cannot**
    - use any of the material you learned about in the reviewed manuscript (unless you also obtained it independently from the author or a depository)
    - give the manuscript to anybody else unless the editor allows it
    - talk to others about the manuscript unless you have a technical question that you can ask without revealing the identity of the author or communicating confidential material
    - disseminate your review to anybody except the editor or program officer who requested the review
    - contact the author with questions or comments

## Professional ethics at the workplace ...

- Ethical use of institutional computer, email, and office facilities
- Confidentiality of privileged information (grades, referee reports, recommendation letters,...)
- Being aware of, and abiding by, copyright and software license requirements:
  - be careful when installing software on different computers or for different users
  - do not download scanned copies of copyrighted material
- Personal conflicts of interest:
  - financial, family, ...
  - dating students and postdocs
  - asking students or postdocs for personal favours

## Title IX ...

- Title IX is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity.

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

– Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972  
to the Higher Education Act of 1965

## Title IX ...

- Brown University's Title IX and Gender Equity Statement of Non-Discrimination:  
*Brown University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, color, religion, age, disability, status as a veteran, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, or any other category protected by applicable law, in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, or other school administered programs.*
- Policy covers:
  - Privacy and Confidentiality
  - Sexual or Gender-based Harassment
  - Sexual Assault
  - Relationship and Interpersonal Violence
  - Stalking
  - Retaliation
  - Consent
- Full Brown policy: <https://www.brown.edu/about/administration/title-ix/home>