

A High Standard of Research Ethics as the Ethos of the University of Tokyo

The University of Tokyo is investigating serious breaches of research ethics in stark contravention of the principles set forth in the University Charter and the University Code of Conduct for Research. The University of Tokyo bears a heavy responsibility to society to set the standard for scientific research in Japan and it is absolutely unacceptable that such cases should occur. We take these cases most seriously as they impact not only the University's honor and society's trust in the University, but also international opinion of and trust in science in Japan as a whole.

We are currently making every effort to quickly complete our investigation into the causes and facts of these cases. Even at this point of the investigation there is strong cause for concern that those involved have serious problems regarding their sense of ethics as well as their awareness of norms of conduct as professional researchers. Our integrity as individuals engaged in the pursuit of truth and creation of knowledge, as is stated in the University Charter, is being seriously questioned.

The University of Tokyo will publish a detailed action plan for preventing recurrences of such breaches of research ethics as soon as the investigators complete their final reports. In the meantime, research at the University continues daily. I ask each and every researcher at the University of Tokyo to ensure the conformity of their actions to the code of research ethics. At the same time, I also ask each organization to immediately hold discussions on ensuring conformity to the code of research ethics and also to take concrete and comprehensive action for faculty development and instruction of students to this end. (Organization includes the faculty and departmental councils of each faculty, graduate school, institute, center or any other organizational unit of the University large enough to hold meaningful discussions.) I ask the deans and directors of each faculty, graduate school, institute and center to collate the results of those discussions and actions and to share those results at all levels of the University. This discussion will form the basis of the University's plan to prevent any recurrence of such breaches of research ethics. Those who have any concerns whatsoever should contact the Executive Vice President responsible for the Code of Conduct for Scientific Research.

The occurrence of even one case of research misconduct greatly harms the trust society has in scientific research. The University's Code of Conduct for Research states that research misconduct is a serious betrayal of humanity that rejects the essence of scientific research and threatens its very foundations. I strongly urge each and every researcher at the University of Tokyo to incorporate the spirit of these words into their daily research. I ask all researchers at the University of Tokyo to heighten their awareness and effort so that the ethos of this university is an unshakeable high standard of research ethics and there should be no recurrences of this kind.

Junichi Hamada
President