Guidelines for Research Ethics for Prizes Awarded by
The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters
Oslo 27 February 2020

Preamble

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters aims to foster good research practices where the scientific endeavor is characterized by civil rights, respect and non-discrimination, and adherence to the general guidelines for research ethics. The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters will adhere to the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees’ General guidelines for research ethics, which is appended to this document. This includes the award of science prizes, as well as the associated selection processes and other related activities.

The general guidelines for research ethics include fundamental norms against dishonesty (fraud, fabrication, plagiarism), discrimination and harassment. (It is to be noted that in the General guidelines for research ethics, under point 9 Collegiality “Researchers must show each other respect” implies absence of discrimination and harassment). The breach of the general guidelines for research ethics may come from negligence, inappropriate citation or co-authorship practices, or from lack of reflection and attention to the role of science and its consequences for humans or the environment. The award of science prizes and positions of trust needs to be carried out in a way that fosters the reputation of The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters and its ability to credibly promote and represent the science community. Accusations of unethical behavior can undermine procedures, but one must also be aware that these may be motivated by personal or work-related conflicts. A fair process needs to be established in all cases, avoiding premature or automatic sanctions.

1. Members of Prize Committees

Appointment of a prize committee: In addition to their scientific qualifications and credentials, the members of prize committees shall comply with the general guidelines for research ethics.

A member of an already appointed prize committee is revealed to have been guilty of breach of the general guidelines for research ethics: If the breach stands to harm the reputation of the prize, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters shall require the member to leave the committee.
A committee member is accused of having breached the general guidelines for research ethics: In such a case the committee member’s home institution has the responsibility for evaluating the accusation. This can take time. Expedited by the concern for the reputation of the prize, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters may require a committee member to step down from the committee while the investigation is ongoing.

2. Ethical Considerations for Prize Laureates

Nomination of prize laureates: In the call for nominations letter sent out by The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters to academic institutions globally, adherence to general guidelines for research ethics shall be a requirement to be taken into account when nominating.

A confirmation is required that the general guidelines for research ethics are taken into account in the nomination work.

The prize committee evaluation of possible prize winners: In addition to the quality and significance of the research carried out by the nominees, their adherence to the general guidelines for research ethics shall also be evaluated.

The prize winner has been announced, but before the prize is awarded it is revealed that the winner has broken general guidelines for research ethics: In the interest of protecting the reputation of the prize, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters shall evaluate and decide whether the award process needs to be discontinued.

Accusations of breaches of general guidelines for research ethics are brought forward after the prize has been awarded: If serious breaches of the general guidelines for research ethics are uncovered in the work that was awarded the prize, The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters can revoke the prize.
Annex The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters adheres to the Norwegian National Research Ethics Committees’ “General guidelines for research ethics”, https://www.etikkom.no/en/ethical-guidelines-for-research/general-guidelines-for-research-ethics/. It is to be noted that under point 9 Collegiality “Researchers must show each other respect” implies absence of discrimination and harassment.