



The procedure for implementing TU Darmstadt's *Zivilklausel*

Specific procedure for research projects/research contracts

The procedure is based on researchers' individual responsibility and ensures that they examine the topic critically. Moreover, it provides documentation for independent *assessments* (checklist) and an opportunity for both researchers and university management to approach the Ethics Commission for a *statement* (recommendation) on whether their proposals are compatible with TU Darmstadt's *Zivilklausel*.

The question as to whether aspects of the *Zivilklausel* come into play shall be an integral part of planning a research project. Before embarking on a research (or teaching) project, academics are required to consult an information package and a checklist available on the intranet to clarify for themselves whether their project is problematic in terms of the *Zivilklausel*. The checklist includes a free text field in which a final assessment (problematic or not problematic) can be explained.

If researchers completing the checklist come to the conclusion that their project can be conducted without problems, they shall file the completed checklist (unless any further enquiries are forthcoming, definitively) in their own documents. The respective third-party funding application or research contract shall be submitted to the Vice President, Administration and Financial Affairs, for signature through the Research Directorate. When applying for the Cost Centre number, applicants shall re-confirm that they have completed the checklist.

If researchers completing the checklist are in doubt as to whether their project is compatible with the *Zivilklausel* they can decide whether they should (1) cease to pursue the project, (2) include the completed checklist with the free-text explanation (clearly formulated with regard to the critical points) in their application/research contract so that their assessment can be submitted to the Research Directorate and Vice President or (3) seek the approval of TU Darmstadt's Ethics Commission.

If a proposal is submitted to the Ethics Commission, the latter issues a recommendation [pursuant to Section 1(3) of its statutes]. On the basis of this recommendation, researchers can consider once again whether they should (1) cease to pursue the project or (2) whether the project is sufficiently unobjectionable. If they wish to conduct the project they shall submit the Ethics Commission's recommendation together with the completed checklist (including the free-text explanation) as part of the project dossier to the administration in the usual way.

If the Vice President has reservations about a research proposal's compatibility with the *Zivilklausel*, he has the right to refuse to sign. If the Vice President/Presidium require further clarification, they may also ask the Ethics Commission for a recommendation. In any case, a negative decision made by the Vice President should be validated by an assessment considering the relevance of the *Zivilklausel*.

Conclusion (for researchers)

- In any event: complete and file the *Zivilklausel* checklist on your research proposal; confirm that this has been done when being issued with your project number.
- In the event of a decision based on independent consideration without a recommendation by the Ethics Commission: use the free text field to explain your decision and submit the completed checklist.
- In the event of need for clarification: seek a recommendation from the Ethics Commission and submit it together with the application dossier and checklist.

Additional information:

One of the Ethics Commission's core duties is to issue recommendations (when required, for example, by the DFG, EU etc.) on issues of research ethics (human experiments, data protection etc.). For this purpose, there is also a checklist and the Commission can be approached.

The assessment of issues pertaining to the *Zivilklausel* ("military/civilian purposes") is conducted in accordance with TU Darmstadt's Charter and is a feature of the culture of responsibility practised at the university.
