2025 EDITION

the CNRS GUIDE to PUBLIC SPEAKING

for scientists

cnrs

Preamble: Editorial by Antoine Petit

Along with doctors, scientists are the professionals the public trusts the most [1] and yet they are under-represented in the media — something the public also regrets. A survey carried out by the Ipsos Science and Society Barometer in 2024 [2] found that 69% of French people consider science to be the main response to the major challenges of our era.

By providing robust knowledge derived from research, scientists contribute to the quality of public debate. By disseminating this knowledge as widely and clearly as possible, they combat misinformation, misconceptions, simplistic solutions and conspiracy theories that may circulate in the media, particularly social networks.

This means that it is vital for scientific results and approaches to be disseminated throughout society to stimulate people's intellectual curiosity and support the development of critical thinking. Scientific discourse can also help raise public awareness of the major issues the world is facing today and encourage citizens to become more actively involved in developing solutions.

To be honest, we did not necessarily choose this profession thinking that we would be talking about it on a daily basis to a wide audience, especially as dealing with the media is not always easy. Public speaking is neither simple, nor comfortable. Nor is it an obligation. However if scientists do not step up to take their place in public debate, others will do so who are less well informed, less rigorous, and possibly motivated by other factors than sharing scientifically-acquired knowledge.

The objective of this guide is to provide the right tools for CNRS scientists who wish to speak in public.

I am well aware that this approach could be criticised. We are often blamed for not intervening when a CNRS researcher takes a controversial position in public (often on a controversial subject). Indeed, it is rare for the CNRS to do this. I have observed that when scientists take a position, generally it is in the name of their research and the resulting expertise. I believe our guide should help all CNRS staff to strike the right balance between their freedom of expression as scientists, their duty of rigour, the preservation of the image of the CNRS and the quality of public debate.

This is why we have developed this guide collectively. Its purpose is to help scientists who would like to express themselves in public to engage with the media as calmly and responsibly as possible, which will help reinforce the position of a science that serves society.

Antoine Petit,
CNRS Chairman and CEO

69% of French people consider science to be the main response to the major challenges of our time.

[1] The IPSOS Global Trustworthiness Index, 2021.
https://www.ipsos.com/en/global-trustworthiness-index-2021

[2] The Ipsos Science and Society Barometer, 2024
https://www.ipsos.com/fr-fr/69-des-francais-considerent-que-la-science-constitue-la-principale-reponse-aux-grands-enjeux

RÉPUBLIQUE
FRANÇAISE
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

cnrs

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Introduction

This guide is intended to serve as a practical educational tool for scientists who would like to express themselves in public. It is a kind of 'toolbox' where researchers can find information on their rights and responsibilities along with practical advice to bear in mind before making a public statement.

The guide is based on the recommendations of the CNRS's "COMETS" Ethics Committee which published an opinion entitled "*Freedom and Responsibility: Academic Researchers' Public Advocacy*" on July 7th 2023 and also on our own scientific communities' expectations as expressed in a survey carried out by the CNRS's general management in March 2024. Both the COMETS document and our communities' expectations indicate the growing presence of CNRS scientists in the media and the usefulness of a document that clarifies the rules in this area of activity.

This guide has been developed from this perspective in collaboration with volunteer staff members and input from the CNRS's Scientific Board. It is intended as a first draft that will evolve and be enriched over time in reaction to feedback from those concerned.

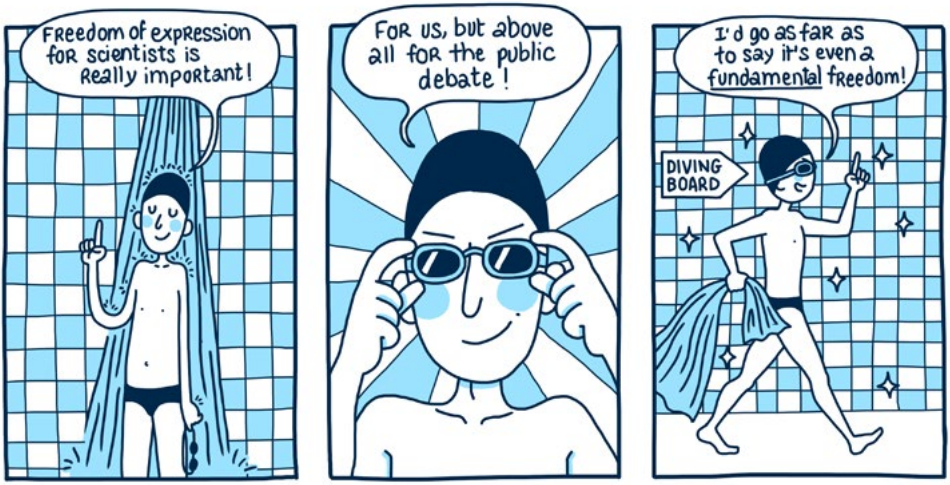
Its scope covers only channels of public expression, namely traditional media — print and online press, television and radio — and social networks. It does not however cover scientific publications as such or the expression of trade unions.

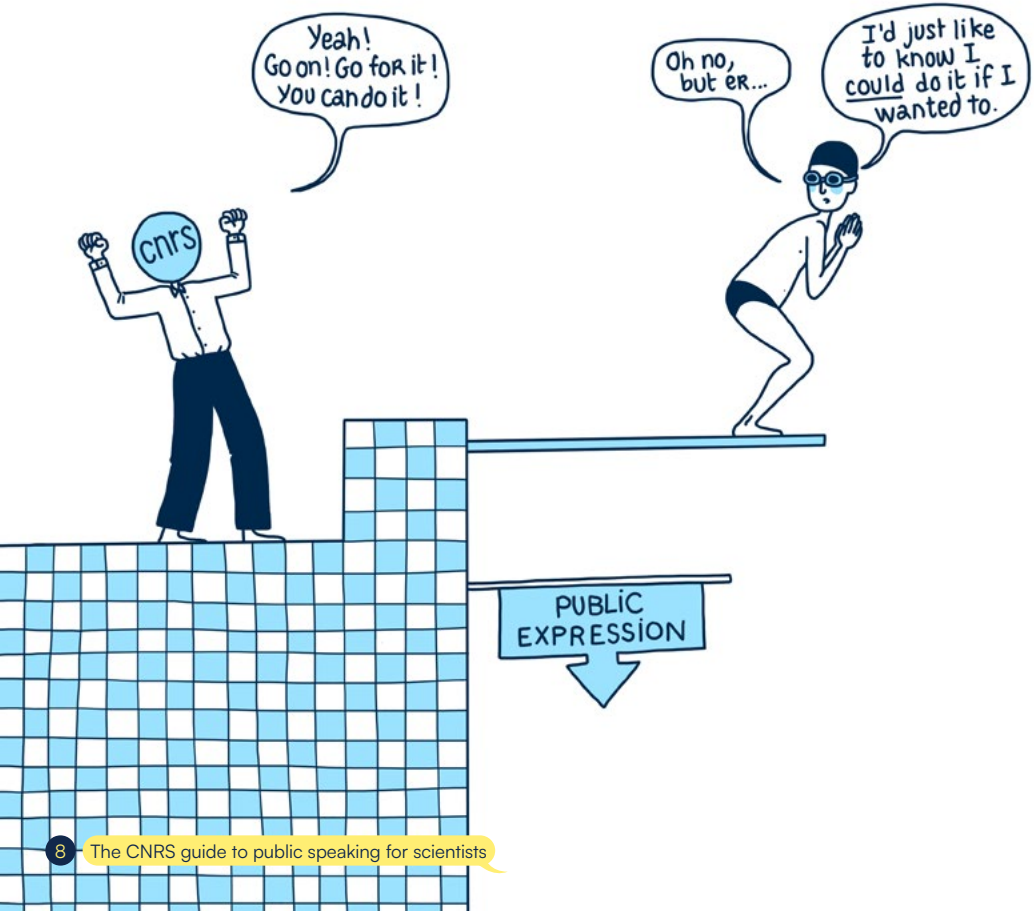
This guide is intended as a practical educational tool for scientists who wish to express themselves in public.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION, PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT.

In the COMETS opinion dated July 7th 2023, public engagement is defined as "*any public intervention by a researcher or a group of researchers, whose authority is linked to their position in the scientific field and whose content has a normative aspect, i.e. an evaluative or prescriptive stance on moral, political or social issues*". COMETS's definition of the notion of engagement therefore refers to specific situations in which scientists express themselves publicly and also express their own opinions.

This guide focuses on the more general notion of public expression. Today, media coverage of society is significantly changing the nature and methods of public expression by scientists. The guide's aim is therefore to clarify the rules that apply to all forms of public expression by scientists, whether this involves them presenting the results of their research to the public or expressing their personal views on a given subject.


Freedom of expression for scientists is really important!
For us, but above all for the public debate!
I'd go as far as to say it's even a fundamental freedom!
DIVING BOARD


Yeah! Go on! Go for it! You can do it!
Oh no, but er...
I'd just like to know I could do it if I wanted to.
cnrs
PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Responding to the expectations **of the scientific community**

15 %

of respondents fear the risk of criticism on social media

In March 2024, the CNRS carried out a wide-ranging survey of its 28,000 scientific staff members on the issue of public expression. This was an unprecedented initiative that took the form of an online questionnaire. The objective was to canvas their opinions on this subject and as to whether they considered it useful to develop a reference document on this issue. The following points emerged:

- The high response rate: 5868 people responded to the questionnaire (21% of the CNRS's 28,000 scientists), which is a good rate for this type of survey.
- A priority approach: 80% of the respondents think that the CNRS's opinions on the public expression of scientists should be a priority with 83% saying they believe that such expression has a positive impact on society.
- A clear commitment to freedom of expression, which enables knowledge to be disseminated; allows research ethics to be shared with the general public; enriches and reinforces the quality of public debate; and combats fake news. The scientists consulted also believe that speaking in public raises the scientific community's profile and contributes to the community's influence and to that of the CNRS.
- The survey found that, in practice, scientists rarely speak out in public, with half of the respondents saying they never do. In addition, 15% are afraid of criticism or even cyberbullying on social media so this guide devotes a specific chapter to this issue.
- The survey also shows a demand for institutional support. The scientific community is requesting support from the CNRS, both to assist them — through training, tools, the clarification of rules, and so on — and defend them in the event of attacks. This is all seen as necessary to enable researchers to speak out more confidently and responsibly in the media and on social media.

COMETS OPINION NO. 44 (JULY 7TH 2023)

The right to speak out or not, **and the duties this entails**

COMETS published its opinion entitled "*Freedom and Responsibility: Academic Researchers' Public Advocacy*" in response to the observation that CNRS scientists are increasingly becoming involved in the public sphere [1]. As well as communicating their findings, a number of researchers wish to use the available scientific knowledge to express opinions, take positions, influence public policy, and so forth.

The debates on climate change and around the COVID-19 pandemic have led to numerous examples of scientists speaking out. COMETS observes that this phenomenon brings up many questions and causes tensions within and beyond the scientific community. Where does the freedom of expression of scientists end? Should we not expect them to be objective and neutral? Can they express themselves in a committed manner without undermining the credibility of their work or even of science itself?

[1] For the definition of engagement as used by COMETS, see above.

In its opinion No. 44, COMETS expressed two main messages.

1 "*There is no incompatibility between, on the one hand, a researcher's public advocacy and, on the other, the norms attributed to or effectively applicable to research*" (objectivity, reliability, rigour, integrity, tolerance, etc.). COMETS considers that "*the involvement of researchers in the social arena is consubstantial with scientific work*" and is fruitful in that it helps to inform public debate and develop critical thinking.

2 "*Public engagement must remain a personal choice for researchers.*" Indeed, "*in taking a public stance, researchers are potentially putting their academic reputation and career at risk; they are also involving the reputation of their institution, as well as that, to a certain extent, of academic research as a sector, and, more generally, the quality of the public debate to which they are contributing or that they intend to provoke.*"

In this regard, COMETS invites scientists who wish to speak out in public to:

▸ "*Stay true to their mission which is to produce or present robust knowledge backed up by a rigorous dedication to the scientific method*"

▸ And thus "*meet the traditional requirements of integrity and rigour applicable to the production of reliable knowledge - description of the research protocol, referencing of sources, availability of primary findings, peer review, etc.*"

▸ "*Situate their statements*" by specifying their interests, the values underpinning their commitment and the capacity in which they are speaking (as a researcher working in their field of expertise or the fringes of their field of expertise, as a citizen, etc.) and on behalf of whom they are speaking (their own behalf, that of their scientific community or the CNRS?). In this context, it is important for speakers "*not to mislead the public as to the nature of their professional skills*" and to make it clear when they are speaking outside their area of expertise. This means scientists must take the time to think in advance about what gives them the legitimacy to speak in public and the areas in which they consider their comments to be relevant.

Scan this QR code to read the full COMETS opinion of July 7th 2023

The legal framework for public expression by scientists

The public expression of scientists is governed by legal and ethical texts involving a series of rights and duties.

Guarantees on freedom of expression

Like all their fellow French and European citizens, scientists have a right to freedom of expression and opinion which are guaranteed respectively by Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. This states that "*everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers*". Also, Article 11 of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen sets out that "*the free communication of ideas and of opinions is one of the most precious rights of man. Any citizen may therefore speak, write and publish freely, except what is tantamount to the abuse of this liberty in the cases determined by Law.*"

As public servants, CNRS scientists enjoy freedom of opinion (Article L111-1 of the General Civil Service Code - CGFP).

Like all French and European citizens, scientists have a right to freedom of expression and of opinion.

As public research personnel, CNRS scientists also enjoy freedom of expression in the exercise of their mission of national interest. This mission in particular includes "*the development of knowledge*","*its transfer and application to companies and in all areas that contribute to the progress of society*", "*informing citizens in the framework of the national open science policy and disseminating scientific and technical culture throughout the population*" and "*scientific expertise*" (Article L 411-1 of the French Research Code).

Finally, researchers in particular also enjoy freedom of research which is an essential component of academic freedom. Article L 952-2 of the Education Code guarantees that "*academics and research staff, teachers and researchers shall enjoy full independence and complete freedom of expression in the exercise of their teaching duties and research activities, subject to any restrictions imposed on them, in accordance with university traditions and the provisions of this Code, by the principles of tolerance and objectivity. Academic freedom is the guarantee of excellence in French higher education and research. It is exercised in accordance with the constitutional principle of the independence of academics.*"

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, TRANSPARENCY AND IMPARTIALITY

The principles of honesty and impartiality in research require scientists to be fully transparent about any conflicts of interest they may have. Conflicts of this kind could introduce bias into the research, skew research results and ultimately lead to a broader conflict with researchers' scientific mission (see above) of producing knowledge impartially.

In this way, a researcher's declaration of interests does not just refer to financial interests but also any interests that could affect a scientist's impartiality in carrying out or communicating about his or her research (financial participation in a company, consultancy for a company, family relationships, etc.)[1].

[1] O. Leclerc, *Déontologie de la recherche et intégrité scientifique* (Research ethics and scientific integrity), PUF, 2024

Exercising freedom **of expression**

Like all French citizens, any scientist who speaks publicly must observe **the limits** of common law on their freedom of expression. These limits are mainly linked to memorial laws (racist or anti-Semitic speech, Holocaust denial, etc.)[1] and the law dated July 29th 1881 on the freedom of the press (insults, slander, incitement to hatred, spreading false information, etc.).

Furthermore, as civil servants, scientists are also subject to the obligations set out in the General Civil Service Code. Thus, the exercise of freedom of opinion needs to be reconciled with the obligations of dignity and impartiality (Article L121-1 of the General Civil Service Code - CGFP), neutrality (Article L121-2 of the CGFP) and professional discretion (Article L121-7 of the CGFP). It also has to be reconciled with the obligation of discretion, of praetorian origin, which requires that public officials exercise restraint in expressing their opinions and more particularly their political views.

The scope of this obligation can vary according to certain criteria (hierarchical level, actual job, the circumstances of expression, trade union responsibilities, etc.). Compliance with this obligation should prevent the expression of personal opinions by CNRS staff members from damaging the CNRS's reputation.

Furthermore, in their work, CNRS scientists are required to comply with the requirement of scientific integrity (Article L211-2 of the Research Code) in their capacity as research personnel. They are also subject to the principles of tolerance and objectivity (Article L952-2 of the Education Code).

Any scientist who speaks publicly must observe the limits of common law on freedom of expression.

[1] These are the laws referred to:
- The French Law dated July 13th 1990 aimed at punishing any racist, anti-Semitic or xenophobic act, which creates the offence of denying the genocide of Jews;
- The French Law dated January 29th 2001 on the recognition of the 1915 Armenian genocide;
- The French Law dated May 21st 2001 recognising the slave trade and slavery as crimes against humanity.

FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND THE OBLIGATION OF NEUTRALITY

Civil servants have an obligation of neutrality which implies they must not express their own political, philosophical or religious opinions in the exercise of their duties in any way. However, this has to be reconciled with the academic freedom of researchers, which includes full independence and complete freedom of expression. In this way, this obligation cannot in any way restrict researchers' freedom of expression when this is exercised in the context of their research-related duties (research itself, training, promotion, expertise, evaluation, etc.) in accordance with the principles of tolerance and objectivity (Art. L. 952-2 of the Education Code).

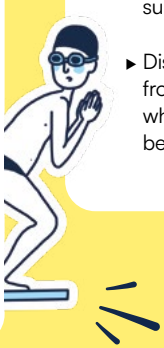
For example, CNRS scientists may give their opinions as researchers on public policy — environmental, prisons, health, etc. — including in a critical, normative or prescriptive way as long as they base their expressed views on scientific data and put their remarks into context by specifying their area of expertise, explaining that different points of view exist and so forth. It is essential that their audience is not misled about the status of the views expressed by researchers — see the golden rules for public expression below.

On the other hand, the obligation of neutrality applies when scientists perform duties that fall exclusively within their functional role as civil servants, like, for example, in the context of recruitment.

The golden rules for public expression as a scientist

Before speaking

- Check your rights and obligations: you have the right to speak in public as a scientist and must comply with the legal and ethical rules that apply to you (see previous page).
- Think about the vectors for your expression - traditional media, social media, etc.?
- Think about the impact of your comments on the public, your community, the CNRS and yourself.
- Ask yourself whether you are qualified to speak as a scientist, especially if the subject is not within your field of expertise, whether speaking in traditional media or on social media, or writing an opinion-based article or blog post.



Give context for your comments

- On each occasion you should indicate whether you are speaking as a scientist specialising in a given subject, on behalf of your organisation (in this case the CNRS) or as a citizen in a field that is more or less distant from your own area of expertise. You should also indicate whether you are speaking on your own behalf or on behalf of your community.

  Mentioning your title and the organisation you work for implies a minimum connection between your professional activities and the comments you will be making.
- Specify any links you may have to the subject under discussion (see above).
- Distinguish between what derives from your scientific expertise and what is based on your own personal beliefs.

- Clarify the values that underpin your position both for yourself and your audience. Avoid misleading the audience about the nature of your professional competence. If you are speaking in a field that does not fall within your own area of expertise, you can refer to scientific data or facts to justify the views you express.

- It is also recommended that you give as short an overview as possible of the current state of the art in the field you are discussing. Is there a scientific consensus or, alternatively, dissent on the subject? Are your own views held by a minority or a majority of the scientific community? What lines of research remain to be explored and which are currently being studied?

To back your argument, you can make reference to the opinions of collective scientific bodies like the CNRS, the IPCC, the IPBES, etc.

Regarding personal views

- Avoid opinions and judgements that are not related to your research. If you express a personal view linked to your expertise, you should do so in a scientifically reasoned manner and clarify the values that underpin your opinion. You should avoid using your status as a CNRS researcher to make a strictly personal point of view sound like scientific truth. In this case, express yourself as a citizen without mentioning that you are a scientist or your affiliation with the CNRS.

- Make the distinction between scientific data or facts and your own personal judgement or views.

In all situations

- Respect the duty of scientific integrity.

- Check and cite your sources and the data you are basing your view upon, prepare your speech so it is as accurate and rigorous as possible, while respecting the codes of the media involved.

- Be respectful in your remarks and receptive to criticism from peers. Think in advance about the consequences your comments could have in different spheres.

How to express yourself **in public debate** and interact with journalists

Adapt your language without compromising **on facts and the scientific method**

Traditional media like television, radio, newspapers and magazines play a crucial role in disseminating information but they all have their own codes which need to be understood to get your message across effectively. Ideally, you should have media training to help you prepare before finding yourself in a real-life media situation. Here are a few tips in the meantime.

The main constraint for journalists is time. Working to produce news makes journalists feel they exist 'in the moment' and that they are under constant pressure from current events. Conversely, research is a long-term endeavour. **When you receive a request or invitation from journalists, the deadline and the format are key factors that need to be considered.**

When it comes to deadlines, the expected response times will not be the same depending on whether the subject is "hot" (if it is in the news, like the announcement of the Nobel Prize or the Notre Dame fire on the day it happened), or "cold" (for example, a contribution to a documentary on particle physics). The publication frequency also has an impact on constraints linked to deadlines.

TIPS:

Never react impulsively. Instead you should take the time to think about whether you are the right person to speak about the given subject. If this is not the case, decline the invitation and take the time to prepare your message, even if this means calling back a journalist working to a tight deadline five minutes after their initial request.

For support, you can rely on the expertise of the CNRS Press Office and the communications departments in CNRS Regional Offices and Institutes (see contacts, page 35).

When you accept a journalist's request to speak:

Before the interview

▸ Ask the journalists about the topics and points they intend to cover along with the nature of the request and the context of the article and/or interview. Which journalist(s) and media outlet(s) are involved? What is the reason behind the request? What is the journalist's intention? What type of contribution is expected from you? Which scientific article or news agency report led to the request? etc.

▸ **Help journalists** by talking to them on the phone and/or giving them appropriate 'outreach' documents that you think are of the requisite high quality.

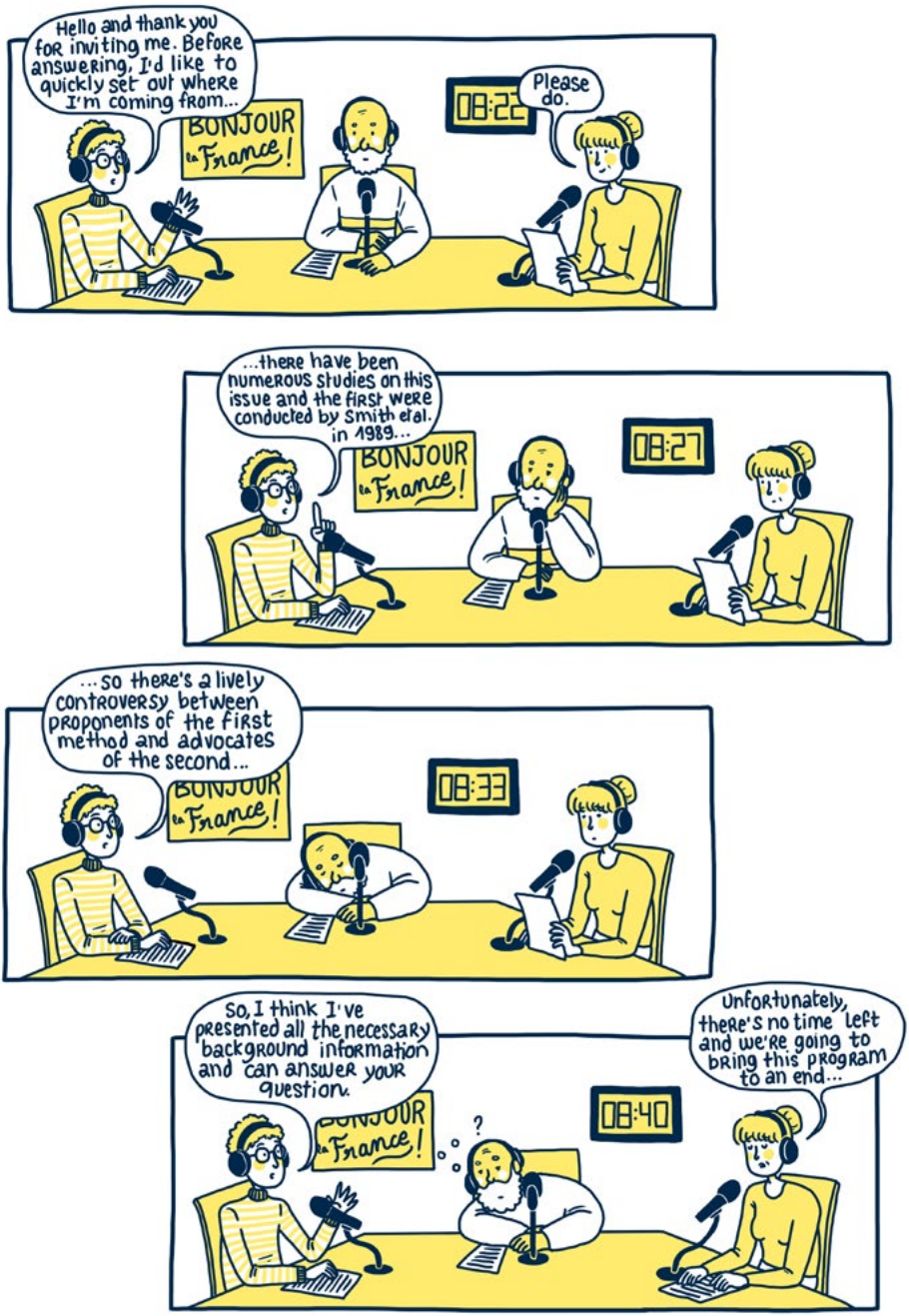
▶ **Be prepared:**

- **Prepare your main messages,** arguments, key ideas, **examples, analogies, links to everyday life** and anything else that would help you get your point across to a broad audience.

- Prepare a few **short, powerful phrases.**

- **Keep your audience in mind** and make sure your message is clear.

- **Be careful with contextual or sensitive questions.** Don't let yourself to be drawn into areas you do not want to discuss or feel uncomfortable with. Think about your ability and legitimacy to express yourself along with the potential impact of your comments (on the image of research, the CNRS, or yourself). Don't hesitate to say that you don't know or that the subject is not within your area of expertise, etc.


Hello and thank you for inviting me. Before answering, I'd like to quickly set out where I'm coming from...
BONJOUR la France!
08:22
Please do.
...there have been numerous studies on this issue and the first were conducted by Smith et al. in 1989...
BONJOUR la France!
08:27
...so there's a lively controversy between proponents of the first method and advocates of the second...
BONJOUR la France!
08:33
So, I think I've presented all the necessary background information and can answer your question.
BONJOUR la France!
?
08:40
Unfortunately, there's no time left and we're going to bring this program to an end...

Get straight to the point

Don't let yourself be sidetracked and refocus what you're saying in your messages.

During the interview

▸ Introduce yourself (CNRS status, discipline, etc.).

▸ If you're discussing a sensitive subject, choose your words carefully and follow all the golden rules, of course (see above).

▸ Be dynamic and show you are passionate about the subject.

▸ Breathe. Speak calmly. Modulate the speed and strength of your voice. Don't speak too quickly, especially at the start. Be careful not to sound condescending or professorial.

▸ **Don't use jargon or acronyms; make sure your comments can be understood by everyone.**

▸ **Get to the point.** Don't say, "*I'm not going to talk about XXX because it's too complicated.*" If a subject is too complicated and you haven't got enough time, don't mention it.

▸ Feel free to **repeat your key points several times in different ways.**

▸ Express your essential message quickly and, if possible, first.

▸ If you can't answer a question, just say so. If you have the impression a question is going in a direction that does not suit you, suggest returning to your messages by saying, for example: "*I think it's more important to...*".

▸ You should assume everything you may say to journalists may be used.

▸ Stay on track, don't let yourself be sidetracked, and refocus what you're saying in your messages.

▸ Don't repeat false information.

If the interview **is for the print media**

Print journalists write articles for newspapers or magazines (which are subject to constraints in terms of space and/or publication date) or for websites for which texts can be edited after publication.

In practice, you should assume everything you say to a journalist may be used by them and therefore ask to proofread your quotes to avoid inaccuracies and errors. This is the most common practice but journalists of course are free to refuse, as you are free to refuse the interview under such conditions.

Once an article has been published, it is still possible to quickly contact the journalist if you wish to correct any errors or inaccuracies. The journalist is then of course free to either follow your suggestions or not.

If the interview **is for radio or television**

Radio of course relies entirely on people's voices. Speakers, journalists, scientists, etc. have to capture the listeners' attention without any visual elements so comments need to be very accessible, rhythmic and "punchy".

Television is the medium that uses non-verbal elements like posture, gestures, etc. the most to accompany what you are saying. Reports often also include testimonies, videos or graphics.

In practice, assume that everything you say to journalists may be used.

ON RADIO AND TELEVISION, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO:

- use **very accessible vocabulary;**
- draw **analogies** with everyday situations to make your ideas easier to understand and help listeners visualise the concepts you're explaining;
- **structure your ideas** by starting with the most important information.

It's also important to use **short sentences,** engage in conversation and listen.

Radio or television interviews may be recorded so it's advisable to repeat the question in your answer to maximise the chances of editors keeping your answer intact in the final cut. You should, however, bear in mind that you never have control over the final edit and that you don't get the chance to approve it.

A live interview is another possibility, either in the studio or by telephone for radio, with or without other participants. For debates, it is important to find out who the other participants are in advance along with an idea of the topics to be discussed, and also to keep in mind the key ideas of your message.

If it is a filmed interview, please be aware that you have no control over the final edit and don't get the chance to approve it.


Did you take part in the blockades?
I'm here to talk about my research.
After the clashes, do you understand we're talking about eco-terrorism here?
I'm here to talk about my research.
Do you condemn the violence?
I'm here to talk about my research.
TV DEBATE

IF YOU SPEAK OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

▸ Set up your profile, take proper care of your biography and profile picture (an avatar will do, it doesn't necessarily have to be a photo).

▸ Decide whether to mention your affiliation with your organisation. If your affiliation with the CNRS is explicit (for example, if your first name, surname and **position with the CNRS** are mentioned on an X account), you should bear in mind that any comments you make will be associated with and may reflect on the CNRS. So you should be careful about this.

▸ Unless you make your account private, remember your messages are visible to all until deleted.

▸ Even though a post may have a short lifespan in your social media feed, it may reappear much later in a completely different context or in search engine results.

▸ Mentioning an account, quoting, reposting or replying to a post increases its visibility. You should only do this if you are sure the account is authentic (name, @, biography, consistent profile and cover images, realistic number of posts since the account was opened, a courteous tone and in compliance with the law).

And above all:

▸ Choose and weigh your words carefully, considering how they may be interpreted by the general public, especially if a sensitive subject is involved.

▸ Be respectful and measured in your comments and accept contradiction. An increasing number of CNRS researchers complain of being attacked, denigrated and harassed by colleagues on social media.

▸ Ask yourself whether the social media format is appropriate for the ideas you'd like to express. For example, you could use social media more as a "showcase" for your research and add a link to a dedicated institutional website that may be more suited to presenting results, linking ideas and conveying nuances. Also, you will be less exposed in doing so.

Although a post may have a short lifespan in a social media news feed, it may reappear much later.

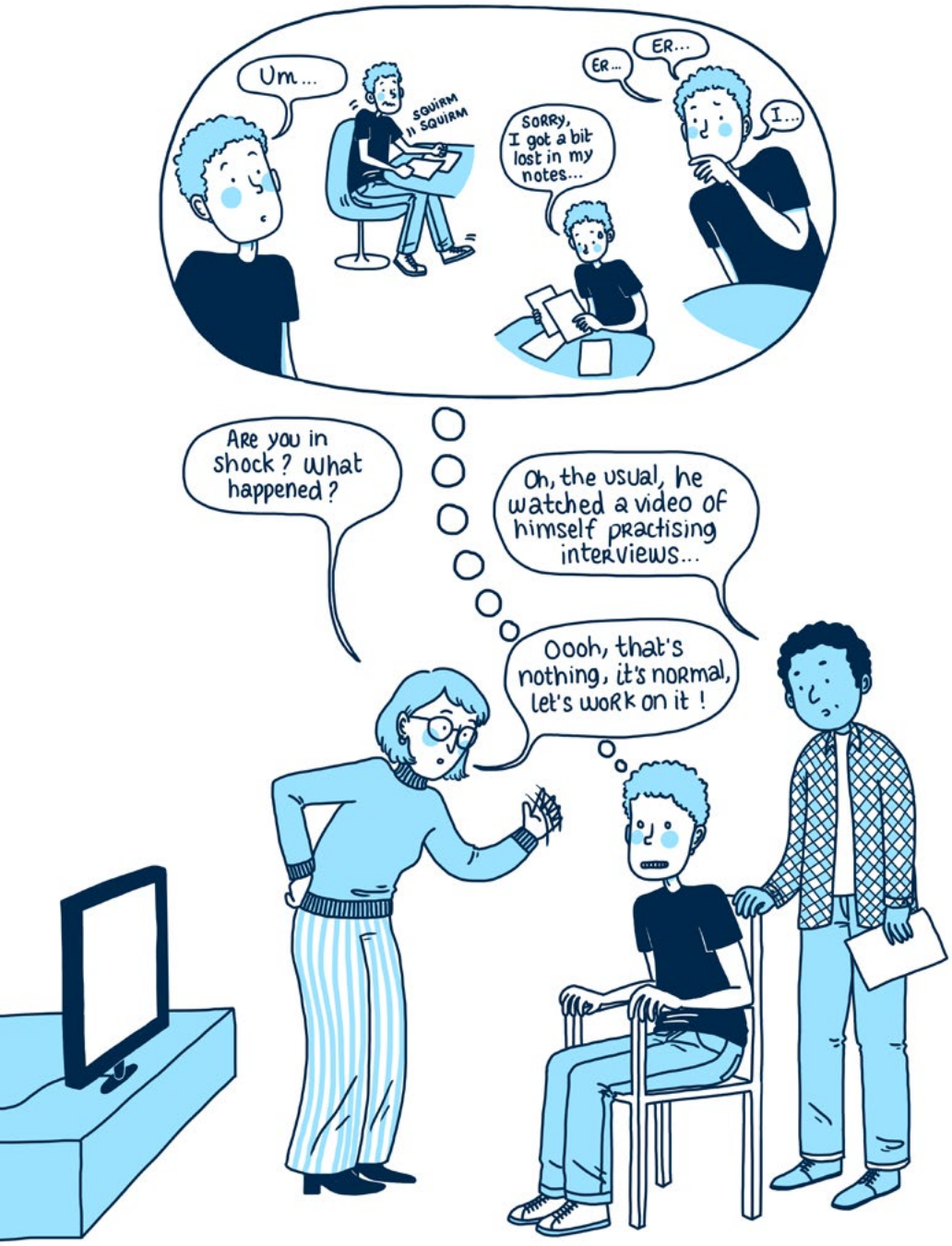
▸ When you are challenged, take the time to look at the profile of the person you are talking to (their biography, number of followers, frequency of posts, content and tone of the account). Some profiles are only looking to provoke in order to gain more visibility. Don't waste your time with trolls.

Support and advice if you have questions

If you have any doubts or questions, please get in touch with the CNRS communications network.

The CNRS's communications department, certain Institutes and Regional Offices provide specific training courses. In particular, the CNRS Press Office runs an annual national media training programme.

In general, if you have any doubts or questions about speaking in public you should contact the CNRS communications network. First, contact your unit's communications officer (if there is one), then the communications departments of your Institute and your Regional Office. They will be able to give you advice on how to speak in public and subsequently provide advice and support in the event of a crisis.


Um...
SQUIRM
SQUIRM
SORRY, I got a bit lost in my notes...
ER...
ER...
I...
Are you in shock? What happened?
Oh, the usual, he watched a video of himself practising interviews...
Oooh, that's nothing, it's normal, let's work on it!

If you are threatened, cyberbullied, insulted or slandered

For CNRS scientists, speaking out in the media is not without risk. When scientists express themselves publicly - particularly on certain sensitive subjects — they can be exposed to ad hominem attacks which are nothing like the scientific controversies they may be used to in their jobs. In some cases, their research may be denigrated and they may be accused of being activists, insulted, threatened or cyberbullied. The above advice can help limit such attacks in many cases.

The CNRS has also implemented a number of measures and best practices, which are summarised opposite to support its staff members in their media communications and provide them with means of defence and protection when necessary.

Speaking to the media is not without risk.

How to deal with cyberbullying on **social media?**

The example of Twitter / X

▸ Disable notifications from the app.

▸ Don't respond to any comments in the heat of the moment.

▸ Check the sender's account (@, bio, number of followers, types of posts). Some may be trolls.

▸ Take screenshots and save the URL of any suspicious or illegal content that may be punishable by law (violence, endangering people, threats or glorification of terrorism, insults or slander, incitement to racial hatred or discrimination, harm to minors). This information can be used to support a complaint or report it on the French *Ministère de l'Intérieur*'s Pharos platform: https://www.internet-signalement.gouv.fr/PharosS1/.

▸ Inform your hierarchy by providing context, URLs of the posts and screenshots.

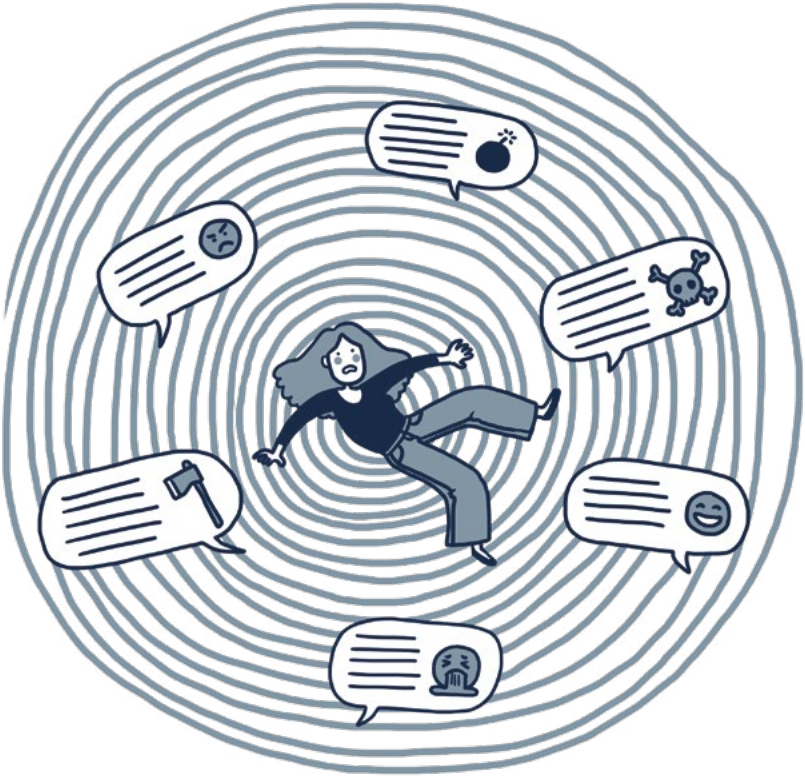
▸ Report the most virulent posts, after taking screenshots and saving the URLs: https://help.twitter.com/fr/safety-and-security/report-abusive-behavior.

▸ Hide an account so it no longer appears in your feed: https://help.twitter.com/fr/using-x/x-mute.

▸ How to block an account: https://help.twitter.com/fr/using-x/blocking-and-unblocking-accounts.

Warning!

If a blocked user visits the profile of a user who has blocked them, they will notice they have been blocked and may share this information with their community. The cure can sometimes be worse than the disease.



Hiding or blocking an account does not mean its posts are invisible to other users who have not hidden it.

▸ Protect your posts on X (private account): https://help.twitter.com/fr/safety-and-security/public-and-protected-posts.

▸ Temporarily deactivate your account until things have calmed down: https://help.twitter.com/fr/managing-your-account/how-to-deactivate-x-account.

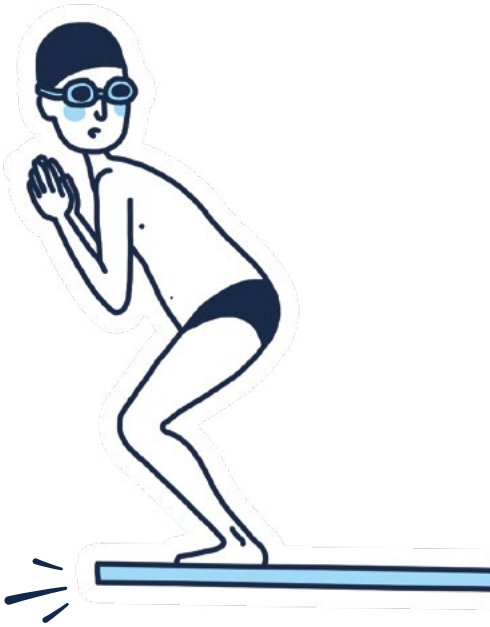
▸ You can also decide to leave this platform permanently. Please note though that if you permanently close your account, the username you were using will then become available for others to use.

Warning!

You have thirty days to reactivate your account before the data associated with it is permanently deactivated in the Twitter/X system.

Inform the CNRS

In the event of attacks, you can alert your unit director, the deputy scientific director of your affiliated Institute, and your Regional Officer. If necessary, they will refer the matter to the relevant authorities (legal department, human resources department, scientific integrity officer, ethics officer, mediator, etc.) who can suggest appropriate solutions according to their own area of expertise.



Functional protection **at the CNRS**

Functional protection is governed in particular by Articles L 134-1 to L 134-12 of the General Civil Service Code. This provides for civil servants who request it to be protected by their administration in the event of substantiated attacks (slander, insults, cyberbullying, etc.) or for civil or criminal proceedings linked to the performance of their duties.

Functional protection is granted subject to the existence of a close link between the alleged attacks and the staff member's duties or status as a civil servant. Staff members who are attacked in a private capacity or for other reasons than those linked to their professional activities do not qualify for this protection.

Functional protection mainly takes the form of legal assistance from the CNRS to the employee (e.g. filing a complaint, covering legal fees, right of reply, etc.) and the implementation of support measures aimed at stopping the attacks as far as possible.

Useful documents to consult:

COMETS Opinion No. 44:
"Freedom and Responsibility: Academic Researchers' Public Advocacy"

French Charter of Ethics for Research Professions

CNRS Code of Ethics

Notes

Your contacts in the communications network

Communication in the regions (on the Intranet)

Regional Office Communications Departments

- Alps
  comalpes@dr11.cnrs.fr
- Alsace
  communication@alsace.cnrs.fr
- Aquitaine
  communication@dr15.cnrs.fr
- Brittany and Pays de la Loire
  dr17.liste.communication@cnrs.fr
- Centre-East
  dr06.com@cnrs.fr
- Centre Limousin Poitou-Charentes
  dr08.liste.com.communication@dr8.cnrs.fr
- Côte d'Azur
  dr20.liste.comcs@cnrs.fr
- Hauts-de-France
  dr18.liste.communication@dr18.cnrs.fr
- Ile-de-France Gif-sur-Yvette
  communication@dr4.cnrs.fr
- Ile-de-France Meudon
  communication@dr5.cnrs.fr
- Ile-de-France Villejuif
  dr01.communication@cnrs.fr
- East Occitania
  dr13.com@cnrs.fr
- West Occitania
  dr14.liste.com@dr14.cnrs.fr
- Paris Centre
  dr02.communication@cnrs.fr
- Paris Normandy
  dr16.communication@cnrs.fr
- Provence and Corsica
  communication@dr12.cnrs.fr
- Rhône Auvergne
  dr07.communication@cnrs.fr

Our Institutes' communications departments (on the Intranet)

Our Institutes' communications departments

- CNRS Biology
  insb.com@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Chemistry
  inc.communication@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Earth & Space
  insu.communication@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Ecology & Environment
  ecologie-communication@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Engineering
  insis.communication@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Mathematics
  insmi.com@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Nuclei & Particles
  communication@in2p3.fr
- CNRS Physics
  inp.com@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Humanities & Social Sciences
  inshs.com@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Informatics
  ins2i.communication@cnrs.fr
- CNRS Terre & Univers
  insu.communication@cnrs.fr

Resources (on the Intranet)

CNRS social networks

Communicating with the press

Legal support and assistance (on the Intranet)

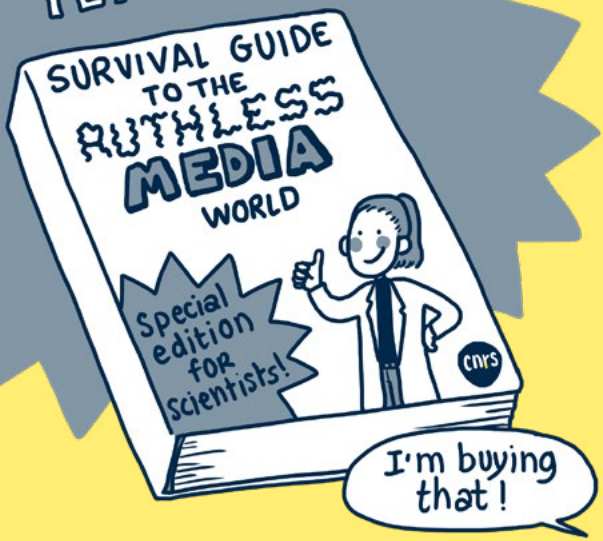
The CNRS Legal Affairs Department

THANK YOU!

We would like to extend our warmest thanks to all staff members who took part in the preparatory workshops, and express our sincere gratitude to the Scientific Board, COMETS, the ethics officers, the Legal Affairs Department and the Human Resources Department for their commitment and hard work during the drafting process for this document.

ESSENTIAL READING

FOR THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR



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