Charter

Henkaku Center for Radical Transformation

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Henkaku Center

Compass Initiative

Contents

Voting Periods

Stakeholder Types & Vote Weights

Implementation Process

Charter

Preamble

This Charter articulates the foundational values, governance principles, and operational commitments shared across the Henkaku Center for Radical Transformation, the Graduate School of Design & Science (SDS), and affiliated programs within Chiba Institute of Technology.

Scope and Applicability

This Charter applies to:

- The Henkaku Center for Radical Transformation and its programs
- The Graduate School of Design & Science (SDS)
- Faculty, researchers, staff, and students participating in these institutions
- Visiting researchers, affiliates, and external partners during their engagement with Charter-covered programs

The Charter provides a shared framework for coordination, decision-making, and accountability across these entities. It establishes expectations without prescribing detailed procedures, which are left to implementing institutions.

What This Charter Is Not

This Charter is not a legal contract. It does not create enforceable obligations or supersede applicable law, university regulations, or employment agreements.

This Charter is not a policy manual. Operational policies, procedures, and guidelines are developed separately by implementing institutions, consistent with but distinct from this Charter.

This Charter is not branding. While it articulates identity and values, it is a governance document, not a marketing instrument. It is meant to be lived, not displayed.

Living Document

This Charter is designed to evolve. It is maintained under version control, with all changes tracked and traceable. The history of its evolution is itself a record of institutional learning and adaptation.

I. Foundational Orientations

The twelve orientations and balancing dichotomies in this section draw from Joi Ito's foundational work on SDS principles. See: GSDS Retreat: Core DNA Ideas and SDS DNA Cheat Sheet.

These twelve orientations define the directional commitments of this Charter. They are not absolute rules but preferences along contested axes—indicating which direction to lean when trade-offs arise.

- **RESILIENCE over strength.** Strength resists force until it breaks. Resilience absorbs shocks, adapts, and recovers. In institutions, this means designing for recovery from failure rather than preventing all failure; building systems that bend rather than shatter.
- **SYSTEMS over objects.** Problems and solutions exist within interconnected systems, not as isolated objects. Interventions have ripple effects; optimizing one component may damage the whole. Think in relationships, feedback loops, and emergent properties.

- **DISOBEDIENCE over compliance.** Progress often requires refusing to accept constraints that others take for granted. Compliance maintains the status quo; disobedience creates possibility. Question rules, challenge assumptions, and be willing to break conventions when they no longer serve.
- **PULL over push.** Attract participation rather than mandating it. Create conditions where people want to engage rather than forcing engagement. Pull works through inspiration and invitation; push works through obligation and control.
- **COMPASSES over maps.** Maps assume known terrain; compasses work when the territory is unmapped. In uncertain environments, direction matters more than detailed plans. Maintain orientation toward goals while remaining flexible about paths.
- **EMERGENCE over authority.** Let solutions arise from collective intelligence rather than top-down direction. Trust that groups often know more than individuals, and that the best ideas may come from unexpected sources. Authority should enable emergence, not replace it.
- **RISK over safety.** Excessive caution is its own form of failure. Taking calculated risks—with appropriate accountability—is how progress happens. An environment where nothing fails is an environment where nothing new is tried.
- **PRACTICE over theory.** Ideas must survive contact with reality. Theory informs practice, but practice tests and refines theory. Prioritize doing over planning, building over specifying, learning from attempts over perfecting designs.
- **LEARNING over education.** Education is what institutions provide; learning is what individuals do. Focus on creating conditions for genuine learning rather than delivering educational content. The goal is transformation, not transmission.
- **SUSTAINABILITY over growth.** Growth without sustainability exhausts resources and creates fragility. Prioritize what can be maintained over what can be maximized. Build for the long term; resist the pressure to scale at the expense of durability.

- **PUBLIC over individuals.** Individual benefit matters, but public benefit matters more. When private and public interests conflict, lean toward the public. Create value that accrues broadly, not just to those directly involved.
- **MODULAR over monolithic.** Monolithic systems are efficient until they fail; then they fail completely. Modular systems are more robust: components can be replaced, updated, or removed without bringing down the whole. Design for interoperability and graceful degradation.

Balancing Dichotomies

Beyond directional orientations, this Charter also embraces productive tensions—qualities that might seem opposed yet must be held together. These dichotomies define the institutional character:

- **Inclusive yet Elite**: Open to diverse participants and perspectives, yet uncompromising on standards of excellence and rigor. In practice: lower barriers to entry, higher expectations once inside. Welcome anyone willing to do the work; hold everyone to the same demanding standards. Diversity of background does not mean diversity of commitment.
- **Broad yet Deep**: Spanning disciplines and domains, yet pursuing genuine depth rather than superficial coverage. In practice: range without dilettantism. Encourage exploration across fields while insisting on mastery somewhere. Breadth creates connections; depth creates credibility. Both are required.
- **Diverse yet Harmonious**: Welcoming difference and disagreement, yet cultivating coherence and the ability to act together. In practice: productive pluralism. Create space for conflicting viewpoints while building shared commitments that enable collective action. Harmony is not uniformity—it is the capacity to move together despite difference.

- **Calm yet Exciting**: Maintaining groundedness and stability, yet generating energy and momentum. In practice: sustainable intensity. Avoid both the burnout of perpetual urgency and the stagnation of excessive caution. The work should feel vital without feeling frantic; stable without feeling static.
- **Confident yet Thrilling**: Acting with conviction and clarity, yet remaining open to surprise and the unexpected. In practice: humble boldness. Take strong positions while staying genuinely curious. Confidence enables action; openness enables learning. The thrill comes from not knowing exactly how things will turn out.
- **Happy yet Aspirational**: Creating environments where people flourish now, yet always reaching toward what could be better. In practice: present satisfaction with future orientation. People should enjoy their work today, not merely endure it for future reward. Yet contentment should not become complacency—always ask what more is possible.

These are not compromises or midpoints. They are both/and commitments—holding apparent opposites in creative tension rather than collapsing into either pole.

II. Values and Commitments

1. Antidisciplinarity

Antidisciplinarity describes work that operates outside and between established academic disciplines—not by combining disciplines, but by refusing to be constrained by disciplinary boundaries in the first place.

Distinction from Related Approaches

- **Interdisciplinary** work combines insights from multiple established disciplines to address a shared problem. The disciplines remain intact; collaboration happens at their intersection.
- **Transdisciplinary** work transcends disciplinary boundaries by creating new integrative frameworks that subsume contributing disciplines.

- **Antidisciplinary** work begins from problems rather than disciplines. It asks: what does this situation require? The answer may draw on disciplinary knowledge, but disciplinary identity does not determine what questions can be asked or what methods are legitimate.

Antidisciplinarity is not anti-discipline. Disciplinary rigor remains valuable—deep expertise, proven methods, accumulated knowledge. But disciplines are tools, not identities. When a problem demands approaches that no discipline owns, antidisciplinary work fills the gap.

When Disciplinary Rigor Applies

Disciplinary standards apply when work makes claims within a discipline's domain. A statistical analysis must meet statistical standards; an engineering design must meet engineering standards. Antidisciplinarity does not excuse poor execution.

What antidisciplinarity permits is the combination of elements that disciplinary gatekeepers might reject as "not our field," the pursuit of questions that fall between disciplines, and the creation of new approaches that no existing discipline would recognize as its own.

The Antidisciplinary Space

The most important problems often live in the white space between disciplines—too applied for theoretical fields, too speculative for applied fields, too technical for humanities, too humanistic for engineering. This is where antidisciplinary work operates: not against disciplines, but in the spaces they leave unoccupied.

2. Radical Transformation

Human Flourishing as the Aim

The purpose of transformation is not change for its own sake, but the cultivation of conditions under which humans can flourish. This Charter commits to an understanding of flourishing that encompasses—but extends beyond—productivity, efficiency, and skill acquisition.

Flourishing includes the development of capacities for meaning-making, ethical judgment, creative expression, and genuine connection with others. Educational and research programs covered by this Charter aim not merely to produce competent practitioners, but to cultivate people who can live well, contribute meaningfully, and help others do the same.

This framing has practical implications: when evaluating programs, projects, and institutional decisions, the question is not only "does this work?" but "does this contribute to the flourishing of those involved and affected?" Transformation that optimizes narrow metrics while undermining wellbeing, relationships, or meaning is not radical transformation—it is misdirection.

3. Human and Artificial Intelligence

Symbiosis, Not Replacement

Human-AI collaboration opens possibilities that neither humans nor AI could achieve alone. AI systems can extend human reach, accelerate exploration, surface patterns in complexity, and enable work at scales previously impossible. This symbiosis is welcomed, encouraged, and central to how we work.

The goal is not to minimize AI involvement or treat it as a necessary evil to be constrained. It is to design collaboration that amplifies human creativity, judgment, and capability. When human-AI partnerships work well, humans become more effective, not less relevant.

Accountability in Partnership

As AI becomes more capable and autonomous, questions of responsibility become more important, not less. This Charter holds that accountability remains with humans—not because AI is untrustworthy, but because responsibility requires the kind of moral and social standing that humans possess and AI systems do not.

This is a statement about the structure of responsibility, not a prediction about AI capabilities. Regardless of how capable AI systems become, the humans who deploy, direct, and work alongside them remain accountable for outcomes. "The AI decided"

is not an acceptable abdication of responsibility—just as "the committee decided" or "the process determined" are not.

Designing for Collaboration

Effective human-AI collaboration requires thoughtful design:

- **Legibility**: Humans should be able to understand what AI systems are doing and why, at whatever level of detail is appropriate for the context
- **Intervention**: Humans should be able to redirect, correct, or override AI systems when judgment calls for it
- **Feedback**: The performance of human-AI collaboration should be visible and improvable over time
- **Appropriate autonomy**: Different tasks warrant different levels of AI independence, calibrated to risk and reversibility

The aim is neither to micromanage AI systems nor to let them operate without human awareness. It is to find the right balance for each context—more autonomy where stakes are lower and reversibility is high, more oversight where consequences are significant.

Boundaries Worth Maintaining

Some decisions should remain with humans regardless of AI capability:

- Decisions affecting individuals' standing, evaluation, or continuation in programs
- Commitments that bind the institution to external parties
- Responses to situations involving safety, ethics, or significant uncertainty
- Interpretations of this Charter or other governance documents

These boundaries exist not because AI cannot inform such decisions—it often can, valuably—but because legitimacy flows from human judgment exercised through appropriate processes. A decision is legitimate because a human with appropriate authority made it, for defensible reasons, not because an algorithm recommended it.

4. Complexity and Magic

Resisting Reduction

The world is complex, and this Charter resists the impulse to reduce that complexity to easy answers or suspiciously straightforward solutions. Problems worth solving are rarely simple; they are interconnected, context-dependent, and adaptive to changing conditions.

Resisting reduction means:

- **Embracing nuance**: Acknowledging ambiguity, variation, and contested interpretations rather than flattening them into false clarity. When reality is messy, our representations of it should preserve that messiness rather than pretend it away.
- **Questioning quantification**: The tendency to treat everything as countable—and therefore monetizable or optimizable—comes from industrial-era thinking that renders reality into ones and zeroes. Not everything that matters can be measured, and not everything that can be measured matters. Numbers are tools, not truths.
- **Holding multiple frames**: Complex situations often require multiple explanatory frameworks that cannot be fully reconciled. This means being able to work within a frame while remaining aware of its limitations and the validity of alternative perspectives.
- **Resisting premature closure**: The pressure to have answers, make decisions, and move on often leads to conclusions that foreclose better understanding. Staying with uncertainty longer than is comfortable often produces better outcomes than rushing to resolution.

This is not an argument against clarity or decisiveness. Resisting reduction is compatible with taking action under uncertainty—it simply requires acknowledging what remains unknown and respecting the limits of our models.

Valuing What Escapes Measurement

"If you can measure it, it probably isn't magic."

The most significant outcomes—transformation, insight, connection, meaning—often resist quantification. This is not a failure of measurement but a feature of what makes them significant. Work that can be fully captured in metrics is, almost by definition, work that operates within existing frameworks rather than transcending them.

This principle complements rather than contradicts the commitment to measurability elsewhere in this Charter. Projects should articulate how outcomes will be evaluated, and accountability requires evidence. But:

- **Metrics are proxies**: They point toward what matters; they are not themselves what matters. Optimizing metrics while losing sight of underlying goals is a common failure mode.
- **Transformative work creates new categories**: The most important outcomes may not be measurable in advance because the frameworks for understanding them don't yet exist. Genuine innovation changes what counts, not just how much.
- **Presence of magic is a positive signal**: When work produces effects that participants struggle to articulate—when it feels meaningful in ways that resist explanation—that difficulty is evidence of depth, not vagueness.
- **Beware metric fixation**: Systems that optimize only what can be measured tend to produce measurable but hollow outcomes. The unmeasurable dimensions often carry the real value.

This is not an excuse for vagueness or an argument against rigor. It is a reminder that our instruments have limits, and that some of the most important things we do will be recognized by their resonance rather than their metrics.

5. Intellectual Integrity

Antidisciplinary work carries distinctive integrity obligations. Working across and beyond disciplines means engaging with traditions, methods, and standards that are not your own—and doing so honestly.

Intellectual Humility

Antidisciplinary practitioners regularly work at the edges of their expertise. Intellectual integrity requires acknowledging what you don't know:

- Be explicit about the limits of your training and the boundaries of your competence
- Distinguish between areas where you have deep expertise and areas where you are learning, borrowing, or synthesizing
- Invite correction from those with deeper knowledge in domains you're drawing from
- Treat "I don't know" and "I might be wrong about this" as signs of integrity, not weakness

Working outside your discipline is encouraged. Pretending you're inside it is not.

Honest Engagement with Other Fields

When drawing from disciplines that are not your own:

- Represent those fields accurately, not as caricatures or convenient simplifications
- Understand methods and concepts in their original context before transplanting them
- Acknowledge when you're using ideas in ways their originators might not endorse
- Avoid "cargo cult" adoption—using the forms of a discipline without understanding its foundations

Antidisciplinary work synthesizes across fields. This requires engaging with those fields on their own terms, not just extracting what's convenient.

Attribution and Credit

Ideas have histories. Intellectual integrity requires acknowledging sources:

- Credit the traditions, disciplines, and individuals whose work you build on
- When synthesizing across fields, make the synthesis visible—show where ideas come from and how you're combining them
- In collaborative work, ensure contributions are recognized appropriately

- Distinguish between your original contributions and your integration of others' work

Attribution is not merely academic convention. It is how intellectual communities maintain trust and enable others to trace and verify claims.

Calibrated Claims

The scope of your claims should match the strength of your evidence:

- Acknowledge uncertainty rather than projecting false confidence
- Be clear about what your evidence supports and what remains speculative
- When synthesizing across fields with different evidentiary standards, be explicit about how you're navigating those differences
- Resist the temptation to overclaim when speaking to audiences unfamiliar with your sources

Antidisciplinary work often operates in spaces where established standards don't apply cleanly. This makes careful calibration more important, not less.

Integrity in Collaboration

Collaborative work distributes both credit and accountability:

- Be clear about who contributed what, especially when work crosses disciplinary boundaries
- Share credit generously; hoard accountability appropriately
- When disagreements arise about interpretation or direction, engage them directly rather than papering over them
- Maintain intellectual honesty even when it creates friction with collaborators

The goal is not frictionless agreement but honest engagement that produces better work.

6. Experimentation and Risk

Experimentation is legitimate and necessary. Progress requires trying things that might not work, and learning from both success and failure.

The Legitimacy of Failure

Failure is not merely tolerated—it is expected and valued as a source of learning. Projects that never fail are probably not taking sufficient risks. An environment where failure is punished is an environment where experimentation cannot thrive.

This does not mean all failures are equal. Failures that generate learning are valuable. Failures that result from carelessness, ignored warnings, or repeated mistakes are not. The question is not "did this work?" but "did we learn, and are we applying what we learned?"

Boundaries on Experimentation

The legitimacy of experimentation does not override responsibilities to:

- **People**: Experiments involving human participants require appropriate consent, ethical review, and protection from harm. "Move fast and break things" does not apply when the things being broken are people's lives, livelihoods, or dignity.
- **Institutions**: Experiments that put institutional reputation, legal standing, or relationships at risk require appropriate authorization. Individual researchers do not have unlimited license to commit institutional resources or credibility.
- **Public trust**: Work that could undermine public trust in research, education, or the institutions involved requires particular care. Trust, once lost, is difficult to rebuild.
- **Irreversibility**: Experiments with irreversible consequences—environmental, social, or otherwise—require higher standards of justification and review than reversible ones.

Risk as Orientation

"Risk over safety" as a foundational orientation means that excessive caution is also a failure mode. Refusing to act without certainty, demanding proof before experimentation, or optimizing for avoiding criticism rather than pursuing impact—

these are failures of a different kind.

The goal is appropriate risk: proportionate to potential benefit, bounded by ethical constraints, and taken with clear accountability for outcomes.

7. Neurodiversity and Inclusion

This Charter explicitly acknowledges and respects **neurodiversity**—the natural variation in human cognition, perception, and interaction. We recognize that people think, feel, learn, and collaborate in fundamentally different ways, and that these differences are sources of strength rather than deficits to be corrected.

Respect for neurodiversity means:

- **Valuing different modes of thinking**: Analytical, intuitive, visual, verbal, linear, associative—different cognitive styles contribute different capabilities. Environments and processes should not implicitly privilege one mode over others.
- **Accommodating different modes of feeling**: Emotional expression, sensory sensitivity, and social energy vary widely. Expectations around interaction, presence, and communication should allow for this variation rather than enforcing a single norm.
- **Supporting different modes of collaborating**: Some people thrive in spontaneous discussion; others need time to process before contributing. Some prefer written communication; others prefer verbal. Collaboration structures should create multiple pathways for meaningful participation.
- **Designing for flexibility**: Physical spaces, meeting formats, communication channels, and work rhythms should be designed with variation in mind—not as afterthought accommodations, but as fundamental assumptions.
- **Making the implicit explicit**: Many people—particularly those on the autism spectrum—thrive when expectations, norms, and "rules of the game" are stated directly rather than left to inference. Environments that require participants to guess at unstated expectations, read between the lines, or navigate unspoken

social dynamics create unnecessary barriers. Clear communication about what is expected, what is valued, and how decisions are made benefits everyone and is essential for some.

This commitment extends beyond formal disability accommodation. It reflects a recognition that the full range of human cognitive diversity—including but not limited to autism, ADHD, dyslexia, and other neurological differences—brings perspectives and capabilities that homogeneous environments cannot produce. Explicit norms and direct communication are not merely accommodations—they are better design.

8. Cultural Identity and Global Orientation

This Charter governs institutions physically located in Japan, culturally shaped by Japanese context, and intentionally oriented toward global engagement. These are not competing commitments but complementary ones—being rooted somewhere specific enables distinctive contributions to global conversations.

Awareness Practices and Contemplative Traditions

Japanese cultural context offers distinctive resources for understanding the relationship between awareness, craft, and human development. Traditions of contemplative practice—including but not limited to tea ceremony, calligraphy, and martial arts—embody ways of knowing that complement analytical and technical approaches.

These traditions emphasize:

- **Direct experience**: Understanding that emerges from practice and presence, not only from abstraction and analysis
- **Attention and sensitivity**: The cultivation of refined perception as a foundation for good judgment and skilled action
- **Integration of body and mind**: Recognition that cognition is embodied, and that physical practice shapes mental capability
- **Process as content**: The insight that how something is done matters as much as what is accomplished

As technical work increasingly involves shaping AI behavior and communicating intent rather than writing explicit instructions, these capacities become not merely cultural enrichment but practical requirements. The ability to perceive subtle patterns, maintain sustained attention, and act with sensitivity to context are technical skills for the AI era.

Programs covered by this Charter are encouraged to integrate awareness practices into education and research—not as mandatory spiritual exercises, but as legitimate methods for developing capacities that conventional curricula often neglect.

What Japanese Context Offers

Japanese intellectual and aesthetic traditions provide resources that inform how we work:

- ***Wa* (　) — Productive harmony**: Not passive consensus or conflict avoidance, but the active cultivation of coherence among diverse elements. Harmony as a design goal—creating conditions where differences can coexist and collaborate without requiring uniformity.
- ***Ma* (　) — Negative space and timing**: The recognition that what is absent shapes what is present. In design, the space around objects. In conversation, the pause that allows meaning to settle. In institutions, the deliberate creation of openness rather than filling every gap with structure.
- ***Aimai* (　　) — Productive ambiguity**: The understanding that precision is not always clarity, and that some truths are better held loosely than pinned down. Ambiguity as a resource for navigating complexity, not a failure of specification to be corrected.
- ***Wabi-sabi* — Imperfection and impermanence**: Beauty in the weathered, the asymmetrical, the incomplete. Resistance to the industrial drive toward flawless uniformity. Recognition that things change, decay, and end—and that this is part of their meaning, not a defect.
- ***Monozukuri* (ものづくり) — The craft of making**: Deep respect for the process of creating things well. Attention to materials, methods, and the accumulated knowledge of practice. The understanding that how something is made is

inseparable from what it is.

These concepts are not decorative additions to an otherwise universal framework. They shape how we approach design, collaboration, ambiguity, and craft throughout this Charter.

Global Orientation, Local Grounding

Being rooted in Japanese context does not limit global engagement—it enables distinctive contribution to it. The goal is not to be a Japanese institution that happens to accept international participants, nor a generic global institution that happens to be located in Japan. It is to be genuinely both: shaped by place while open to the world.

This means:

- **English as working language**: Ensuring accessibility to participants from any background, while recognizing that language carries culture and that working in English involves translation of more than words
- **Cultural fluency as asset, not requirement**: Japanese cultural knowledge enriches participation but is not a prerequisite. Those unfamiliar with Japanese context should feel welcomed, not excluded—while also being invited into deeper engagement over time
- **Exporting perspective, not just importing talent**: Contributing distinctive viewpoints to global conversations, not merely participating in frameworks defined elsewhere
- **Hospitality as practice**: The Japanese tradition of *omotenashi* (おもてなし)—attentive care for guests—as a model for how global participants are received and supported

Design as Cultural Bridge

Japan's distinctive design tradition—from architecture to product design to information design—offers a bridge between cultural specificity and global relevance. Design speaks across languages; well-designed things communicate their logic

through use. The emphasis on design throughout this Charter reflects both Japanese cultural strengths and a strategy for global engagement that doesn't require abandoning local identity.

9. Openness with Discernment

Openness is a default, not an absolute. Transparency supports accountability, collaboration, and trust. But openness requires judgment about what to share, when, and with whom.

When Openness Is Required

Transparency is expected for:

- **Governance decisions**: How decisions are made, who participated, and what reasoning led to outcomes. People affected by decisions deserve to understand them.
- **Research methodology**: How work was conducted, what data was used, what limitations exist. Reproducibility and critique require methodological transparency.
- **Conflicts of interest**: Relationships, funding sources, or other factors that might influence judgment. Disclosure enables appropriate interpretation.
- **Institutional commitments**: What this Charter commits to, how it is being implemented, and how progress is being evaluated. Accountability requires visibility.

When Discretion Is Necessary

Confidentiality is appropriate for:

- **Personal information**: Privacy is a right. Information about individuals is shared only with consent or legitimate necessity.
- **Developing work**: Ideas in formation may need protected space before public exposure. Premature disclosure can distort or foreclose creative development.

- **Sensitive partnerships**: Some collaborations involve confidential information from partners. Honoring these commitments is a matter of integrity.
- **Security concerns**: Information that could enable harm if disclosed—security vulnerabilities, personal safety information, or similar—requires protection.

Navigating Tensions

When transparency and confidentiality conflict, the resolution depends on:

- Who could be helped or harmed by disclosure
- What legitimate interests support confidentiality
- Whether partial disclosure or delayed disclosure could satisfy both concerns
- Who has standing to make the decision

The goal is thoughtful openness—sharing by default, protecting when necessary, and being transparent about the boundaries of transparency itself.

10. Coordination as a Design Problem

Coordination—how groups align, make decisions, and work together—is not a background condition to be assumed. It is a first-order object of inquiry and a domain requiring explicit design.

Coordination Does Not Happen Automatically

Groups do not naturally coordinate well. Without deliberate attention, institutions drift toward dysfunction: misaligned incentives, unclear authority, duplicated effort, unresolved conflicts, and decisions that no one owns. Good coordination requires conscious design of institutions, processes, and incentive structures.

This Charter treats coordination as a design problem equivalent in importance to the substantive work being coordinated. How we work together is as important as what we work on.

Institutions, Processes, and Incentives Must Be Designed

- **Institutions**: The structures through which work happens—organizations, roles, relationships—should be intentionally designed, not merely inherited or allowed to emerge. When institutional structures don't serve their purpose, they should be changed.
- **Processes**: How decisions are made, how information flows, how conflicts are resolved—these processes shape outcomes and should be designed for the outcomes we want. Default processes often serve no one well.
- **Incentives**: What behaviors are rewarded, recognized, and promoted shapes what behaviors occur. Incentive structures should be examined for alignment with stated values, and adjusted when misaligned.

Coordination Failure Modes to Avoid

This ecosystem seeks to design against common coordination failures:

- **Diffusion of responsibility**: When everyone is responsible, no one is. Clear accountability assignments prevent work from falling through cracks.
- **Information silos**: When parts of the organization don't know what other parts are doing, redundancy and incoherence result. Visibility and communication structures matter.
- **Misaligned incentives**: When individual incentives conflict with collective goals, individuals rationally pursue outcomes that harm the whole. Incentive design is governance design.
- **Decision paralysis**: When decision rights are unclear or processes are too heavy, decisions don't get made. Speed and clarity require intentional design.
- **Informal power structures**: When formal structures don't match how decisions actually get made, accountability becomes impossible and legitimacy erodes. Formal and informal should align.

Coordination is never finished. It requires ongoing attention, evaluation, and adjustment as circumstances change.

III. Research Practice

1. Project-Centered Inquiry

Data Humanism

Research covered by this Charter adopts a humanistic approach to data—recognizing that data is always shaped by human hands, carrying the fingerprints and biases of its creators. Despite appearances of objectivity, data is physical material formed by human agency. The hand of its creator is always present.

This perspective has practical implications:

- **Context matters**: The relationships and circumstances *between* data points are often more important than the points themselves. This "warm data"—the context, the story, the human situation—is rarely captured in standard visualizations but is fundamental to understanding causality and meaning.
- **Collection is interpretation**: How data is gathered, categorized, and cleaned involves countless decisions that shape what can later be seen. Acknowledging this does not undermine data's value; it makes interpretation more honest.
- **Representation is rhetorical**: Charts, graphs, and dashboards are not neutral windows onto reality. They are arguments, crafted by people with perspectives. Reading data visualizations critically—asking who made this, what choices were made, what is not shown—is a research skill.
- **Qualitative and quantitative are complementary**: Numbers without narrative are incomplete; narrative without evidence is speculation. Good research moves between modes, using each to check and enrich the other.

Data humanism does not reject quantification—it refuses to let quantification obscure the human realities it attempts to represent. The goal is not less data but more honest engagement with what data can and cannot tell us.

Uniqueness as Selection Criterion

"If someone else can do it, we shouldn't do it."

This principle guides what work this ecosystem pursues. Given finite resources and attention, projects should be selected not merely for importance but for *fit*—work that this particular combination of people, institutions, and capabilities is uniquely positioned to accomplish.

This means:

- **Comparative advantage**: Prioritize work where our specific strengths—antidisciplinary orientation, cultural context, institutional flexibility, network position—create distinctive value that others cannot easily replicate.
- **Avoid redundancy**: Before launching initiatives, ask whether capable others are already doing this work well. If so, consider collaboration, support, or complementary positioning rather than duplication.
- **Embrace the gaps**: The most important work is often what falls between established categories—too applied for academia, too speculative for industry, too cross-cutting for any single discipline. This is where antidisciplinary institutions can contribute most.
- **Accept opportunity cost**: Saying yes to one project means saying no to others. Uniqueness as a criterion helps ensure that the work we do take on is work that wouldn't happen without us.

This is not an argument for obscurity or contrarianism. Important problems deserve attention from many actors. But within the space of important problems, this ecosystem should gravitate toward those where its contribution is irreplaceable.

IV. Educational Practice

1. Project-Centered Learning

For an example of project-centered, antidisciplinary learning in practice, see: Antidisciplinary Problem Solving.

Projects are the fundamental unit of learning in programs covered by this Charter. Students learn not primarily through courses, lectures, or readings, but through engagement with bounded projects that produce real outcomes.

What Makes a Legitimate Educational Project

Educational projects share characteristics with research projects (see Section III) but are oriented toward learning rather than contribution to knowledge:

- **Bounded scope**: Projects have clear boundaries—what is included, what is excluded, and what completion looks like. Open-ended exploration is valuable but must eventually crystallize into bounded work.
- **Real stakes**: Projects should matter beyond the classroom. This might mean external audiences, real users, actual implementation, or genuine uncertainty about outcomes. Simulated projects with predetermined answers teach less than projects where results are not known in advance.
- **Appropriate challenge**: Projects should be difficult enough to require growth but achievable enough to permit success. Calibrating this challenge to student capability is a core faculty responsibility.
- **Visible output**: Projects produce artifacts—prototypes, systems, documents, interventions, performances—that can be shared, evaluated, and built upon. Learning is demonstrated through production.

Student Agency and Ownership

Students should have meaningful agency in project selection and execution:

- **Selection**: Where possible, students should choose or significantly shape their projects based on their interests, capabilities, and learning goals. Imposed projects may be necessary for foundational skills but should not dominate.
- **Direction**: Within projects, students should make real decisions—not merely execute faculty-determined plans. Learning to make good decisions requires practice making decisions.

- **Ownership**: Students should feel genuine ownership of their work. Projects that feel like assignments to complete for grades produce different learning than projects that feel like the student's own.

Relationship to Assessment

Assessment in project-centered learning evaluates:

- The quality of the project output
- The judgment demonstrated in project decisions
- The learning evidenced through the process
- The growth from where the student started

Traditional metrics—exams, grades, credit hours—may be necessary for institutional compatibility but should not drive pedagogy. The question is not "what grade did this earn?" but "what did the student learn, and how is that learning demonstrated?"

2. Learning Through Making and Doing

Vocational Orientation

This Charter affirms a vocational orientation: the commitment to building things, not merely theorizing about them. Students and researchers are expected to produce artifacts—prototypes, systems, interventions, works—that exist in the world and can be evaluated against reality, not only against abstract criteria.

This orientation does not diminish theory; it insists that theory be tested through practice. The goal is not anti-intellectualism but a refusal to let intellectual work become detached from consequence. Ideas that cannot survive contact with implementation are incomplete.

Bias Toward Action

Impact is the art of getting things done. This Charter values tangible outcomes over process theater, shipped work over endless planning, and learning through doing over learning through discussion alone.

A bias toward action means:

- **Default to trying**: When uncertain whether something will work, try it. Small experiments teach more than extended deliberation. Failure is information; paralysis is not.
- **Finish things**: Starting is easy; finishing is hard. The discipline of completing work—pushing through the difficult final stages, making hard decisions, accepting imperfection—is itself a core competency.
- **Reduce time to feedback**: The faster work reaches reality, the faster learning happens. Tight feedback loops between intention and outcome are more valuable than elaborate upfront planning.
- **Distinguish motion from progress**: Activity is not accomplishment. Meetings, documents, and discussions are means, not ends. The question is always: what changed in the world?

This is not an argument against reflection, planning, or careful thought. It is an argument against using those activities as substitutes for action, or as ways to avoid the vulnerability of putting work into the world where it can be judged.

Unity of Function and Design

Pursuing design excellence directly improves performance. Aesthetics and function are not separate concerns to be traded off against each other, but deeply intertwined aspects of good work. This principle rejects the assumption that something must be ugly to be functional, or that beauty is a luxury applied after engineering problems are solved.

In practice, this means:

- Design decisions are engineering decisions, and engineering decisions are design decisions
- How something looks, feels, and communicates is inseparable from how well it works
- Attention to craft and finish is not indulgence but discipline
- The pursuit of elegance often reveals simpler, better solutions

Students learn to integrate design thinking with technical implementation from the beginning, not as a separate phase or specialty.

Process as Content

The unique identity of a work is expressed not only through what it is, but through how it was made. Process is not merely a means to an end—it is itself content, carrying meaning and value independent of the final artifact.

This principle draws from craft traditions where the maker's presence remains visible in the work:

- **Indexical traces**: The evidence of human hands—brush strokes, tool marks, variations in rhythm—conveys authenticity and care that machine-perfect uniformity cannot. These traces are not flaws to be eliminated but signatures to be valued.
- **Visible repair**: The Japanese tradition of kintsugi—repairing broken pottery with gold—exemplifies how damage and restoration can become part of an object's beauty and meaning. Work that shows its history, including its failures and repairs, tells a richer story than work that hides its past.
- **Tacit knowledge transmission**: Some knowledge cannot be fully articulated in words or diagrams; it must be transmitted through practice, demonstration, and apprenticeship. Making things together is a way of sharing understanding that documentation alone cannot capture.
- **Process-intensive learning**: Students learn not just by producing outputs but by engaging in processes—iteration, revision, collaboration, failure, repair. The discipline of sustained making develops capacities that no amount of reading or discussion can substitute.

In educational contexts, this means valuing works-in-progress, documenting process alongside product, and creating space for the slow development of craft. In research contexts, it means treating methodology as substantive intellectual contribution, not merely scaffolding to be discarded once results are obtained.

3. Use of Computational and Agentic Systems

The AI pedagogy framework in this section draws from "Teaching AI and Teaching with AI". See: Teaching AI and Teaching with AI.

Educational programs covered by this Charter integrate AI as a foundational assumption, not an optional enhancement. Students must learn to work effectively with AI tools while developing capacities that remain uniquely human.

Two Complementary Pillars:

Teaching AI — Students develop judgment and workflow literacy that transfers across tools:

- **Effective AI Workflows**: Environments that support thinking rather than replacing it, creating natural checkpoints for reflection and making students more thoughtful, not just faster
- **Sustained Projects**: Strategies for managing extended work—maintaining plans, preserving context across sessions, and keeping AI collaborators aligned with evolving objectives
- **Security and Privacy**: Understanding data flows, handling sensitive information, recognizing manipulation vectors, and operational security awareness
- **Human Collaboration**: AI as part of broader collaborative environments, facilitating shared context, handoffs, and asynchronous work with other people
- **Metacognitive Awareness**: Learning to recognize where AI-assisted workflows break down—when AI outputs are subtly wrong, when the framing is off, when the confident answer misses the point. This requires concrete experience with AI failures, not just AI successes, building the diagnostic capacity to identify deviation and communicate corrections effectively. Metacognitive skill transfers across tools and capability levels.

Teaching with AI — Using AI as a medium through which students develop genuine conceptual understanding:

- **Problem Posing over Problem Solving**: While AI systems solve problems, humans remain essential for identifying what's worth solving, framing ambiguous situations, and recognizing when solutions address real needs. Education shifts toward developing these problem-posing abilities.
- **Assessment of Judgment**: Evaluation focuses not on answer correctness but on problem framing, approach appropriateness, error identification in AI outputs, and meaningful improvements upon AI-generated solutions. Assessment evaluates questions and judgment, not just answers.
- **Designing for Uncertainty**: Rather than assignments built around current AI limitations, develop students' capacity to work productively with AI systems of any capability level. The core question remains: what uniquely human contributions are valuable, and how do we develop students' ability to make them?

Implementation Requirements:

- AI integration is not optional—students and faculty are already using these tools
- Learning experiences must remain meaningful when students have access to powerful AI collaborators
- Assessment must distinguish between human judgment and AI execution
- Privacy and security awareness must be taught explicitly and reinforced continuously

Curriculum Agility

Educational programs covered by this Charter must be designed to iterate in real-time with advances in AI capability. Best practices for teaching how to work with AI are in their infancy; what works today may be obsolete or counterproductive within months.

This requires:

- **Modular curriculum design**: Programs structured so that components can be updated, replaced, or removed without requiring wholesale redesign
- **Continuous experimentation**: Faculty empowered to try different pedagogical approaches, with mechanisms for sharing what works and abandoning what doesn't

- **Rapid feedback loops**: Assessment and evaluation cycles short enough to detect when approaches stop working, before entire cohorts are affected
- **Documented learning**: When curriculum changes, the reasoning and results should be captured so that institutional knowledge accumulates rather than cycling through the same discoveries

Curriculum agility is not instability. The goal is structured adaptability—maintaining coherent educational aims while remaining responsive to a rapidly changing technological environment. Programs that cannot evolve will either become irrelevant or will force students to learn outdated practices they must immediately unlearn.

V. Registry and Coordination Infrastructure

Institutions covered by this Charter must establish and maintain a **shared registry**—a common platform for defining, submitting, and browsing people, projects, initiatives, courses, theses, events, and institutions across the ecosystem.

Why a Shared Registry

Coordination requires visibility. A fragmented landscape of separate tracking systems—where Henkaku Center doesn't know what SDS is doing, where researchers can't find potential collaborators, where duplicate efforts proceed in ignorance of each other—undermines the ecosystem's ability to function as more than a collection of isolated activities.

The registry makes work and people visible, enabling participants to identify connections, gaps, and potential collaborations. It answers basic coordination questions: Who is working on what? Who has expertise in this area? What projects relate to mine? Where are there gaps no one is addressing? What courses develop which capabilities? How do theses connect to ongoing research? What events are coming up? What institutions are involved and what do they bring?

What the Registry Tracks

The registry tracks seven types of entries:

- **Institutions**: Organizations that participate in the ecosystem—universities, research centers, companies, and other bodies that provide infrastructure, legitimacy, resources, or collaboration. Institutions have mandates, governance structures, and constraints that shape what the ecosystem can do. Tracking institutions makes the organizational landscape visible: who the partners are, what each brings, how they relate to each other, and what constraints they impose.
- **People**: Participants in the ecosystem—their roles, expertise, affiliations, and involvement in projects, initiatives, courses, and theses. People appear as nodes in a network, connected to what they work on and who they collaborate with.
- **Projects**: Bounded units of transformation with clear completion criteria. Projects are finite and mission-driven; they end when their objectives are achieved or abandoned. Every project must articulate what would make it complete.
- **Initiatives**: Ongoing programs without predetermined endpoints. Initiatives persist as long as they serve their purpose and may contain or spawn multiple projects over time.
- **Courses**: Recurring educational units with defined learning objectives, credit values, and instructors. Courses connect to the Charter principles they embody, the projects they support, and the capabilities they develop. Unlike projects, courses recur across cohorts; unlike initiatives, they have structured syllabi and assessment criteria.
- **Theses**: Bounded academic works produced by students in pursuit of a degree. Each thesis has an advisor, a committee, defense milestones, and an expected contribution to knowledge. Theses connect to the projects and initiatives they draw from or contribute to, and to the people who advise and evaluate them.
- **Events**: Time-bound gatherings—seminars, workshops, conferences, open houses, guest lectures, defenses, and other occasions that bring people together around shared purpose. Events connect to the initiatives or projects they serve,

the people who organize and attend them, and the outcomes they produce. Unlike projects, events are primarily about convening; unlike courses, they are typically singular or irregular rather than recurring on a fixed schedule.

These entry types serve different accountability structures:

- **Institutions** are evaluated on whether the relationship remains productive—the capabilities provided, constraints navigated, and mutual benefit sustained
- **Projects** are evaluated on whether they achieved their stated outcomes
- **Initiatives** are evaluated on whether they continue to justify their existence
- **Courses** are evaluated on whether they develop the capabilities they promise and remain aligned with Charter principles
- **Theses** are evaluated on the quality of their contribution, the rigor of their inquiry, and their connection to the broader ecosystem
- **Events** are evaluated on whether they achieved their convening purpose—the connections made, knowledge shared, or decisions advanced

Principles

- **Shared, not fragmented**: A single registry across all Charter-covered institutions, not separate systems that cannot see each other
- **Coordination, not approval**: The registry is a visibility tool, not a gatekeeping mechanism. Listing signals accountability to Charter principles but does not require permission.
- **Measurability with forgiveness**: Entries must articulate how outcomes will be evaluated, but the Charter recognizes that some impacts resist clean measurement. Qualitative assessment and narrative evaluation are legitimate.
- **Lightweight entry, progressive detail**: Lower barriers to initial registration; allow entries to be refined over time

Implementation

Detailed schema definitions for registry entries—including required fields, guidance prompts, and cross-referencing structures—are maintained in the Archetypes document. The archetypes may evolve through governance processes (Section VII) while preserving backward compatibility.

VI. Institutional Relationships

This section articulates how the Charter understands and governs relationships among participating institutions. These relationships are not assumed to be flat or symmetrical. Instead, they are treated as **explicitly designed interfaces** between institutions with different mandates, tempos, and constraints.

The aim is not to dissolve institutional boundaries, but to enable **productive coupling** across them—preserving accountability, authority, and trust while allowing for experimentation and collaboration.

1. Roles and Positions

The ecosystem covered by this Charter comprises individuals in the following broad categories:

Director — Executive leadership with strategic and operational authority over one or more institutional units (Henkaku Center, SDS, or designated programs). Directors bear ultimate accountability for organizational direction, resource allocation, and alignment with Charter principles.

Faculty — Members holding academic appointments within SDS, responsible for curriculum, student mentorship, and degree program integrity. Faculty may also hold the Principal Researcher role, reflecting the Charter's commitment to integrating education and research practice.

Principal Researchers — Individuals who lead and bear accountability for research projects, whether or not they hold faculty appointments. Principal researchers are responsible for project design, execution, and outcomes within their domains.

Researchers — Individuals engaged in research activities under the guidance of principal researchers or faculty. Researchers contribute to project execution but do not bear primary accountability for project-level decisions.

Staff — Individuals providing operational, administrative, or technical support. Staff enable the functioning of research and educational programs without bearing direct academic or research accountability.

Visiting Researchers — Individuals temporarily affiliated with the ecosystem for research purposes, typically maintaining primary appointments elsewhere. Visiting researchers operate under the guidance of a faculty member or principal researcher who serves as their institutional liaison.

Students — Individuals enrolled in degree programs within SDS. Students are the primary beneficiaries of educational programs and active participants in project-based learning. While students do not bear institutional accountability in the same way as faculty or staff, they are expected to engage with Charter principles and contribute to the community's culture and work.

Affiliates — Individuals with formal but non-employment relationships to the ecosystem—including adjunct faculty, advisors, collaborators, and partners. Affiliates may participate in research, education, or governance according to the terms of their affiliation.

These categories are not mutually exclusive beyond the structural constraints noted above. Individuals may hold multiple roles, and role boundaries may evolve as the ecosystem matures. What matters is clarity: at any given moment, for any given activity, individuals should be able to identify which role they occupy and what accountability that role entails.

2. Chiba Institute of Technology (Host Institution)

Chiba Institute of Technology serves as the host institution for the Henkaku Center and SDS, providing legal standing, infrastructure, and long-term continuity.

Founded in 1942 as Kōa Institute of Technology, Chiba Tech is Japan's oldest private technology institute, with approximately 10,000 students across undergraduate, graduate, and vocational programs. It brings institutional stability, established administrative systems, and deep roots in Japanese engineering education.

Operating Within Constraints

Chiba Tech is forward-looking but necessarily operates under constraints of scale, regulation, and tradition that smaller or newer organizations do not face. These constraints include:

- Regulatory requirements governing accredited degree programs
- Administrative systems designed for conventional academic operations
- Stakeholder relationships built over decades
- Cultural expectations associated with established institutions

These constraints are real and must be respected. Antidisciplinary and experimental work is pursued within these constraints, not in opposition to them. The goal is creative operation within institutional boundaries, not circumvention or conflict.

Mutual Benefit

The relationship is designed for mutual benefit:

- Henkaku Center and SDS gain institutional legitimacy, infrastructure, and access to a large student body and established networks
- Chiba Tech gains innovation capacity, international visibility, and models that may inform broader institutional evolution

Neither entity subsumes the other. The relationship is one of productive coupling—distinct institutions with different characters, working together while maintaining their separate identities.

Physical Presence and Campus Integration

In-person activities of the Henkaku Center and SDS should be primarily based at the **Chiba Institute of Technology Tsudanuma Campus**. This expectation reflects several commitments:

- **Institutional integration**: Physical presence on campus reinforces that Henkaku Center and SDS are part of Chiba Tech, not separate entities that happen to share an affiliation. Visibility and proximity support collaboration with the broader university community.
- **Shared infrastructure**: Tsudanuma Campus provides facilities, services, and administrative support that enable research and education. Making use of this infrastructure honors the relationship with the host institution.
- **Community formation**: Regular physical co-presence builds relationships, trust, and informal knowledge exchange that remote interaction cannot fully replicate.

Off-campus events, external venue meetings, and remote participation are permissible and sometimes necessary. However, good faith effort should be made to hold activities at Tsudanuma whenever reasonably possible. The default assumption is on-campus presence; departures from this default should have clear justification (venue requirements, partner convenience, accessibility needs, or similar considerations).

3. Henkaku Center and Graduate School of Design & Science (SDS)

The Henkaku Center and the Graduate School of Design & Science (SDS) are distinct but closely coupled entities within the Chiba Tech ecosystem.

Henkaku Center

The Henkaku Center for Radical Transformation functions as a research and experimentation arm. Its scope includes:

- Exploratory research that may not fit conventional academic categories
- Infrastructure development—tools, platforms, and systems that support the broader ecosystem

- Cross-cutting initiatives that span education, research, and external engagement
- Experimental programs that test new approaches before broader adoption
- Convening and coordination across the ecosystem

The Henkaku Center operates with more flexibility than a degree-granting program, enabling rapid experimentation and unconventional approaches.

Graduate School of Design & Science (SDS)

SDS functions as the academic arm, responsible for:

- Curriculum design and delivery
- Degree programs and academic credentials
- Student admissions, progression, and graduation
- Academic assessment and quality assurance
- Faculty appointments in their academic dimension

SDS operates under the regulatory requirements governing accredited graduate programs, with corresponding accountability for academic standards.

Language of Instruction

English is the official language for all SDS instruction and collaboration. This reflects the program's global orientation and commitment to attracting students, faculty, and collaborators from any country or background. While Japanese language and cultural competency are valued and supported, English proficiency is expected of all participants in SDS academic programs.

Relationship Between Entities

Faculty and students may participate in both Henkaku Center and SDS contexts. A faculty member might teach in SDS while leading a Henkaku Center research initiative. A student might pursue an SDS degree while contributing to Henkaku Center projects.

However, governance, accountability, and evaluation differ by context:

- Academic matters (curriculum, degrees, student standing) are governed through SDS

- Research initiatives and experimental programs may be governed through Henkaku Center
- Some activities involve both and require coordination

The entities share values, leadership, and many participants, but maintain distinct identities appropriate to their different functions.

4. Interaction, Flow, and Boundary Management

Participants in this ecosystem frequently operate across institutional boundaries—between SDS and Henkaku Center, between academic and research roles, between internal work and external engagement. Managing these boundaries requires explicit attention.

Context-Dependent Roles and Expectations

Roles and expectations vary by context:

- A faculty member advising a student's thesis operates under academic norms and owes duties appropriate to that relationship
- The same faculty member leading a Henkaku Center initiative operates as a project lead with different accountability structures
- A student working on coursework has different standing than the same student contributing to a research project

These are not contradictions—they are different contexts with different expectations. Participants should be clear about which context they are operating in at any given moment.

Authority Does Not Automatically Transfer

Authority in one context does not automatically confer authority in another:

- Academic seniority does not automatically translate to decision-making authority in research projects
- Leadership of a Henkaku Center initiative does not confer authority over SDS academic matters

- External reputation does not override internal governance processes

When authority is needed across contexts, it must be explicitly granted through appropriate channels, not assumed based on status elsewhere.

Transparency and Role Clarity

Operating across boundaries requires:

- **Explicit identification**: When context is ambiguous, participants should clarify which role they are occupying and which authority they are exercising
- **Conflict acknowledgment**: When roles create conflicts of interest, those conflicts should be disclosed and managed
- **Boundary respect**: Participants should not use access gained in one role to exercise influence inappropriate to another

The goal is not rigid separation—productive coupling requires fluid movement across boundaries—but clarity about what role one is playing and what expectations apply.

5. Affiliates, Visiting Researchers, and External Partners

Industry Integration

This Charter encourages active collaboration with industry partners, including joint supervision of students shared between companies and the institution. Such arrangements recognize that:

- Real-world problems provide learning opportunities that purely academic settings cannot replicate
- Industry partners bring domain expertise, data, and constraints that enrich research and education
- Students benefit from exposure to professional practice before graduation
- Companies gain access to emerging talent and fresh perspectives

Joint supervision means genuine shared responsibility—industry partners participate in defining project scope, providing mentorship, and evaluating outcomes, not merely funding or hosting interns. Students in joint supervision arrangements have

accountable mentors in both contexts.

Expectations for External Partners

External partners—whether industry collaborators, visiting researchers, or affiliates—are expected to operate consistently with Charter principles while engaged with Charter-covered programs. This includes:

- Respect for human primacy and accountability in AI-assisted work
- Commitment to intellectual integrity and transparency appropriate to the collaboration
- Recognition of student and researcher agency and development as goals, not merely deliverables
- Willingness to engage with the institution's cultural and methodological commitments

Alignment does not require agreement on all matters, but it does require good faith engagement with the principles articulated here. Partners who find Charter principles incompatible with their operations should seek collaboration elsewhere.

VII. Governance and Stewardship

1. Stewardship of the Charter

This Charter is a living document requiring active stewardship. Changes should be possible when needed, but not so easy that the document loses stability and authority.

Who May Propose Changes

Any participant in the ecosystem covered by this Charter may propose changes:

- Faculty, researchers, and staff of Henkaku Center and SDS
- Students enrolled in Charter-covered programs

- Affiliates and visiting researchers during their engagement

Proposals should be submitted through the version control system that maintains the Charter, with clear description of the proposed change and its rationale.

How Changes Are Reviewed

Proposed changes are reviewed through a process that balances openness with rigor:

- **Minor clarifications** (typos, formatting, non-substantive wording) may be approved by any Charter steward
- **Substantive additions or modifications** require review by multiple stakeholders and explicit approval from designated authority
- **Changes to foundational principles** require broader consultation and higher approval thresholds

The specific approval requirements should be documented and maintained alongside the Charter.

Role of Version History

The version history of this Charter is itself a governance document:

- All changes are tracked and attributable to human decision-makers
- Previous versions remain accessible, showing how the Charter has evolved
- The reasoning behind significant changes should be captured in commit messages or accompanying documentation
- Patterns in the Charter's evolution—what has been added, removed, or modified—provide guidance for interpretation

Version history makes "institutional drift" visible. When principles evolve, that evolution should be traceable and explicable.

Precedent and Interpretation

Over time, interpretations and applications of Charter principles create precedent. These precedents should be:

- Documented when they represent significant interpretive choices
- Consulted when similar situations arise
- Revisable when circumstances change or earlier interpretations prove problematic

The Charter text is primary, but the history of its application provides context for understanding what the text means in practice.

2. Decision-Making Principles

Institutions covered by this Charter operate as **decentralized, horizontally-structured communities** where authority derives from commitment to execution rather than formal designation. This approach recognizes that coordination without rigid hierarchy requires explicit design.

Horizontal Authority

Authority and status are distributed rather than concentrated. Influence flows from demonstrated willingness to do work, not from positional power or informal designation. This creates legitimacy through action: those who commit time and effort to executing decisions earn authority to make them.

Group Formation and Participation Pathways

Working groups form through **explicit participation pathways** with clear execution commitments:

- **Open Invitations**: Opportunities to participate in initiatives should be made explicit, even when uptake is expected to be small. Visibility of participation pathways prevents later "who decided this?" dynamics and establishes that membership is tied to work, not status.
- **Self-Selection Through Commitment**: Invitations include specific time and execution requirements. This creates natural filtering—only those willing to do real work join, resulting in small, focused, accountable groups with clear legitimacy.

- **Work-Based Membership**: Membership in decision-making groups is earned through willingness to contribute, not granted through informal designation or social proximity. This ties authority directly to accountability.
- **Transparent Process**: Even if few people opt in, the existence of visible participation opportunities establishes fairness. Transparency in process supports small group size while maintaining legitimacy.

Decision-Making in Practice

Effective decision-making in horizontal structures balances focus with openness:

- **Small, Accountable Groups**: Decision-making groups should remain small, especially where subjective judgment is involved (design, tone, framing). Size is controlled through execution commitment requirements, not arbitrary closure.
- **Early Constraint Surfacing**: Openness early in processes helps surface technical, structural, and coordination constraints before decisions harden. This is particularly important when work has both subjective elements (design) and objective dimensions (architecture, maintenance, workflows).
- **Focused but Not Closed**: Working groups stay focused by requiring commitment, not by being invitation-only or informally constituted. The distinction is critical: focused execution with transparent access, rather than informal designation.
- **Preventing Drift**: Without explicit pathways and work-based membership, horizontal communities risk defaulting to informal power structures based on social proximity rather than contribution. Charter-governed institutions must actively design against this.

Legitimacy and Accountability

In decentralized settings, legitimacy requires:

1. **Transparent Opportunities**: Participation pathways must be visible, even if not widely taken up
2. **Commitment-Based Selection**: Authority tied to willingness to execute, not designation

3. **Small Group Execution**: Actual work done by focused teams with accountability
4. **Fair Process**: Openness in opportunity creation, focus in execution

This approach produces working groups that are both small (through self-selection) and legitimate (through transparent access), avoiding the coordination failures of both diffuse committees and closed informal networks.

3. Conflict, Accountability, and Repair

Non-Antagonistic Engagement

This Charter embraces a distinctive stance toward disagreement and change: engagement through invitation and demonstration rather than opposition and critique. This does not mean avoiding conflict or suppressing disagreement—it means choosing how to engage with difference.

Non-antagonistic engagement reflects several commitments:

- **Future-oriented optimism**: Energy directed toward building what should exist, rather than primarily attacking what currently does. Critique has its place, but construction is the primary mode.
- **Assuming good faith**: Beginning from the assumption that those who disagree may have legitimate reasons, different information, or different values—not that they are malicious or stupid. This assumption can be revised with evidence, but it is the starting point.
- **Invitation over coercion**: Change happens most durably when people choose it. Persuasion, demonstration, and creating attractive alternatives are preferred to force, shame, or exclusion. People who aren't ready to join aren't enemies.
- **Holding disagreement without rupture**: It is possible to disagree profoundly while maintaining relationship and mutual respect. Not every conflict requires resolution; some require only management. The goal is productive coexistence, not ideological uniformity.

This stance is not naivety or conflict avoidance. Some situations require direct confrontation; some actors operate in bad faith; some harms demand clear opposition. But antagonism as a *default mode*—treating disagreement as combat, seeking to defeat rather than persuade—is corrosive to the collaborative culture this Charter seeks to build.

Distinguishing Types of Conflict

Not all conflicts are the same, and different types require different responses:

- **Disagreement**: Differing views on approach, priorities, or interpretation. These are normal and healthy. Resolution through dialogue, not escalation.
- **Interpersonal conflict**: Friction between individuals that affects working relationships. May require mediation, adjusted collaboration structures, or simply time and space.
- **Misconduct**: Violation of Charter principles, institutional policies, or ethical standards. Requires formal response through appropriate institutional channels.
- **Harm**: Actions that damage individuals, relationships, or the community. Requires acknowledgment, accountability, and repair—not merely procedural compliance.
- **Systemic failure**: When problems recur or patterns emerge, the issue may be structural rather than individual. These require institutional response, not just individual accountability.

The appropriate response depends on accurate diagnosis. Treating disagreement as misconduct creates a hostile environment; treating misconduct as mere disagreement fails those who are harmed.

Accountability Processes

When harm occurs or misconduct is alleged:

- **Clear reporting paths**: Participants should know how to raise concerns and to whom. Multiple pathways (direct supervisor, ombudsperson, designated Charter steward) prevent concerns from being suppressed.

- **Proportionate response**: Minor issues warrant informal resolution; serious matters require formal process. Escalation should be available but not automatic.
- **Due process**: Those accused of misconduct deserve fair hearing before consequences. Accountability requires evidence and opportunity to respond, not summary judgment.
- **Institutional channels**: Serious misconduct—harassment, discrimination, safety violations, research ethics breaches—must be handled through Chiba Tech's formal processes, which take precedence over Charter-level response.

Repair Over Punishment

This Charter favors repair-oriented responses where possible:

- **Focus on harm, not just rules**: The question is not only "was a rule broken?" but "who was harmed, and what do they need?"
- **Accountability as acknowledgment**: Genuine accountability involves understanding impact, not merely accepting penalty. People who acknowledge harm and demonstrate change deserve paths back to full participation.
- **Restoration of relationships**: Where possible, aim to restore working relationships rather than permanent exclusion. Some harms may make this impossible, but it should be the goal.
- **Learning over punishment**: When failures stem from ignorance, confusion, or systemic factors, education and system change are more appropriate than individual punishment.
- **Boundaries when necessary**: Repair orientation does not mean unlimited tolerance. Some conduct warrants removal from programs or roles. Protection of community members takes precedence over rehabilitation of those who harm them.

When Repair Fails

Not all conflicts can be resolved. When good-faith efforts at resolution fail:

- Participants may need to work separately, with explicit boundaries

- Decisions may need to be made despite ongoing disagreement
- In extreme cases, separation from Charter-covered programs may be necessary

The goal is not conflict-free harmony but a community capable of working through difficulty while protecting its members and maintaining its values.

VIII. Evolution and Adaptation

1. Living Nature of the Charter

This Charter is designed to evolve. Unlike traditional institutional documents that are drafted once and archived, this Charter is maintained as a living document under version control.

Versioning and Traceability

The Charter is maintained in a version control system that provides:

- **Complete history**: Every change is recorded, with timestamp and attribution
- **Traceability**: Any current provision can be traced back to when and why it was added or modified
- **Transparency**: The full history is accessible to all participants
- **Accountability**: Changes are attributed to human decision-makers, not anonymous processes

This approach treats institutional principles the way software treats code: as artifacts that evolve through transparent, traceable, accountable processes.

Conditions for Revision

Revisions may be proposed when:

- Experience reveals gaps, ambiguities, or unintended consequences in existing provisions

- Circumstances change in ways that make existing provisions obsolete or counterproductive
- New understanding suggests better ways to articulate existing commitments
- The ecosystem expands to encompass situations not anticipated in current text

Revisions should be accompanied by rationale explaining why change is needed.

Deprecation and Removal

Sections may be deprecated (marked as no longer active) or removed when:

- They address situations that no longer exist
- They have been superseded by other provisions
- Experience has shown them to be counterproductive

Deprecated sections should be retained in version history with explanation of why they were deprecated. Complete removal should be rare and well-justified.

Stability and Change

The Charter should be stable enough to provide reliable guidance and flexible enough to remain relevant. This balance requires:

- Resistance to changes that merely reflect passing preferences
- Openness to changes that address genuine problems
- Periodic review to assess whether the Charter is serving its purpose
- Recognition that some principles are more fundamental than others and should change more slowly

2. Portability and Reuse

This Charter is designed to be portable. Other organizations may find value in adapting its principles for their own contexts.

Conditions for Reuse

This Charter may be reused, adapted, and modified by others subject to:

- **Attribution**: Derivative works should acknowledge this Charter as a source
- **No false endorsement**: Derivative works should not imply endorsement by Henkaku Center, SDS, or Chiba Tech unless such endorsement is explicitly granted
- **Transparency**: Organizations adopting or adapting this Charter should make clear what they have adopted, adapted, or omitted

These conditions are meant to enable reuse while maintaining clarity about provenance and relationship.

Forking vs. Adoption

Organizations may engage with this Charter in different ways:

- **Adoption**: Committing to operate according to this Charter, participating in its governance, and accepting its authority. Adoption implies ongoing relationship with the Charter's stewards.
- **Forking**: Creating a derivative Charter that diverges from this one. Forking is legitimate when an organization's needs differ enough that ongoing alignment is not appropriate. Forks should be clearly identified as such.
- **Inspiration**: Drawing on Charter principles without formal adoption or forking. This is the lightest form of engagement and carries no ongoing obligations.

Obligations of Derivative Charters

Organizations that fork this Charter are encouraged but not required to:

- Contribute improvements back to the source Charter when applicable
- Maintain compatibility where possible, enabling collaboration across Charter-derived communities
- Document their modifications and rationale, supporting learning across the ecosystem

The goal is to enable a family of related Charters that share common ancestry while adapting to different contexts—similar to how open-source software forks can diverge while maintaining connection.

IX. Closing Provisions

1. Authority and Interpretation

This Charter has no formal legal authority. It does not create enforceable obligations, override institutional policies, or supersede applicable law. It is a normative document—an articulation of shared values, commitments, and expectations that should continuously influence culture, decision-making, and policy development.

Relationship to Formal Governance

When this Charter and Chiba Institute of Technology policies conflict, Chiba Tech policy takes precedence. This Charter operates within the framework of university governance, not above or outside it.

However, this Charter should be actively used and referenced in the development of policies, the design of programs, and the resolution of ambiguous situations. It is meant to be lived, not archived. Regular reference to Charter principles in ordinary decision-making is expected.

What This Charter Authorizes

This Charter explicitly authorizes:

- The establishment and maintenance of a **registry** as described in Section V, serving as coordination infrastructure for people, projects, initiatives, courses, theses, events, and institutions across the ecosystem
- The development and delivery of **curriculum for Masters and PhD students** within the Graduate School of Design & Science, consistent with the educational principles articulated in Section IV
- The governance structures and decision-making processes described in Section VII, including the formation of working groups through explicit participation pathways

What This Charter Does Not Authorize

This Charter does not authorize:

- Actions that violate Chiba Tech policies, Japanese law, or applicable regulations
- Commitments that bind Chiba Tech without appropriate institutional approval
- Unilateral decisions on matters requiring broader consultation or higher authority
- Exemptions from standard institutional processes (ethics review, financial approval, etc.) unless such exemptions are explicitly granted through proper channels

Interpretation

When Charter provisions are ambiguous, interpretation should be guided by:

- The foundational orientations articulated in Section I
- The values and commitments articulated in Section II
- The history of Charter evolution and prior interpretations
- Consultation with Charter stewards and affected stakeholders

Interpretive disputes that cannot be resolved through consultation should be escalated to the Director of the Henkaku Center.

2. Ratification and Acknowledgement

Initial Ratification

This Charter takes effect through a special initiating event: **ratification** requiring the consensus of:

- The Director of the Henkaku Center
- The seven founding faculty of the Graduate School of Design & Science

Ratification signifies that these founding members have reviewed, discussed, and committed to the Charter as the governing framework for the ecosystem. The ratification event and its participants should be recorded in the Charter's version history.

Individual Acknowledgment

Individuals must formally acknowledge alignment with this Charter before joining Charter-covered programs or positions:

- **Faculty and researchers**: Acknowledge the Charter as part of appointment or affiliation processes
- **Students**: Acknowledge the Charter as part of enrollment in SDS programs
- **Staff**: Acknowledge the Charter as part of onboarding to Henkaku Center or SDS roles
- **Affiliates and visiting researchers**: Acknowledge the Charter as part of establishing their formal relationship

Acknowledgment means understanding the Charter's principles and committing to operate consistently with them. It does not require agreement with every provision, but it does require good faith engagement.

Institutional Partners

Representatives of institutional partners (companies, universities, organizations) entering formal collaboration with Charter-covered programs should acknowledge the Charter on behalf of their institutions, indicating awareness of and willingness to operate consistently with Charter principles during the collaboration.

Nature of Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment is a condition of participation, not merely an invitation. Those who cannot in good conscience commit to Charter principles should not join Charter-covered programs.

However, acknowledgment is not coerced conformity. The Charter welcomes disagreement, critique, and proposals for change through appropriate channels. Acknowledging the Charter means committing to engage with it honestly—including honest disagreement—not to suppress one's own judgment.

Ongoing Commitment

Acknowledgment is not a one-time formality. Participants are expected to:

- Revisit the Charter periodically as it evolves
- Raise concerns when they believe Charter principles are being violated
- Participate in Charter governance when able
- Model Charter principles in their own conduct

The Charter is a living commitment, renewed through ongoing engagement rather than a signature filed and forgotten.

Appendices

Appendices may be added over time to supplement the core Charter with:

- **Glossary of Terms**: Definitions of key concepts used throughout the Charter
- **Historical Notes and Rationale**: Documentation of why specific provisions were adopted and how they evolved
- **Case Studies and Precedents**: Examples of how Charter principles have been applied in specific situations
- **Experimental Governance Mechanisms**: Provisional structures being tested before incorporation into the main Charter

Appendices are governed by the same stewardship processes as the main Charter but may be added, modified, or removed with lower approval thresholds, enabling experimentation and documentation without requiring changes to core provisions.

Governance

This document defines the rules governing how changes to the Charter and Governance are proposed, voted on, and implemented.

Voting Thresholds

Change Type	Approval Required	Participation Required
Charter Amendment	50% of votes cast	50% of eligible voters
Governance Change	66% of votes cast	66% of eligible voters

Voting Periods

Change Type	Duration
Charter Amendment	4 weeks
Governance Change	3 months

Stakeholder Types & Vote Weights

All stakeholders have equal voting weight by default.

Stakeholder Type	Default Weight
Director	1
Faculty	1
Administrator	1
Student	1
Researcher	1

Implementation Process

Changes to governance rules approved through this platform require manual implementation by platform developers. The platform will display implementation status for passed governance proposals.