

Code of Conduct of the University of West Bohemia

PREAMBLE

The University of West Bohemia fully embraces the values and principles based on the European cultural and historical heritage, such as freedom, inviolability of human dignity, respect for truth, justice, responsibility, professionalism, critical thinking, as well as respect for differing opinions and cultures. It is crucial that these values are safeguarded in everyday behavior, as well as in moments of major decisions or solutions to serious problems, and not allowed to be relativized, misinterpreted or politicized.

Therefore, UWB wants to create an environment that develops the full potential of all, an environment that is welcoming, fair, safe, supportive and one that expresses respect for individuality. An environment where the behavior and actions of all present are naturally driven by the principles of collegiality, integrity, equality, respect, openness and consideration for others and where any form of undesirable behavior, intimidation, aggression, bullying or discrimination is considered unacceptable.

Article I.
INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

1. The UWB Code of Conduct (hereinafter also referred to as the "Code" or "Code of Conduct") delineates the ethical principles and values to which UWB subscribes. These principles and values constitute the standard of ethical conduct in the UWB environment.
2. The Code of Conduct is binding for all employees and students of UWB (hereinafter collectively referred to as "everyone", "all" or "anyone"). For the purposes of this Code, students also include participants in lifelong learning, to whom the provisions of this Code apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Article II.
**THE RELEVANCE OF ACADEMIC FREEDOMS AND RIGHTS
TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. The University of West Bohemia is a self-governing academic institution. Within the framework of its academic rights, UWB creates representative academic bodies, uses academic insignia and conducts academic ceremonies. Within the framework of its academic freedom, UWB creates and develops educational, scientific, research, development, innovation, artistic and other creative activities.
2. UWB respects academic freedoms and academic rights and exercises them in line with the standards of ethical conduct defined in this Code.

Article III.
GENERAL STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

1. Regardless of the personal concept of morality of employees, staff and students, general ethical principles and principles of decent interpersonal relations are respected at UWB.
2. Everyone respects the basic values to which UWB subscribes, in particular: freedom, equality, democracy, academic freedoms and social accountability, professionalism, discipline and economy, sustainable development in a knowledge-based society, the applicability of knowledge and its grounding in the regional environment, as well as the transcendence to the national, European and international environment.
3. Students respect the principles expressed in the matriculation pledge and in the academic pledges; in particular, they honor UWB and do not allow their actions to damage its good name.
4. Everyone:

- a) acts in accordance with the mission of the University of West Bohemia as stated in the Statutes of the University of West Bohemia and does not put their interests above this mission;
 - b) respects the principles applied in the academic environment, in particular the principle of collegiality and loyalty to a particular department, unit and UWB as a whole. Everyone shall always act in such a way as not to damage the good name of UWB;
 - c) cares for the property of UWB and does not abuse it to pursue private interests or gain personal benefit;
 - d) refrains from accepting gifts or benefits for the performance of his/her activities at UWB if such action would be contrary to good manners or the principles set out in this Code and values;
 - e) warns of conflicts of interest. In general, a conflict of interest is a situation in which the requirement to respect and promote the interest of UWB or its constituent units may conflict with loyalty to another institution or person. Conflicts of interest may arise, for example, when the same person serves in parallel in management positions at different levels within UWB, when close persons serve in management positions at different levels within UWB or in the case of parallel activities of an individual in solving a certain scientific or creative task within UWB and in another institution, unless such activities are based on a contractual relationship between UWB and the institution. If anyone finds himself/herself in a conflict of interest, they shall immediately notify their supervisor, who shall decide on the necessary action to be taken;
 - f) honors freedom of expression and opinion, and if they express criticism, it must always be factual, considered and supported by sound arguments. They shall also remain critical of the results of their own work and shall strive to develop their professional skills, knowledge and abilities;
 - g) treats each other with courtesy at all times and in accordance with generally accepted social manners. They shall treat each other with respect and deference. They shall act in such a way that the honor, reputation or dignity of others is not violated;
 - h) refrains from any discrimination based on any grounds such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, conviction, worldview, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, disability, social or financial status.
5. UWB subscribes to the principle of political neutrality of the academic sphere. Academic grounds are not used for the promotion or advocacy of the interests of political parties and movements.
6. Sexual and gender-based harassment and violence is completely unacceptable in the UWB environment.

7. In the case of those holding office, all shall exercise the powers vested in them responsibly and in accordance with the principles set out in this Code. In addition, they shall lead others to comply with the Code.
8. If anyone encounters unethical behavior in their own surroundings, they shall not tolerate it even for reasons of loyalty or self-interest. They always seek to correct it and do everything possible to prevent such behavior in future. Employees shall report suspected unethical conduct to their supervisor or to the UWB Ethics Committee. Students shall report suspected unethical conduct to the UWB Ethics Committee.
9. Staff and students of UWB shall not be subjected to any negative consequences resulting from reporting unethical conduct in accordance with this Code.

Article IV.
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT
IN EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND STUDIES

1. Teachers develop students' knowledge and skills using all their abilities and experience. They expose students to different approaches to problem solving and are open to discussion and collaboration. They encourage the development of students' critical thinking skills and their independence in achieving their learning objectives and facilitate their qualification, professional and personal development.
2. Teachers strive to be professional when appearing before students and are fully aware that they are representing the university to students by their actions in the classroom. They always observe the general rules of the organization of teaching as well as individual agreements regarding the fulfillment of study obligations.
3. When assessing the work of students, teachers always act objectively and impartially and carry out assessments on the basis of transparent criteria.
4. Teachers treat students in an open and collegial manner. Teachers do not disparage the results of the work of students, and neither do students disparage the results of the work of teachers or other UWB employees. Legitimate and justified criticism cannot be considered as disparaging the work of students, teachers or staff.
5. Teachers shall not abuse their position to enforce the fulfillment of any requirements beyond the duly established study obligations. They shall not, as a matter of principle, delegate to students the performance of their own duties.
6. Students use their studies for personal, qualification or professional growth. They devote themselves to their studies fully, actively approach their teachers' suggestions and are open to teamwork.

7. Learners shall not cheat or assist in the cheating of others in the performance of their study duties. They shall not commit any form of plagiarism. They shall perform all study obligations personally and shall not, as a matter of principle, be substituted in any way in the performance of any study obligations. They fulfill their study obligations only by using the tools provided by the teacher.

Article V.
STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT
IN SCIENTIFIC, RESEARCH AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

1. UWB respects the plurality of scientific and creative disciplines and approaches to solving research and creative tasks.
2. Everyone:
 - a) focuses their research or creative activity mainly on expanding the boundaries of human knowledge, the development of artistic and cultural values and education in general. They always ensure that the results of their research or creative activity are for the benefit of society;
 - b) seeks to make research results known not only to the professional community, but also the general public. Direct contact with the public helps to better understand public interest and concerns in scientific and creative activity;
 - c) acts conscientiously in their research, takes into account current knowledge in the given scientific field, places emphasis on ensuring the verifiability of the results of their research and respects other principles of professional ethics in the given scientific field. If they discover an error in their publications, they take all necessary and possible steps to correct it, and do not try to conceal or cover it up or pass responsibility for it on to someone else;
 - d) keeps up to date with the current state of research to avoid duplication of previous research results. They do not republish the same research results or deliberately fragment research results into multiple publications in order to artificially increase the number of publications;
 - e) abides by the principles of intellectual property protection. They do not appropriate the results of the research or creative activities of others. As a matter of principle, they will not commit any form of plagiarism. They respect the citation principles and practices in the given field;
 - f) carries out research or creative activities at UWB and attributes the results of these activities to their department or unit. As a rule, they do not give credit for the results of research achieved at UWB to another institution;

- g) publishes the results of their research or creative activities on scientifically relevant and reputable publishing platforms. They shall avoid publishing on platforms registered on lists of so-called predatory publishers and journals;
- h) is open to teamwork. They do not take ownership of the results obtained through teamwork, but acknowledge co-authorship to all those who have contributed appropriately to the results. They communicate substantively within the team and do not belittle or humiliate team members;
- i) in their role as reviewers of research or creative activities, members of academic and professional panels or evaluators of research project proposals, are guided only by professional considerations. They shall always act objectively and impartially when evaluating the research or creative activities of others and shall comply with the rules laid down for evaluation. They shall not deliberately prolong the evaluation period in order to gain an advantage for themselves or for third parties.

**Article VI.
UWB ETHICS COMMITTEE**

1. The UWB Ethics Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee") is established; the Committee is an advisory body to the Rector.
2. The Committee monitors compliance with the Code of Conduct and informs the Rector of its activities.
3. To this end, the Committee:
 - a) handles complaints regarding possible violations of the Code of Conduct,
 - b) issues an opinion on a research project proposal that, for whatever reason, requires an ethical assessment (the dignity, freedom, health, quality of life and safety of the persons involved in the project, including work with biological material); the opinion must be issued before the commencement of the project,
 - c) generalizes the findings of its activities,
 - d) prepares reports and makes recommendations.
4. The Committee carries out its work independently and impartially. The performance of activities shall not be to the detriment of the members of the Committee.
5. Members of the Committee shall be considered biased if their independence or impartiality may be doubted in view of their relationship to the case or to the persons involved. Anyone who is biased in a case may not take part in its deliberation.
6. A member of the Committee must not be a member of a UWB institution or its constituent units, nor a manager/employee at any level of management.
7. In carrying out its activities, the Committee is authorized to
 - a) consult files, documents and records,

- b) request information and explanations,
 - c) ask questions of employees, staff, students, and others.
8. In order to exercise the authority referred to in paragraph 7, everyone is obliged to provide the Committee with assistance.
 9. The Chairperson of the Committee or a member of the Committee authorized by the Chairperson is also entitled to be present at meetings of the UWB management or the Rector's Board if issues related to the Committee's activities are to be discussed.
 10. A member of the Committee shall keep confidential any facts of which he/she becomes aware in the course of his/her activities.
 11. The Committee shall ensure the protection of the personal data of persons with whom it comes into contact in the course of its activities. In particular, it shall ensure that such personal data are not leaked or used in an unauthorized manner.
 12. The Committee shall keep full and complete records of its activities.
 13. By 31 March at the latest, the Committee shall prepare a report on its activities for the previous calendar year, discuss it with the Rector, and then publish it on the UWB website.
 14. The administrative activities of the Committee are ensured by the Rector's Office.

Article VII.
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

1. The Committee consists of 7 members.
2. The Chairperson and other members of the Committee are appointed and removed by the Rector. In doing so, the Rector shall take into account an equal representation of women and men. The Committee shall always have a member who is a student.
3. The Rector may appoint other persons to discuss a particular matter. Their activity ends with the resolution of the matter. They shall have the same rights and obligations as a member of the Committee during the proceedings.
4. The Committee shall designate a member with a specialization to deal with matters under Article VI(3)(a) and a specialization to deal with matters under Article VI(3)(b). This person shall be the rapporteur for the case.
5. Membership shall terminate upon delivery of a written resignation to the Rector or upon delivery of a written notice of removal from office.
6. If membership ceases, the Rector shall immediately appoint a new member.
7. Membership in the Committee is non-transferable.

8. The Chairperson manages the activities and deliberations of the Committee and shall speak for the Committee to the public. He/she may delegate another member of the Committee to chair the Committee's meetings.
9. If the Rector agrees and if the nature of the case so requires, the Committee may request an impartial expert opinion.

Article VIII.
DELIBERATIONS AND VOTING

1. Meetings of the Committee shall not be public, though the Committee may decide otherwise.
2. Meetings of the Committee shall be convened by the Chairperson as required.
3. The invitation shall be sent to the members by the Chairperson no later than 10 days before the meeting. If urgent interest so requires, the time limit may be shortened. The invitation shall include the agenda and the documents necessary to discuss the agenda.
4. The agenda shall be prepared by the Chairperson.
5. A proposal to amend or add to the agenda shall be sent by members to the Chairperson before the meeting, including the reasons and supporting documents necessary for its consideration.
6. A proposal to change the agenda may also be made at a Committee meeting. A motion may be added to the agenda only if it is agreed to by a majority of the members present.
7. The quorum of the Committee shall be a majority of all its members present.
8. If the Committee does not have a quorum, the meeting shall not take place and the Chairperson shall call another meeting.
9. The Committee shall vote openly. If the Committee decides that a secret ballot is necessary, the vote shall be taken by secret ballot. The secret ballot shall be conducted by a three-member committee whose members shall be publicly elected by the Committee.
10. A resolution shall be passed if a majority of the members present are in favor of it.
11. The Chairperson closes the meeting by reading out the resolutions adopted.
12. The minutes shall include the approved agenda, the substantive content of the agenda items, the voting results and the exact wording of the adopted resolutions.
13. Members have the right to have their views recorded in the minutes.
14. The minutes shall be signed by the Chairperson and the minute-taker; they shall be circulated by the Chairperson to the members and those concerned.

15. Members or the persons to whom the minutes have been delivered shall have the right to comment on the minutes without undue delay after their delivery. The Chairperson shall rule on objections; his/her decision shall be final.
16. The settlement of the objections is part of the minutes. The amended minutes shall be circulated in the same way as the original minutes.

Article IX.
SPECIAL METHOD OF DELIBERATION AND VOTING

1. The Committee may hold meetings by means of remote communication (hereinafter referred to as "remote meetings"), if it is appropriate and expedient to do so.
2. If a remote meeting is to be held, the Chairperson shall announce it in advance and state the conditions under which the remote meeting is to take place.
3. Voting at a remote meeting may be conducted publicly and, if technically secure, by secret ballot.
4. The records of the remote meeting and the voting shall be maintained and recorded by the Chairperson.
5. Unless the nature of the matter prevents it, a vote on the matter may be taken outside the meeting. Voting may be carried out by means of remote communication. This may not be done if the vote is to be taken by secret ballot.
6. The Chairperson shall circulate to the members the draft resolution to be voted on and shall set a deadline for doing so. He/she shall also circulate the supporting documents to the motion together with the draft resolution.
7. If a member fails to comment within the time limit, he/she shall be deemed to disagree with the draft resolution.
8. A resolution shall be adopted if a majority of all members are in favor of it.
9. Once the voting period has expired, the Chairperson shall inform the members of the result of the vote.

X.
INVESTIGATIONS INTO BREACHES OF THE CODE

1. An employee, student or participant in lifelong learning may initiate an investigation into a violation of the Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as the "complaint"). A complaint may also be made anonymously.
2. The Ombudsman can also file a complaint in relation to their social security activities.

3. The Committee itself may decide to initiate an investigation into a breach of the Code of Conduct.
4. The complaint can be submitted:
 - a) in paper form to the Chairperson of the Committee,
 - b) by email to etikom@rek.zcu.cz,
 - c) in writing electronically via a dedicated hotline.
5. The complaint must contain a description of the conduct in which the violation of the Code of Conduct is alleged.
6. If it is not clear from the complaint what it seeks to achieve and if it is not completed within the set time limit, and if it has not been submitted anonymously, the Commission shall defer the complaint.
7. The rapporteur shall invite the applicant to complete the formalities.
8. The Commission shall inform the complainant of the deferral of the complaint.
9. If the complaint is an appeal in another case, the rapporteur shall immediately inform the complainant and instruct him or her on the correct procedure.
10. If another person is responsible for dealing with the complaint, the rapporteur shall forward it without delay, otherwise it shall be deferred. He/she shall inform the complainant of his/her action.
11. The Committee shall consider the complaint within the limits set by the Code of Conduct. Other aspects involving a violation of the law shall be dealt with and assessed in accordance with these rules, regardless of the outcome of the Committee's investigation.
12. The rapporteur prepares the discussion of the complaint in the Committee.
13. The Committee shall discuss the complaint and adopt a resolution on whether the Code of Conduct has been violated.
14. The resolution shall contain the specific provision of the Code of Conduct that was violated, who violated it, and a description of the conduct by which the violation was committed.
15. A violation of the Code of Conduct may be a violation of an obligation arising from legal regulations related to the work performed by the employee or a disciplinary offence.

Article XI.

ASSESSMENT OF THE ETHICAL ASPECTS OF RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. A proposal for the assessment of ethical aspects of a research project (hereinafter referred to as the "proposal") is usually submitted by the person who will be the principal

investigator/supervisor of the project after its acceptance (hereinafter referred to as the "Proposer").

2. The Proposer shall submit the proposal to the Chairperson of the Committee on the required form available at <https://tiskopisy.zcu.cz>.
3. The proposal must always include a brief description of the project and the text of the informed consent for those involved in the project. If the project is to be undertaken in departments other than the Proposer's department, the proposal shall include a statement from these departments on the proposal.
4. If the risk of the project is very low or negligible in terms of the interests of the persons involved in the project, the Proposer shall attach an affidavit of this fact to the proposal.
5. If the risk of the project in terms of the affected interests of the persons involved in the project is medium or high, the Proposer shall furthermore provide a description of the procedures leading to a reduction of the risk, a detailed description of the project, a justification of the need for procedures that increase the risk (e.g. deception), or a justification of the need to implement the project on vulnerable groups if these groups are involved in the project.
6. If the proposal lacks the required particulars or if the particulars have not been completed within the set time limit, the rapporteur shall defer the proposal and inform the Proposer accordingly.
7. The rapporteur shall invite the Proposer to provide the particulars.
8. The rapporteur prepares the discussion of the proposal in the Committee.
9. The Committee may decide to redraft the project proposal, otherwise it will approve or reject the proposal. If the Committee rejects the proposal, it shall state the reasons for its decision.
10. The Committee shall inform the Proposers of its decision.

XII. FINAL PROVISIONS

1. This Code of Conduct shall enter into force on 7 February 2024.
2. The Code of Conduct of 22 November 2018, including its amendments, is hereby repealed.
3. The Statutes and Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee for Research of the University of West Bohemia dated 29 November 2021 are repealed on the effective date of this Code of Conduct and on the same date all members of the Ethics Committee for Research of the University of West Bohemia cease to be its members.

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Rector