

CODE OF ETHICS

Preamble

Mendel University in Brno (hereinafter referred to as the “University”) adheres to the general and universally accepted moral and formal principles of conduct for individuals and groups in an advanced society, taking into account the nature of higher education and research work. The Code of Ethics sets and maintains moral standards and helps prevent conflicts of interest or conflict situations.

PART ONE

THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR EMPLOYEES, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI OF MENDEL UNIVERSITY IN BRNO

Article 1 General Provision

- (1) The Code is binding on all employees and students of the University.
- (2) The principles expressed in this Code are respected by the University's alumni, as well as by individuals who obtained their academic and scientific-pedagogical titles and degrees at the University. Alumni also respect the commitment of the graduation oath and fulfill its intent.

Article 2 Academic Freedom

- (1) The basic academic freedom is the freedom of the University as an academic institution in creating and implementing the overall concept of its development and in formulating and implementing the intentions of its educational, research, development and artistic activities.
- (2) Academic freedom is exercised:
 - a) in full compliance with the concept of development, long-term intention and focus of the educational, research, development and artistic activities of the University,
 - b) in accordance with general moral principles and generally accepted practices of work ethics in educational, research, development and artistic activities,
 - c) in accordance with the rules of moral conduct expressed in this Code as well as in other internal and other regulations of the University,
 - d) respecting the restrictions imposed by the special conditions of the research in accordance with other rules arising from the internal and other regulations of the University.
- (3) Academic freedom of employees means, above all, free expression of opinion and free communication, free will and decision-making in accordance with accredited programmes in teaching students, freedom in self-education, freedom of scientific research, including the choice of the issues to be investigated and research methodology.

Article 3

General Requirements for the Ethical Conduct of Staff and Students

- (1) In their activities both within and outside the workplace, they adhere to moral principles and values that are generally recognised in society.
- (2) They respect human rights and fundamental freedoms enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms.
They respect freedom of speech, the free exchange of views and information, and the principles of collegiality and academic cooperation. They prevent actions that would violate these rights and freedoms.
- (3) They reject discrimination, restriction and harm to persons in their rights and entitlements in all its forms. They treat everyone with respect and promote a positive approach to people with special needs.
- (4) They reject all forms of bullying and violence, including gender-based violence, and respect the integrity of the person and their privacy.
- (5) They contribute to creating a safe, respectful and supportive University environment.
- (6) They do not use academia to advance the interests of political parties, movements and religious societies.
- (7) They do not exert inappropriate or undue pressure on other employees and students of the University, nor do they engage in humiliation, verbal attacks or physical violence. They present any critical feedback with factual support. They apply criticism and alternative views fairly, and treat other staff and students with respect.
- (8) They protect the mission of the University. They do not place their private interests above it, and in this way they honour the University and do nothing by their conduct which might damage its reputation.
- (9) They do not damage the property of the University, nor do they misuse it for private interests and purposes or for personal or third-party benefit.
- (10) They shall avoid conflicts of interest and, should such a situation arise, report it to the appropriate supervisor in an appropriate manner.
- (11) To carry out educational, research, development and artistic activities, they continuously deepen and share their knowledge and skills within and outside the academic community.
- (12) They ensure the appropriateness and manageable extent of their work or study commitments both at the University and outside of it. Nor do they threaten its activities and reputation by their other activities.
- (13) If they accept an academic position, membership of an academic body, selection committee or leadership position, they shall exercise it properly, transparently and impartially, in accordance with this Code.

Article 4

Principles in Educational Activities

- (1) University employees:
 - a) treat students honestly, fairly, collaboratively, and transparently;
 - b) do not engage in humiliation, immoral behaviour, or inappropriate or undue forms of pressure towards them;
 - c) strive to set an example for students through their behaviour and actions;
 - d) in assessing learning outcomes, they act fairly, transparently and in accordance with legal and internal regulations;
 - e) do not abuse their authority and do not require students to perform activities that are part of their job description;
 - f) do not appropriate the results of the students' work.

- (2) University students:
- a) are not committing plagiarism;
 - b) do not cheat during the course of their studies and do not give others the opportunity to cheat;
 - c) do not present the work of others as their own and do not disseminate the work of others without their consent;
 - d) do not belittle the results of their work, the work of their lecturers, other students, staff or other persons;
 - e) do not engage in physical or verbal violence or assault.

Article 5
Double Jeopardy Exclusion

In order to avoid double jeopardy exclusion, possible violations of this Code by students are dealt with through the disciplinary procedure of the unit at which the student is enrolled for study.

PART TWO
**INTEGRITY OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION AT MENDEL UNIVERSITY IN
BRNO**

Article 6
Principles in Research, Development and Artistic Activities

- (1) University staff and students:
- a) are open to teamwork and professional discussion within and outside the academic community of the University;
 - b) communicate factually and openly with correct reasoning and backed up by unquestionable facts, without demeaning others or disparaging their activities;
 - c) do not belittle scientific practices and respect different scientific opinion as well as the plurality of scientific and R&D&I disciplines;
 - d) are reasonably critical of colleagues, and they also apply criticism to themselves;
 - e) reflect the latest trends in the field, are responsible for the adequacy, accuracy and objectivity of the methods used and ensure that the results are not distorted;
 - f) take care of the data or materials under study, their accurate description, protection and archiving;
 - g) ensure that the procedures and results of scientific and research, development and artistic work are open to review;
 - h) adhere to the rules of professional ethics inherent in the field;
 - i) protect and respect intellectual property and ensure that the results of research, development and artistic activities are properly affiliated, do not publish outputs in an ethically questionable manner, do not support publication in journals suspected of unethical publishing practices and without proper peer review, do not appropriate the results of the work of others, and do not commit plagiarism;
 - j) do not provide results to third parties for personal gain if this could jeopardise or damage the interests of the University;
 - k) adhere to the standards of research integrity and innovation set out in Article 7 of this Code.

- (2) Heads of institutes and heads of research teams:
 - a) ensure fairness and openness in communication and do not use autocratic management methods;
 - b) ensure that performance requirements and professional competition are consistent with ethical principles and take measures to prevent unethical behaviour;
- (3) University employees prepare expert opinions or scientific and other expert opinions with full responsibility, impartiality, objectivity and in the light of the current state of knowledge, without purposeful distortion or influence by external interests. They are factual in their assessment, using standard criteria and procedures.

Article 7 Ethical Standards

The ethical standards that guide MENDELU staff and students in promoting and ensuring research integrity are based on the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (“European Code”)¹ and the Singapore Statement on Research Integrity².

Article 8 Education

- (1) Staff and students participate in educational activities to raise awareness of research integrity issues and take both a positive approach to research integrity as a critical factor in the research mission and a proactive approach to preventing research misconduct.
- (2) The design of relevant education and training programmes/modules to embed research integrity principles and practices at the University is the responsibility of the Vice-Rector for Research, Development and Innovation and normally includes:
 - a) regular training/seminars on intellectual property issues, including joint authorship conventions and ethical considerations and definitions of research misconduct;
 - b) research integrity training for new and existing researchers;
 - c) incorporating best research practices into teaching at all levels of study.
- (3) Researchers and academics responsible for supervising PhD students and post-docs are actively involved in continuing education focused on research integrity through mentoring.

Article 9 Good Practice in Data Management

- (1) Staff and students shall handle data in accordance with the principles set out in the European Code and the Singapore Statement and, after publication of research results, shall retain the underlying data for the results and documentation of all significant results for the period of time customary in the discipline, unless prevented by other obligations or regulations. Data management conforms to FAIR principles³, with the recommendations of the University and the principles of open science.
- (2) It is the responsibility of every employee and student of the University to follow best practice in the use, storage and retention of research data.
- (3) Personal data collected in the course of research are obtained by lawful procedures, for lawful purposes, and processed and stored in accordance with the law.

¹ European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, revised edition, ©ALLEA – All European Academies, 2017 https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/European_Code_of_Conduct_Digital_CZ.pdf

² Singapore Statement on Research Integrity <https://www.wcrif.org/downloads/main-website/singapore-statements/223-singapore-statement-a4size/file>

³ The FAIR principles represent an approach to working with research data to make it findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. <https://www.go-fair.org/fair-principles/>

Article 10
Legal Awareness

Employees and students are aware of the obligations arising from the relevant legislation of the Czech Republic.

Article 11
Research Errors and Other Unacceptable Acts

In the event of suspected misconduct, an investigation and assessment by the Ethics Committee for Research Integrity and Innovation, whose activities are regulated by another University regulation, is ensured.

PART THREE
GENERAL AND FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 12
Ethics Committees

- (1) University staff and students are invited to contact the relevant ethics committees at the University to assess the ethical aspects of research work or to submit suggestions to the relevant committees for consideration.
- (2) The following ethics committees operate at the University, the scope, composition and rules of procedure of which are regulated by other regulations:
 - a) Ethics Committee of the University;
 - b) Ethics Committee for Research with Human Subjects;
 - c) the Ethics Committee for the Treatment of Animals;
 - d) Committee for Research Integrity and Innovation.

Article 13
Final Provisions

- (1) This Code cancels and replaces the Code of Ethics for Students and Employees of Mendel University in Brno dated 23/09/2019.
- (2) The Vice-Rector for Research, Development and Innovation is responsible for setting the University's strategy and goals in the field of research ethics, issuing unifying recommendations and opinions on ethical aspects of research for faculty committees.

Brno 18 November 2024

Professor Dr. Ing. Jan Mareš
Rector