

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EMPLOYEES AND STUDENTS OF PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY OLOMOUC

Recitals

The Constitution of Palacký University Olomouc (hereinafter “UP”) defines its mission as spreading knowledge, nurturing independent scholarly and artistic activities and taking care of the cultural and educational development of society. UP carries out this mission by exercising academic rights and freedoms through engaging in educational and creative activities in accordance with the internal policies of UP and its constituent parts as well as this Code of Conduct.

Universities are places for sharing knowledge with students, deepening such knowledge by engaging in discussions and working with such knowledge, in order to develop their critical thinking. For knowledge sharing at universities to exist and thrive, certain requirements exist applicable to the teacher, the teacher’s communication and the teacher’s relationship to the respective field and students. All members of the academic community engaged in teaching activities should bear in mind that they serve as role models for generations of students, and should act accordingly. To this end, this Code of Conduct lays down the principles that should be followed by any person aspiring to be a good teacher.

For research to be successful, certain fundamental principles should be followed: diligent data acquisition and verification; critical assessment of one’s own results; free exchange of views which should be articulated in a way that allows for intersubjective exploration and repeated verification. While the topics and methods may be essentially chosen freely, compliance with the principles of research activities is a strict requirement. If an individual chooses to use a method not recognised thus far, he or she is still a scholar. If, however, a person refuses to comply with the principles of research activities, they have to be requested to remedy the situation or may be excluded from the research community. These principles apply not only to the natural or social sciences, but also to the humanities, although the topics and methods may vary.

The final results are not therefore the most important aspect of scholarship since they may be wrong or only partially right, but strict reliance on these principles is what is most important. Only in this way can scholarship remedy its own mistakes and move forward, and be trustworthy for the public. It is uplifting that the research community has developed these principles on its own without them being imposed by an external authority, to which the community should be grateful. The research community has adopted the principles out of respect for the vast extent and complexity of the real world, as well as out of respect for the effort that needs to be exerted to discover unknown facts and laws, and be aware of any risks involved in negligent, wrong or skewed methods when processing and interpreting data, as well as the responsibility arising from its activities towards humanity.

The need to comply with the principles of research activities is reflected in the requirements imposed on academic staff as well as other employees contributing to creative or teaching activities, as well as the requirements imposed on students, mainly doctoral students. The ethos that is formed is extraordinary in many ways. Genuine scholars have to be courageous and self-confident enough to promote new methods, but also critical, sceptical, modest, and tolerant, open to other opinions, selfless and willing to share their findings willingly with others. These moral values need to be instilled by members of the academic staff as well as other employees in their students and disciples.

In light of the above, it is hopefully clear how important it is to establish a Code of Conduct applicable to members of the academic community and other employees contributing to creative or teaching activities, as well as students. It is concerned not only with assessing the activities of individuals, but also with the very core of academic activities and the surrounding atmosphere, its trustworthiness and exceptionality. This must be defended in the public arena. Scholarship cannot be trustworthy and effective without complying with the principles of research work and without defending these principles in public. This has to resonate with a solid moral profile of any researcher. In this respect, the Code of Conduct for employees and students is an integral part of their activities. Only if the Code of Conduct is followed can scholarship be viewed by the public as not only a demanding, but also a reliable, trustworthy, and useful activity serving the benefit of all.

Part I

Fundamental Provisions

1. This Code of Conduct defines the basis ethical requirements applicable to the activities of members of academic staff as well as other employees engaged in teaching and creative activities at UP (hereinafter “UP Employees”) and UP students arising from the nature of their work or employment, or their condition as students.
2. The rules defined herein apply only to creative and teaching activities of UP Employees (academic staff, researchers etc.) and the activities of their students. The Code applies, with necessary modifications, to the activities of other employees provided that their activities affect the course of studies or creative activities.
3. Employees and their students respect applicable ethical standards and principles defined on an institutional, field-specific, national and international level.
4. The Code applies as a moral statement by UP without amounting to a piece of legislation or a UP policy. Violations hereof include conduct contrary to moral and social principles and the generally accepted values of humanity.
5. For the sake of clarity, any references to masculine include feminine.

Part II

Fundamental Principles

1. When engaging in activities listed in Part I(2) hereof, UP Employees and students adhere to high standards of human moral and ethical principles and fully endorse the rules defined herein.
2. UP Employees and students expect the same requirements from other UP Employees and students. In this respect, UP Employees actively promote this approach towards students and serve as their role models.
3. UP Employees and students do not defend or cover up any unethical conduct or behaviour even if such conduct or behaviour has been driven by purposeful benefit, obedience or loyalty.
4. UP Employees and students consider creative and teaching activities to constitute an integral contribution to the development of human knowledge, humanity, culture and general benefit, and defend it against unfair undermining and abuse; UP Employees and students adhere to and promote the principles of reliable and trustworthy activities for the public among UP employees and, primarily, students.
5. UP Employees and students are engaged in continuous development of their abilities, expanding and deepening their knowledge in the (future) field of their professional or study interest as well as general creative and teaching activities.
6. UP Employees and students remain critical of the results of their work, acquired knowledge and findings, and maintain an objective and critical, but friendly approach to the results of other UP Employees and students. They are open to debates and arguments put forward by others.
7. UP Employees and students defend freedom of thinking, research, expression, exchange of opinions and information. They respect the right of others to present their views and attitudes even in confrontation, provided that the principles of decent and respectful communication are not violated. They reject any forms of penalizing others for their opinions and ideas be they minority ones; this also applies to opinions about sexual orientation or gender, racial and similar issues provided that such opinions are not offensive or degrading or contrary to elementary reason.
8. When engaged in creative and teaching activities, UP Employees and students do not promote any ideological and irrational attitudes, reject anything that may be offensive to human dignity, undermines the principles of humanity and jeopardises proper development of the human community.
9. UP Employees and students will refrain from any acts that could be considered discriminatory against any group of persons. They will make also every effort that may be reasonably required to prevent such acts from being committed by anyone else.
10. UP Employees and students will refrain from any forms of sexual abuse, gender-based violence and abuse of position or influence. They will refrain from any acts having a sexual pretext and aimed at degrading human dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile and degrading or offensive environment or that can be legitimately perceived as a precondition

for a decision to be made by the respective person. They will also make every effort that may be reasonably required to prevent such acts from being committed by anyone else.

11. In line with the terms of their employment, UP Employees will respect the principles established below for their teaching and creative activities.
12. In line with student obligations, UP students will respect, with necessary modifications, applicable principles for teaching and creative activities.

Part III

Principles Applicable to Teaching Activities

1. UP Employees treat students based on objective, fair, demanding, but respectful and sensitive assessment of their abilities, knowledge, efforts and other personality traits; UP Employees' assessment of study results is unbiased, objective and transparent, and UP Employees will refrain from putting selected students at an advantage or disadvantage be it on the basis of their personal relations, or any other grounds. UP Employees do not act as students' superiors, but always treat them as their colleagues.
2. UP Employees' communication with students is open and fair and free of humiliation, or any degrading and offending conduct.
3. UP Employees treat students fairly at all times. In their communication with students, UP Employees will not abuse their position or power to gain an unfair benefit for themselves or for any other person, or to cause injury to any other person.
4. UP Employees willingly share their knowledge, skills and experience with their students.
5. UP Employees do their best to influence students not only by high-quality teaching and training, but also serve as role models for their students and diligently adhere to the organisational rules applicable to teaching.
6. UP Employees devote their full time and attention to group and one-to-one teaching of students and contribute to the development of their independent and critical thinking. They promote, in a comprehensive way, their career growth and professional development, creative and research activities, and help them establish contacts, including international contacts.
7. UP Employees make reasonable conclusions from any students' failures or cases of unethical conduct.
8. When engaged in teaching activities, UP Employees who are related to any students by affinity, partnership or otherwise, if giving rise to doubts about their impartiality and fairness, will inform their superior employees thereof timely.

Part IV

Principles Applicable to Creative Activities

1. When engaged in creative activities, UP Employees aim to expand the horizons of human knowledge, develop artistic and cultural values, wisdom, or technical innovation, etc. As

far as practicable, UP Employees strive for the results of their creative activities to serve the human community.

2. UP Employees make their best efforts to ensure that their creative activities do not jeopardise their colleagues, the human community, the environment or any material, cultural and ethical values. UP Employees realise that freedom of research is not limitless; the limits may derive from the circumstances of the research project, UP operational capacities, development, and research policy at UP, protection of intellectual property, etc.
3. UP Employees are aware of their responsibility for objectivity, reliability and accuracy of their research; they respect and share the limitations of the methods they use.
4. When publishing research results and findings, UP Employees ensure that they are complete, true, verifiable and interpreted in an objective way.
5. After the research results have been published, UP Employees keep the raw data and documents stored in a way and for a time as standard in the respective field unless prevented from doing so by other legitimate undertakings or applicable legislation.
6. UP Employees ensure that the funding provided for creative activities is used economically and effectively. Since UP uses public funds, UP Employees are aware of their accountability to society as well as their accountability to the employer, or as the case may, investors whose funding is used.
7. UP Employees will not duplicate research carried out elsewhere unless necessary to verify, supplement or compare the results.
8. UP Employees will share the results of their work with the scientific, professional or artistic community unless the results are subject to legitimate non-disclosure. UP Employees report their findings to the public at large only once they have been verified and published in specialised journals.
9. UP Employees only present themselves as authors or co-authors of results if they have achieved them themselves or otherwise contributed to them in a creative manner; UP Employees will strictly refrain from any form of plagiarism.
10. UP Employees refer to the findings of their colleagues and predecessors in their publications and when doing so include a clear and specific bibliographic reference.
11. UP Employees also refer to major works that are contrary to their findings or views.
12. UP Employees refrain from splitting the results into more publications in order to increase their number. If it is necessary that an employee publish an identical, or nearly identical, work in more publications, only one will be registered for the purpose of evaluating their work.
13. If UP Employees discover an error in their publication, they will take all possible and necessary steps to remedy it and will refrain from hiding or concealing it in any way.
14. UP Employees carry out any review or evaluation activities assigned personally, independently and diligently.
15. UP Employees protect the intellectual property of the authors of the manuscripts under review, projects and reports, works of art, etc., and do not use any details contained in such documents for purposes other than drawing up the respective report, and will not share them with third parties.

16. UP Employees will not intentionally extend the evaluation period to gain any benefits for themselves or third parties.
17. UP Employees will refuse to draw up any scientific, expert or artistic opinion if the conclusions thereof may be biased by their personal interest, or will give clear notice thereof; UP Employees will refrain from any wilful conflicts of interest.
18. UP Employees will draw up any expert reports responsibly, objectively and impartially and only in the fields of their expertise; when doing so, UP Employees will not succumb to external pressure. This will apply by analogy to situations when giving statements or commentaries to the media on behalf of UP or in connection with UP.
19. In any evaluation and review proceedings, UP Employees base their evaluation on objective criteria, comply with the rules defined by the commissioner and impose the same requirements on other parties to the proceedings.
20. UP Employees who act as principal or corresponding authors are liable for the compliance with ethical standards of scientific work also in relation to the parts of the work that have been, in full or in part, created by another member of the team of authors unless the defects could not be identified despite reasonable efforts. Article 13 of Part IV hereof will apply by analogy to principal or corresponding authors who have knowledge of an error in a publication.
21. UP Employees will ensure that their co-authors and subordinates, as well as individual departments, receive due credit for their achievements in terms of creative activities as well as any related benefits.

This Code comes into effect on 1 January 2024.

In Olomouc on 13 December 2023

Prof. MUDr. Martin Procházka, Ph.D.
Rector of UP