

## MASARYK UNIVERSITY CODE OF ETHICS

Masaryk University Code of Ethics was discussed by the Academic Senate of Masaryk University on 6 November 2023.

*(Please note: The interpretation of expressions **highlighted in blue** is provided at the end of this document.)*

### 1. PREAMBLE

The establishment and history of Masaryk University are intrinsically linked to the existence of independent Czechoslovakia. Both through its name, its academic values and internal culture, the university advocates the democratic tradition and moral principles associated with the first Czechoslovak president T. G. Masaryk. Several times in the past, Masaryk University had to face the consequences of efforts to restrict the democratic tradition; it was not even allowed to use its original name for three decades. This is why we realize that creative freedom, socially responsible transmission of knowledge and skills from generation to generation and the advancement of knowledge and learning are inherently connected to the cultivation of democracy and respect for fundamental moral principles.

The esprit de corps of students, teachers and staff of Masaryk University should naturally inspire their personal commitment to moral and academic integrity, that is, to observing the general principles of freedom, responsibility, honesty, politeness and respect for others.

The Masaryk University Code of Ethics should not be understood as a simple set of rules for an easy assessment of potentially problematic situations and those involved: the moral dimension of human conduct in its various forms cannot be captured in a finite number of clauses of any regulation or standard. The Code of Ethics is a declaration of moral values and general ethical principles relevant to the academic environment to which Masaryk University and its community adhere. The assessment of the extent to which a particular act corresponds to these values is not dependent on simple compliance or non-compliance with a certain provision but on a responsible and impartial consideration of all moral aspects of the situation concerned.

Masaryk University and its community, consisting of all who work and study there, are committed to respecting the values stated below.

### 2. FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY

2.1 Masaryk University and its community acknowledge the principle of academic freedom, realizing that freedom is contingent on the observance of fundamental legal and moral standards and responsibility for the consequences of one's actions.

2.2 Masaryk University is a place for an open and civilized exchange of professional opinions, and for free, socially responsible research. Academic discussion, based on a diversity of

opinions, intellectual integrity and critical thinking, is only possible if the parties respect one another.

### 3. MORAL AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All members of the Masaryk University community:

3.1 Comply with the laws of the Czech Republic and are guided by general moral principles and professional ethical standards.

3.2 Try to foster the environment at Masaryk University to naturally encourage compliance with general moral principles and professional ethical standards, leading by example.

3.3 Reject their own and other people's conduct that is illegal or contravenes general moral principles or professional ethical standards and accept the consequences of their actions contradicting these principles or standards.

3.4 Promote the reputation of Masaryk University and represent it with dignity on all occasions.

3.5 Are committed to broadening and deepening knowledge in order to benefit individuals and society, improve public space, protect the environment and promote socially responsible behaviour.

3.6 Strive to create and maintain the spirit of Masaryk University as a centre of education, rationality, critical thinking, openness and social responsibility.

3.7 Seeking to uncover the truth, they build expertise based solely on fairly collected and processed data and valid arguments, not on prejudice, ideology or personal gain.

3.8 Carry out their work and study responsibilities toward the university and broader professional community duly, diligently and honestly and see similar conduct as desirable in others.

3.9 Use resources and facilities provided by Masaryk University always in the interest of the university and duly care for its property.

3.10 Carry out educational, research and other activities in accordance with their professional competence; realize and respect its limits.

3.11 Follow the latest developments in their field of expertise, thus deepening their knowledge and skills.

3.12 Prevent [conflict of interest](#) in all its forms and openly declare their own conflict of interest.

3.13 Act transparently regarding [multiple relationships](#) where they also have other than professional roles in relation to another person; actively cooperate to adopt measures that exclude doubt about the objectivity and integrity of the participants.

3.14 Do not accept or offer unjustified financial and other benefits.

3.15 Reject questionable or fraudulent professional conduct in all forms, such as [plagiarism](#), self-plagiarism, [fabrication](#) and [falsification](#) of research data or documentation, or cheating in the performance of study obligations.

3.16 Publish research results in accordance with [publication ethics](#).

3.17 Proceed objectively and impartially in the assessment of research results, primarily taking into account their validity and scientific value.

3.18 Treat data and information responsibly and protect confidential and sensitive information conscientiously.

3.19 Prevent potentially negative impacts of their own educational, research and other activities on individuals and society as a whole; assume responsibility if such occur through their own fault.

3.20 Ensure compliance with professional ethical standards, due protection of participants and adherence to standards for working with experimental animals in their research.

3.21 Teachers strive to convey the best possible knowledge in their field to students and help create optimal conditions and environment for their studies. They assess students' work and results fairly and impartially.

## 4. DECENCY AND RESPECT

4.1 The university community is aware that university members have always had a common mission, and therefore, the relationships within the university should be fostered in a spirit of solidarity, cooperation and fair competition.

All members of the university community:

4.2 Respect good manners in personal communication and correspondence and show helpfulness.

4.3. Treat others with respect for human dignity and their role within the university. They do not abuse their position and avoid manipulative behaviour; they expect fair treatment from others and do not tolerate cases of manipulation and abuse of power.

4.4 Show respect for fundamental human rights, different opinion and experience; they also show respect for other academic disciplines and institutions and strive for an environment open to different approaches to scientific inquiry.

4.5 Reject all forms of harassment, bullying, threats, abuse, humiliation and discrimination based on, for example, ethnicity, religion, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, political beliefs or disability.

4.6 Support people with special needs and actively promote the conditions for their work and study at the university.

4.7 Try to prevent conflict; in conflict resolution, they proceed reasonably, strive for mutual understanding, respect, fairness and open discussion.

4.8 Teachers regard students as people who strive for knowledge and come to the university motivated to achieve education; they consider students' views and ideas.

4.9 Students regard teachers as people who have achieved a certain level of knowledge and expertise in their field, thus guaranteeing the quality of education.

## **5. THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN SAFEGUARDING ETHICS AND INTEGRITY**

5.1 Masaryk University strives to ensure that all aspects of its operations conform to this Code of Ethics. Although the relevant control mechanisms are in place, the university emphasizes information, education, consultation and prevention in order to prevent unethical conduct instead of sanctioning it.

5.2 Masaryk University and its bodies address cases of violation of this Code of Ethics timely and effectively. The university protects those who, in good faith, report a violation of the Code of Ethics or for whose benefit a violation was reported.

## **DEFINITIONS**

(an attachment to the MU Code of Ethics)

### **Conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest is a situation where several conflicting interests of a person impact the objectivity of their behaviour or decision-making. This typically includes a conflict between one's own benefit and obligations toward an employer. A conflict of interest usually leads to a compromise of a person's impartiality or the impartial exercise of their office and thus the possibility of undue advantage for themselves or someone close to them.

### **Multiple relationships**

Multiple relationships are situations where an individual also has other than professional roles in relation to another person, for example as a result of kinship, romantic relationship, friendship or enmity or another employment relationship outside MU. Multiple relationships are not unethical as such, but they may compromise the impartiality of the person or their ability to duly perform their professional role or lead to harm or abuse of another person. . In such cases, multiple relationships can be understood as a conflict of interest.

## **Data fabrication**

Data fabrication is the creation of completely fictitious research data that do not originate from actual research.

## **Data falsification**

Data falsification is the intentional manipulation of real research data aiming at obtaining desired results.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the use of the content, ideas or structure of another work without due reference.

## **Publication ethics**

Publication ethics is a set of rules which regulate the process of publication of research results. It applies to authors as well as to editors and reviewers; its purpose is to prevent the following issues, among others:

- simultaneously submitting the same article to several different journals without the editors' knowledge
- fictitious or undeserved co-authorship
- incorrectly solicited citations, e.g. as part of the practice of so-called citation cartels, or artificially increasing scientometric indicators
- various forms of plagiarism and self-plagiarism
- breach of confidence, objectivity and anonymity of the peer review process
- insulting the author or reviewer during the peer review process
- unjustified prolongation of the peer review process
- fraudulent reporting of projects or grants in publications or other research outputs.