

# MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA



## THE CODE OF ETHICS OF MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA

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## **THE CODE OF ETHICS OF MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY IN BANSKÁ BYSTRICA**

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (hereinafter also referred to as "MBU" or the "University") after approval by the Academic Senate of MBU on the proposal of the Chairperson of the Ethics Committee of MBU in accordance with Article 8 (14) (c) of the Statute of MBU pursuant to Section 9 (1) (a) (1) of Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts, as amended (hereinafter also referred to as "Higher Education Act") on 12 September 2023 issues this Code of Ethics of Matej Bel university in Banská Bystrica (hereinafter also referred to as the "Code of Ethics of MBU") in accordance with Section 15 (1) (n) of the Higher Education Act.

### **Preamble**

Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica is a public and self-governing educational, scientific and artistic institution. The mission of the University is to develop education on the basis of scientific research and artistic activities in the spirit of national and democratic traditions, to develop harmonious personality, morality, knowledge, wisdom, goodness and creativity in a person and also to contribute to the development of education, science, culture for the well-being of the whole society.

By creating a dignified academic environment in which young people are morally and professionally profiled for work and life in the 21st century, it contributes to the development of education as part of culture and to raising the scientific, technical, economic and artistic standards of society. This activity follows the global development of science, technology, art, and culture, and strives for intensive cooperation with foreign educational, scientific, and research institutions.

The University guarantees academic freedoms and academic rights for all members of its academic community. The exercise of academic freedoms and academic rights must be in accordance with the principles of democracy, humanity and the rule of law.

The activity of the academic community and other employees of the University is based on adherence to and full respect for the principles of humanism, equality of opportunity, gender equality, freedom, democracy, respect for the environment, as well as good teaching and research practice. The active application of the principle of welcoming cooperation and collegiality leads to the emergence of a vibrant university community that goes beyond the boundaries of a formal community formed only on the basis of an existing employment or enrolment relationship.

The Code of Ethics of MBU expresses basic, moral and ethical requirements for the academic community and other employees of the University in compliance with the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, Act No. 131/2002 Coll. on Higher Education and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts, as amended, the Statute of MBU and other internal regulations of MBU. Equally important is the full acceptance of the European Code of Ethics and Research Integrity, as well as Act No. 365/2004 Coll. on Equal Treatment in Certain Fields and on Protection against Discrimination and on Amendments and Additions to Certain Acts (Anti-Discrimination Act), as amended.

The aim of the Code of Ethics of MBU is to determine a set of rules of conduct for all employees and students of the University and thus to prevent the emergence of ethically controversial situations. Compliance with the established rules of the Code of Ethics of MBU becomes a natural part of the university environment, as well as the behaviour of University employees and students.

In this spirit, the Code of Ethics of MBU specifies principles of ethical conduct of persons who carry out educational, scientific research or other creative activities at MBU, on behalf of MBU or in cooperation with MBU. The Code of Ethics of MBU also specifies principles of ethical conduct of persons who perform managerial activities in leadership positions at MBU, as well as principles of ethical conduct in other types of interactions involving members of the MBU academic community, other employees and associates of MBU.

MBU adopts this Code of Ethics in order to transparently disclose its attitude towards universal ethical values.

## **PART I**

### **BASIC PROVISIONS\***

#### **Article 1**

#### **General ethical principles**

##### **All persons employed or studying at MBU:**

1. Respect the following ethical principles: humanity, reasonableness, honesty, decency, fairness, tact, consideration, responsibility, sense of duty, respect for the dignity of others, and awareness of one's own dignity and honour.

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\* For the sake of clarity, consistency and fluency of the text, the generic masculine is used as for all genders in the text of the Code of Ethics of MBU.

2. Respect fundamental human rights and freedoms, and by their actions show mutual respect for everyone, respecting equal rights of all without distinction of race, nationality, gender, age, religion, social and health disadvantage. They do not tolerate unethical speech on or off campus.
3. Maintain their independence and freedom: to make decisions, to think critically, to investigate, to research, to choose to study within accredited study programs of study, to be open, to express and publish their views.
4. By their behaviour, they co-create an atmosphere of high work and social ethics in the workplace and thus contribute to the formation of appropriate interpersonal relationships not only with colleagues but also with students of the University.
5. Have a negative attitude towards physical and psychological violence. They reject all direct and indirect forms of discrimination.
6. Are loyal to the University. They honour and respect the name of the University, its history and traditions.
7. Use information related to MBU activities only for work and study purposes, they do not abuse their position, information systems and property of MBU for their own personal benefit or for the benefit of third parties or for any form of corruption.
8. Adhere to the rules of political neutrality on the MBU grounds.
9. Treat the environment with respect and consideration, and shall contribute to its protection by their behaviour, while taking into account its importance and preservation for future generations.

## **Article 2**

### **Relationship with the University and the public**

1. MBU is aware of the societal impact of its activities. The management of MBU, together with other head employees, shall strive to create working environment that supports the professional and personal development of both staff and students of MBU

and believes that this approach will lead to excellent results and also to pride in belonging to MBU and its components. In their activities, all members of the academic community, as well as other MBU employees shall always act in such a way as to maintain the respectability, high social credit and status of MBU.

2. Employees and students of the University act in such a way as to represent the good name of the University by their actions during their study stays outside the University premises.
3. Employees and students of the MBU academic community emphasise the value of education in relation to the public, and within the scope of their knowledge, they inform about scientific research results and their impacts on various areas of human activity.
4. Modern information and communication means and social media are used by employees and students to disseminate acquired knowledge, scientific research results and professional opinions only as representatives of MBU and do not use them to present private opinions, attitudes and possible negative opinions on current social topics.

## **PART II**

### **SPECIFIC CATEGORIES OF ETHICAL PRINCIPLES**

#### **Article 3**

##### **Ethical principles in pedagogical activities**

1. The pedagogical activity of the University teachers and researchers is based on principles of tolerance, respect for the truth, respect for human being and his/her personality, as well as respect for freedom of thought, expression, and objectivity.
2. The University teachers and researchers respect the right of students to free access to education, encourage their creative work in order to stimulate the development of a coherent personality both professionally and ethically.
3. The University teachers and researchers use the University premises freely and objectively transmit their scientific, professional, and pedagogical knowledge and

expertise, respecting the right to education and information of the students of the University.

4. Relationships between members of the MBU academic community are formed on the basis of collegiality and mutual negotiations are always correct.
5. The University teachers and researchers do not abuse their position as superior. They do not require students to perform activities that are the subject of their own duties and do not appropriate the students' work. Where warranted, they show respect for the results of students' work by acknowledging them as authors or co-authors in the context of publishing and disseminating research results.
6. In their teaching activities, the University teachers and researchers carry out their duties honestly, responsibly and to a high professional standard. They use their working time only for activities which correspond to their job description and employment contract. All non-work activities shall be carried out after working hours. The employee is obliged to request prior written consent from the Rector of MBU for the performance of gainful activities which are identical to the subject of the employer's activity in accordance with the provisions of generally binding legal regulations and the Working Regulations of MBU.
7. The University teachers and researchers strive for their own professional development and try to offer the latest knowledge acquired in the best possible quality and comprehensible form in their teaching.
8. The University teachers and researchers always act impartially, fairly and transparently when evaluating learning outcomes, as well as the results of scientific work of students or other staff members, so that unjustified differences do not arise in similar cases. They shall not accept any form of influence on student results.
9. In accordance with the Code of Ethics of MBU, it is not possible to allow MBU students to be guided by a person close to them in the preparation of their final theses of the 1st, 2nd or 3rd level of study in accordance with Section 116 of the Civil Code. The same principle is respected by MBU in the field of evaluation of the results of studies or

scientific research work where such persons should not be a direct part of habilitation and inauguration proceedings and must not be placed in a direct relationship of superiority and subordination at MBU in accordance with Act no. 552/2003 Coll. on the performance of work in the public interest, as amended.

10. By their behaviour and actions, they promote anti-corruption behaviour, do not ask for and do not accept material or other benefits from others in connection with the performance of their work; they refuse gifts from the student, his/her parents or other persons; and refuse to intervene on behalf of the student.
11. The University teachers and researchers do not apply the so-called false collegiality attitude of tolerating violation of general ethical principles and rules of this Code of Ethics of MBU, other internal MBU regulations and generally binding legal regulations.
12. The University teachers and researchers encourage cooperation with domestic and foreign educational, scientific and artistic institutions with the intention of permanent intellectual development of all students and employees of MBU.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Principles of ethical conduct of students**

1. The student respects the name, symbols of MBU and its components, academic officials, teaching staff, and other employees of the University.
2. The student behaves and acts in a representative manner in public, does not disparage the good name of the University, its employees, or members of the student community, and does not behave in a manner contrary to good manners.
3. The student has the right to his/her own opinion, which does not limit dignity and humanity, the right to respect, esteem and correct dialogue on the part of MBU employees, as well as on the part of other members of the student community, s/he freely expresses his/her professional opinions, respects freedom of speech and critical thinking, free exchange of opinions and information.



4. The student actively opposes all manifestations of extremism, racism, discrimination, religious intolerance, social intolerance, disparagement of sexual orientation, rejects everything that may offend human dignity.
5. The student is aware of his/her responsibility for the consequences of his/her actions during the teaching process; s/he respects the Study Regulations of the University and uses its provisions in accordance with good manners; during the teaching process, s/he is attentive, active and comes prepared to classes and exams. The student does not disrupt the course of the class or examination by arriving late or leaving early, disturbing the teacher and other students with activities that are not related to the class, and uses information and communication means during the class in accordance with the teacher's guidelines. Does not come to class under the influence of alcohol and other drugs, does not consume food and does not sleep during class.
6. The student observes ethical standards in the processing of seminary, term and final papers and in the publication of the results of scientific; s/he always achieves his/her study results only in an honest way, does not cheat and does not use dishonest procedures during any form of verification of his/her study knowledge. S/he uses only study aids and technical means authorised by the examiner.
7. The student does not commit plagiarism, does not claim someone else's work as his/her own.
8. During lessons, the student respects the teachers and classmates and behaves correctly, tactfully, and tolerantly towards them. When addressing teachers and colleagues, in verbal and e-mail communication, s/he respects the rules of social behaviour. S/he does not harass, discriminate or, insult anyone for their origin, nationality, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, or use violence or the threat of violence.
9. The student adheres to the principles of social contact on the premises of the University. S/he comes to class and to examinations in appropriate social clothes. At sporting activities and practical work, s/he respects the requirements of teachers when it comes to clothing.
10. The student behaves considerately towards the University's property. S/he uses technical

resources, computer equipment and the Internet only for studying purposes, and does not misuse them for commercial purposes or for illegal activities. When using them, s/he complies with safety regulations and health and life protection principles.

## **Article 5**

### **Ethical principles in scientific and research activities**

#### **The University teachers, researchers and students:**

1. Consider scientific, research and development work as a means of increasing the level of knowledge of society, thereby enhancing the quality of teaching of the University's students and the prestige of the University.
2. Use scientific approach in their scientific and research work, and their research consists of seeking and acquiring knowledge through systematic exploration and thinking, observation and experimentation.
3. Are fully aware of their responsibility for the objectivity and credibility of their research results. When publishing the results, they ensure their completeness, verifiability and objectivity.
4. Respect the basic principles of research, namely:
  - a) reliability in ensuring the quality of research, which is reflected in its design, methodology, analyses, and resource use,
  - b) integrity in the development, conduct, assessment, reporting, and communication of research in a transparent, fair, complete, and impartial manner,
  - c) respect for colleagues, research participants, society, ecosystems, cultural heritage and the environment; and
  - d) responsibility for research from the initial idea to its publication, for its management and organisation, training, supervision, and professional guidance, and for the wider implications of the research.
5. Where justified, maintain the confidentiality of data or findings, but make their findings available in a standard manner, taking into account the protection of primacy, their copyright and co-authors' rights, the intellectual property rights and the rights of the University, as well as the rights of others involved in research.

6. In the research in which they participate, they guarantee voluntary participation, respect human dignity and the research itself is conducted in such a way as to avoid psychological or physical harm to the participants.
7. In their public appearances aimed at disseminating scientific knowledge and results they shall be guided by the expertise in which they carry out their research, development, innovation or teaching activities, distinguishing between professional opinion and personal opinion.
8. They use research funding properly, conscientiously, economically and efficiently.
9. They adhere to the principles of impartiality in terms of ideological or political views, as well as independence from external economic, financial, interest, or other pressure groups.
10. In research activities, as well as in management and support activities, they proceed in such a way as to exclude any possibility of a conflict of interest that would lead to a diminution of the credibility of the organization, persons, achievements, publications, public appearances, review and refereeing procedures, management, decision-making and support activities.
11. They carry out their expert, evaluative and opponent work personally, independently and fairly.
12. They make the results of their research available and publish them for the further development of the field. They shall not disclose the results of educational and scientific research and development activities carried out at the University to third parties with the aim of obtaining a special benefit or disadvantage for the University. If possible, they follow the principles of open science as one of the prerequisites for strengthening the European Research Area.
13. In relation to the domestic and foreign scientific and teaching community, they behave correctly, recognize the rules of legal protection of copyright works, intellectual property and are mindful of the University's reputation.

14. In the implementation of their projects, they have the right to ask the Ethics Committee of MBU for a statement and an ethical assessment as to whether their research project activity is in accordance with the required ethical principles.
15. Failure to comply with the ethical rules of research practice damages research processes, undermines relations between researchers, undermines trust in research and its credibility, and can lead to loss of respect, professional reputation and waste of resources.

## **Article 6**

### **Forms of violation of ethical rules of research**

- 1. An extremely serious violation of ethical standards is considered to be:**
  - a) creating fabricated results and recording them as if they were real (fabrication),
  - b) tampering with research material, equipment or processes or unjustified alteration, omission or deletion of data or results (falsification),
  - c) use of the work and ideas of other people without due reference to the original source, thereby infringing the rights of the original author or authors, originator or contributors to the results of their creative intellectual activity (plagiarism),
  - d) theft, fraud or forgery at any stage of the scientific research process from conception to publication of the results.
  
- 2. A serious violation of conduct is considered to be:**
  - a) authorship fraud (copyright shares) or disparaging the role of other researchers in publications,
  - b) unjustified delays in publishing the results of others, especially in the peer review process,
  - c) unjustified accusations of breaches of ethical conduct by others,
  - d) misleading and deceiving the public by presenting distorted and false information about the results achieved or their possible use in practice,
  - e) publishing in an ethically questionable manner, including the use of ethically questionable publishing platforms,
  - f) establishing or supporting ethically dubious publishing platforms,
  - g) compromising the independence of the research process or communicating its results

- in a biased manner in favour of the funders/supporters of the research,
- h) delaying or unduly obstructing the work of other researchers,
  - i) defending and covering up behaviour which goes against the principles of this Code, including the invocation of the need for obedience or loyalty.

**3. Unacceptable behaviour is considered to be:**

- a) republishing substantial portions of one's own earlier publications, including translations without properly stating or quoting the original (so-called self-plagiarism),
- b) selective citation with the intention of supporting one's own findings or to accommodate editors, reviewers or colleagues,
- c) failure to provide research results,
- d) unjustified dissemination of bibliography,
- e) misrepresentation of research results,
- f) exaggeration of the importance and practical application of research results,
- g) abuse of seniority or position to violate the integrity of research,
- h) ignoring manifestations of research integrity violations or concealing inappropriate responses to violations of ethical and other research rules.

**Article 7**

**Ethical principles for academic officers, managers and head employees**

1. The Dean and the heads of departments show respect for ethical principles by creating appropriate conditions at the Faculty or department:
  - a) for personal, professional, qualification and career development of all members of the Faculty or departments
  - b) the systematic formation of personalities capable of taking over the leadership of the Faculty or department when they leave office.
  
2. In addition to the application of general ethical principles, all academic officials, managers and head employees are obliged in particular to:
  - a) create favourable conditions for the performance of the activities of all staff and departments,
  - b) create a working environment in which any discrimination, bullying, humiliation, defamation, and other manifestations of hostility are excluded; if such manifestations

- occur, they are obliged to ensure that they are remedied without delay,
- c) act in such a way as not to damage the name of the Faculty or the University, faculty departments, members of the MBU academic community and Faculty staff,
  - d) ensure correct attitude and professionalism in the work environment to support the qualification development of the work team,
  - e) require from creative employees pedagogical, research, publication, project and organizational activity, development of academic cooperation at home and abroad, especially with regard to quality,
  - f) not to abuse his/her position for his/her own benefit, to disadvantage other members of the academic community or to damage the reputation, position or legitimate interests of other members of the academic community,
  - g) openly accept factual and fair criticism of their activities as directors or managers, without penalising authors of criticism.

## **Article 8**

### **Ethical principles for administrative staff**

1. In addition to the application of general ethical principles, administrative staff shall in particular:
  - a) carry out their duties professionally, efficiently and without undue delay,
  - b) encourage cooperation with other employees in order to achieve the most effective performance of their work tasks,
  - c) not unreasonably and unjustifiably require other staff to carry out work tasks assigned to them or for which they are responsible, nor unreasonably request their cooperation in the performance of such tasks,
  - d) create an environment of collegiality, trust, understanding, and mutual assistance in their workplace,
  - e) create a welcoming environment in their workplace that presents the University in a positive light to the public, and being mindful of the positive image of the University in communications with the public,
  - f) not to request or accept gifts or other benefits conditioning the performance of work activities,
  - g) reject favouritism or discrimination,
  - h) assist new employees in their department in the process of their adaptation,
  - i) maintain confidentiality of information and facts concerning university employees or

- students of which they learn in the course of their duties,
- j) openly accept factual and fair criticism of their activities as administrative staff, without penalising the authors of the criticism.

### **Article 9**

#### **Ethical principles for graduates, holders of scientific and pedagogical degrees and external partners of MBU**

1. MBU graduates and holders of MBU scientific and pedagogical degrees are bound by their graduation vows and continue to act in such a way as not to damage the reputation of MBU.
2. MBU graduates, holders of MBU scientific and pedagogical degrees and external partners of the University act to support MBU in its social, pedagogical and research mission.

### **PART III**

#### **VIOLATION OF THE PRINCIPLES CODE OF ETHICS OF MBU**

### **Article 10**

1. The Code of Ethics OF MBU obliges all employees and students of the University to behave in accordance with its requirements. Any violation and subsequent measures shall be dealt with by the Ethics Committee of MBU, whose members are appointed by the Rector of MBU.<sup>1</sup> All possible disputes in this area must be resolved consistently and transparently.
2. Discussion of cases of violation of the Code of Ethics of MBU is carried out by the standard organizational procedure through respective head employees, or through the respective bodies of the academic self-government with the possibility of submitting the case to the Ethics Committee of MBU.

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<sup>1</sup> Article 11(2) and (4) of the Statute of MBU.

3. Cases of violation of the Code of Ethics of MBU may be assessed as a violation of obligations arising from legal regulations, or as failure to fulfil the requirements for the proper performance of work. Such assessment may entail the application of appropriate legal consequences in academic, labour, criminal or disciplinary terms.
4. The competence of the Ethics Committee of MBU and the acceptance of suggestions and requests in the ethical field are regulated by the Statute and the Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee of MBU.

**PART IV**  
**FINAL PROVISIONS**

**Article 11**

1. The Code of Ethics of MBU may be amended in the form of numbered amendments, subject to approval by the Academic Senate of MBU.
2. The Code of Ethics for Employees of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, which was approved by the Academic Senate of MBU on 21 February 2011, and the Code of Ethics for Students of Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, which was approved by the Academic Senate of MBU on 27 April 2015, are hereby repealed.
3. This Code of Ethics of MBU was approved by the Academic Senate of MBU at its meeting on 12 September 2023 pursuant to Section 9(1)(a)(1) of the Higher Education Act.
4. This Code of Ethics of MBU enters into force and effect on the date of its approval by the Academic Senate of MBU.

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Ing. Barbora Mazúrová, PhD  
The Chairperson of the Academic  
Senate of MBU

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doc. PhDr. Miriam Martinkovičová, PhD  
The Chairperson of the Ethics  
Committee of MBU