

# CODE OF ETHICS OF BRNO UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

## Preamble

1. The Brno University of Technology (hereinafter the “BUT”) is a hub that provides education and knowledge at the highest level, and as such it is aware of its position in society, accepts the related roles and responsibilities for respecting, upholding and disseminating the legal and moral principles, values and standards that form the foundations of modern European democratic society.
2. Not all rights and obligations of academic and research staff, students and employees of the BUT can be described by the letter of the law or legal regulations.
3. The BUT fosters its moral prestige and as an institution emphasises the ethical behaviour of all individuals employed, studying and learning at the University. Therefore, it publishes the BUT Code of Ethics as a set of basic moral rules it considers to be determinant and guiding not only for behaviour on University grounds, but also for the actions and behaviour of its academic staff, employees and students outside the BUT.
4. This Code of Conduct is also based on the European Charter for Researchers<sup>1</sup>.
5. The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity<sup>2</sup> forms a binding annex to this Code of Ethics and its text is adopted by the BUT as an extension of the Code of Ethics. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of the Code of Ethics and its Annex, the provisions of the Code of Ethics shall prevail.

## Article 1

### Introductory provisions

1. The Code of Ethics is morally binding and follows the basic rights and obligations of employees as set out in the Labour Code, in the concluded employment contract or agreements on work performed outside the employment relationship, in the BUT Code of Practice and other related internal standards issued by the BUT.
2. The Code of Ethics applies to the following:
  - a) members of the BUT academic community, i.e. academic staff and students of the BUT;
  - b) other BUT employees; and
  - c) lifelong learners at BUT.

The Code of Conduct for Research Integrity applies to the following:

- a) members of the BUT academic community, i.e. academic staff and students of the BUT;
- b) scientific, research and development staff of BUT.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/CS/ALL/?uri=CELEX%3A32005H0251>

<sup>2</sup> This Code is developed by the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities (ALLEA) and approved by the European Council.

- (3) The Code of Ethics uses the masculine gender in its provisions for the sole purpose of unifying the wording.

## **Article 2**

### **Relationship with the BUT**

A member of the academic community, employee and lifelong learner at the BUT shall:

- a) perceive and present his educational activities and the results of his scientific, research and creative activities as part of his activities at the BUT; respect the fact that he achieves his results with the support and utilising the facilities of the BUT;
- b) be loyal to the University, represent, promote and defend the interests of the BUT;
- c) be involved in building the reputation of the BUT, both in the domestic and international environment;
- d) respect the BUT by not jeopardising the main objectives and activities of the BUT through his extra-university activities or his own business activities;
- e) act in such a way that the results of his professional activities carried out within the BUT are attributed to the BUT;
- f) take care in his professional activities that the consequences of his activities do not harm the BUT and its interests, nor the members of the BUT academic community;
- g) maintain confidentiality towards the external environment, especially about professional facts which he learns in connection with the performance of his work tasks and which could harm or endanger the activities of the BUT. The duty of confidentiality does not apply to facts:
  - that give rise to suspicion of corruption or other conduct incompatible with the ethical conduct of a BUT employee;
  - that are contrary to the legal order;
  - that give rise to a notification obligation.

## **Article 3**

### **General requirements for ethical conduct**

1. A member of the academic community, employee and lifelong learner at the BUT shall:
  - a) observe moral and ethical principles to a high standard, both in the performance of his activities at the BUT and outside the BUT;
  - b) act honestly and in accordance with good morals;
  - c) observe the laws of the Czech Republic and other legal regulations, as well as the internal regulations and standards of the BUT; avoid any wrongful activity;
  - d) oppose all forms of discrimination based on any grounds; reject, in particular, any direct discrimination on the basis of race, ethnic origin, nationality, ideology, religion, belief, world view, age, gender, sexual orientation, physical or sensory disability, language, social origin, marital status or property status; treat everyone with respect, regardless of socio-cultural differences;
  - e) adhere to the principle of equal access and equal opportunities;
  - f) promote equal and positive treatment of persons with special needs and the improvement of conditions for their participation in the academic community;
  - g) observe not only general moral principles, but also ethical principles that are customary in his field of activity;
  - h) uphold the principles of academic freedom, emphasising the right to independent research, freedom of speech and expression, freedom to exchange views and information, and freedom

- of critical thinking in accordance with such principles; respect the right to participate in self-government; treat opinions different from his own correctly and without prejudice;
- i) respect the principle of academic responsibility, emphasis professionalism and objectivity in its activities, demonstrate a sense of truth and justice, strive for social and economic benefit, sustainability, profitability, security and stability of the University and its components; respects the order and principles of management;
  - j) consider educational and creative work to be an integral contribution to the development of human knowledge, culture, innovation and the common good, promote and defend it against unfair questioning or abuse, and carefully observe and disseminate the principles of reliable and trustworthy creative work in public, among his colleagues, and especially among students;
  - k) observe the principles of collegial behaviour; not discredit others, spread unverified, unsubstantiated or fabricated information, rumours or gossip;
  - l) continuously work on the development of his abilities and skills, continuously educate himself and deepen his professional knowledge; maintain the ability to be objectively critical of his own work and the work of others;
  - m) oppose all forms of abuse of position and other forms of bullying (e.g. bossing, mobbing, staffing) as well as sexual pressure or harassment; not create immoral pressure on other employees or students of the BUT, or tolerate condescending or humiliating treatment;
  - n) not appropriate other people's thoughts, creations and ideas. In doing so, he shall take care to consistently cite the authors whose ideas or results he relies on or uses in his work; not commit or tolerate plagiarism or self-plagiarism;
  - o) perform all activities with due care and awareness of potential risks;
  - p) use the information systems of the BUT and the data contained therein aware of the obligation to use them exclusively to perform work or study activities, not for private benefit or for the benefit of other persons;
  - q) be prohibited, for the purpose of obtaining an advantage, to give or receive gifts in money (cash or non-cash) or other financial means.
2. A member of the BUT academic community or any employee of the BUT shall not take advantage of his position, academic or operational, to harm others, for personal gain or for the wrongful benefit of third parties.
3. Every member of the academic community and every employee of the BUT shall subscribe to the principle of political neutrality of the academic sphere. The premises of the University shall not be used to promote or advance the interests of political parties and movements.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Educational activity**

1. An academic employee of the BUT, or an employee involved in teaching shall:
  - a) not only impart its expertise, knowledge and experience to students, but also lead them by example, especially in the implementation of ethical principles in education, research, development and creative activities; be responsible for the quality of teaching and the high quality of the study aids provided by him, as well as for their adaptation to the current results of scientific knowledge;
  - b) treat students like colleagues, encouraging their personal development and critical thinking; not belittle, demean or disparage students and their interests or studies, exert undue pressure on them or engage in any form of discrimination;
  - c) approach students, their studies and activities objectively, impartially and without bias. He shall apply the same principle in the course of teaching and in the testing or verification of knowledge; act fairly, impartially and objectively in the assessment and classification of

learning outcomes; not demand that students perform activities that are his own duties or appropriate the work of students and their results.

2. A student of the BUT shall:
  - a) use the studies for personal and professional growth;
  - b) show respect for their teachers and other students;
  - c) not disparage the results of his work, the work of his teacher or other members of the academic community;
  - d) not commission thesis, term papers or any other work to be written by third parties.
3. This Article shall also apply with the necessary modifications to participants in the BUT lifelong learning programme.

## **Article 5**

### **Scientific, research, artistic and other creative activities**

1. A member of the BUT academic community shall:
  - a) focus its scientific, research, development, artistic and other creative activities on expanding the boundaries of human knowledge; make sure that his results serve society and be aware of his responsibility for what he offers to the society;
  - b) take into account in his scientific work the latest developments in his field and continuously develop his professional knowledge and skills;
  - c) accept responsibility for the objectivity, accuracy and reliability of his research results, methods and data. He shall also strive for their completeness and verifiability;
  - d) interpret the results of research and development correctly and objectively, both when interpreting his own results and those of others;
  - e) make available the results of his scientific, research, artistic and other creative activities under the conditions customary for the field; ensure that the knowledge resulting from his professional activities is disseminated to the relevant scientific or artistic community and applied in teaching or practice as soon as possible;
  - f) adhere to the ethical rules related to respect for intellectual property; cite also such substantial works that are inconsistent with his results and views;
  - g) lead by example in fulfilling moral principles in scientific, research, artistic and other creative activities in which students participate;
  - h) ensure the efficient and effective use of the funds he has received for creative activities. He shall distribute such funds fairly and transparently.
2. If a member of the BUT academic community discovers a significant error in his published texts, he shall not attempt to conceal it, but shall take appropriate steps to correct it without undue delay.
3. A member of the BUT academic community is presented as the author or co-author of the results of professional activity only if he has achieved them alone or in collaboration with others and has made a significant creative contribution to the results achieved. Such member shall not divide its interrelated results into multiple publications in order to increase their number, nor allow the purposeful expansion of the author team to include persons who have not contributed creatively to the results presented.
4. As a member of a working team, a member of the BUT academic community shall acknowledge the contribution of other team members, including students, to the results of the team's work and take this into account, especially when reporting their contribution to the publication. Such member shall be open and willing to engage in substantive professional discussion. He shall

respect the opinions of team members. He shall contribute, through his objective approach, to functional teamwork.

- 5 This Article shall also apply to other employees of the BUT, as appropriate, to the extent to which they perform the activity in question.

## **Article 6**

### **Expert and economic activities**

1. A member of the BUT academic community shall:
  - a) in the performance of his duties as an expert (which for the purposes of this Code means all appraisal, review, expert or other evaluation activities, as well as participation in relevant committees), carry out his work personally, independently and using all his professional competencies;
  - b) refuse to provide an expert opinion if the conclusions could be influenced by his personal interest, or he shall make this fact clear; avoid any form of conflict of interest, including deliberately extending the evaluation period to obtain advantages for himself or for a third party, as well as using the data from the provided documents for other purposes, and not let external pressures influence his decision-making.
2. In his expert activities, an academic employee of the BUT shall build the reputation of the BUT as an independent and objective university by through his expertise, independence, serious conduct, quality and efficiency of work.
3. A member of the academic community and an employee of the BUT shall, in his economic activity, strengthen the connection between research and practice for the benefit of the University. Such member shall not accept assignments that could bring him into conflict of interest with the BUT.

## **Article 7**

### **Conflict of interest**

A member of the academic community and an employee of the BUT shall, in his activities, avoid conflicts of interest, which means in particular:

- a) using the equipment, infrastructure, brand of the BUT and know-how of the University for purposes other than those which constitute the mission of the University and which serve to fulfil the duties arising from the labour-law relationship;
- b) pursuing gainful activity identical to the employer's objects of business without the employer's prior written consent, unless it is the performance of scientific, pedagogical, journalistic, literary or artistic activity;
- c) acting contrary to the legitimate interests of the employer;
- d) inadequate performance of work or other commitments in another organisation or in his own business with the consequence of not devoting himself to teaching or scientific activities at the BUT with due professional commitment;
- e) serving on the boards of other entities, particularly those that may be in competition with the University's activities without the knowledge of a supervisor;
- f) arranging an undue advantage for related natural or legal persons, including the provision of information conferring an undue advantage;
- g) misusing the results of work activities (educational, research, etc.) for personal gain;
- h) employing family members in line of subordination.

## **Article 8**

### **Ethics Committee of the BUT**

1. The Rector establishes the BUT Ethics Committee (hereinafter also the “Committee”) to review complaints regarding compliance with this Code of Ethics. The Committee serves as an advisory body to the Rector.
2. The members of the Committee are appointed by the Rector after discussion in the Academic Senate of the BUT with respect to gender balance and representation of the academic community, both from among academic staff and students, or scientific research and other staff. The BUT Equal Opportunities Coordinator shall always be a member of the Committee.
3. Additional ad hoc members may be added to the Committee to deal with a particular case, depending on the nature of the case under consideration. These members shall be appointed by the Rector, and their membership shall terminate upon consideration of the submission to which they have been appointed.
4. Membership in the Committee shall be incompatible with the position of Rector, Vice-Rector, Bursar, Chancellor, Dean, Vice-Dean, Secretary, Director of a BUT higher education institute and Director of another component of BUT.
5. A member of the Committee shall be bound by confidentiality of the facts of which he has become aware during the consideration of submissions.
6. The Committee and its individual members shall actively provide consultations to members of the academic community and BUT employees regarding the Code of Ethics, ethical conduct and possible opportunities to submit a complaint to the Commission. They shall spread awareness related to the values arising from the BUT Code of Ethics.
7. Detailed rules of the Committee’s proceedings are regulated by a special internal standard of the BUT.

## **Article 9**

### **Dealing with breaches of the Code of Ethics**

1. In the event that a member of the academic community, an employee or a lifelong learner believes that unethical conduct has occurred, he shall not conceal the conduct but, on the contrary, initiate its resolution by submitting a complaint.
2. Complaints can be submitted to the Ethics Committee of the BUT in the manner described in Annex 2, using the form attached in Annex 3. Anonymous complaints will not be considered by the Committee except in cases where the Rector of the BUT decides to do so on the proposal of the Chairman of the Committee.
3. In the case of employees, suspected unethical conduct shall be reported by the person who discovers it to the employee’s supervisor, unless the conduct was committed by the superior or unless reporting to the supervisor would be unduly burdensome for the person reporting the unethical conduct in view of the nature of the unethical conduct.
4. The Ethics Committee of the BUT will assess whether the complaint was made on reasonable grounds and whether the conduct was ethical or not. The assessment must include a justification. This is then referred to the Rector for a final decision. Furthermore, if:
  - a) the conduct of a BUT employee is considered, the Rector’s opinion is made known to the employee’s supervisor and the head of the relevant BUT component;

- b) the conduct of a student or a lifelong learner at the BUT is assessed, the Rector's opinion is made known to the head of the relevant BUT component;
- c) the Committee concludes that the conduct under consideration may have constituted a disciplinary infraction, the Rector may initiate a proposal to the Dean to initiate disciplinary proceedings before the relevant disciplinary committee in accordance with the Disciplinary Rules of the BUT;
- d) the Committee concludes that the conduct under consideration may have violated obligations arising from legal regulations related to the work performed by the BUT employee, or other legal regulations, it shall report this fact to the employee's supervisor and the head of the relevant BUT component, who, after assessment, may apply the relevant labour-law or other legal consequences.

## **Article 10**

### **Research Ethics Committee of the BUT**

1. Every project that involves ethically relevant research and requires the approval of the Research Ethics Committee according to legal requirements or the requirements of the funding provider is subject to review by the Research Ethics Committee of the BUT. The Committee serves as an advisory body to the Rector.
2. The consideration referred in paragraph 1 may be replaced by consideration by a research ethics committee established by a BUT component, which has been established for this purpose by the Dean or Director of the component, or by an external committee relevant for the assessment of the project.
3. The composition and proceedings of the Research Ethics Committee of the BUT are regulated by a separate internal standard of the BUT.

## **Article 11**

### **Awareness**

The following shall become familiar with the BUT Code of Ethics:

- a) an employee when negotiating an employment relationship or an agreement for work outside the employment relationship;
- b) a student at the time of his enrolment;
- c) a lifelong learner when registering for the relevant course.

## **Article 12**

### **Final Provisions**

1. Nothing in the Code shall be construed to restrict academic freedom.
2. This Code of Ethics fully cancels and replaces the BUT Code of Ethics effective from 1 June 2016.
3. This Code of Ethics of the BUT was discussed by the Academic Senate of the BUT on 8 November 2022 and it became effective on this date.

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Rector