

Internal rule no.:



Title: ETHICAL CODE OF THE INSTITUTE OF BIOPHYSICS OF THE CAS

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ETHICAL CODE

OF THE INSTITUTE OF BIOPHYSICS OF THE CAS

PREAMBLE

- The Ethical Code of the Institute of Biophysics of the CAS, v. v. i. (hereinafter referred to simply as “the IBP” or “the Institute”) represents a summary of moral requirements, rules and principles determining the methods and procedures all employees follow when performing their work activities within the IBP. These requirements, rules and principles are, above all, fundamental principles of human morality and require not to tolerate any discrimination or unequal treatment due to nationality, citizenship, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion or a lack thereof, world view, or social status; furthermore, they require not to tolerate any corruption or bribery, other forms of harassment, and any dishonest conduct in any shape or form.
- IBP employees are aware that education, research and innovation are the fundamental pillars of the development of today’s society. Trust in science is based on trust in the honesty of researchers as well as non-researchers when striving for new findings and results. The findings and results and their interpretation may be verified by the broader scientific community whose members are the main addressees of these new findings and results. For science to remain trustworthy, it is essential for all IBP employees to be guided by the basic principles of morality, particularly by honesty and righteousness.
- IBP employees assume moral responsibility for all their work activities and the impact they have on society and environment, which can be influenced by their actions and behaviour.
- The Ethical Code is based on, among others, the principles of the currently valid Ethical Code for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences. The Ethical Code for Researchers of the Czech Academy of Sciences is binding on IBP researchers.
- Furthermore, the Ethical Code is based on the principles of the Ethical Framework of Research, i.e. Czech Republic Government Resolution of 17 August 2005 No. 1005; the European Charter for Researchers, 2005/251/ES, Official Journal of the European Union of 22 March 2005; Rules of Good Scientific Practice, adopted by the Senate of the Max Planck Society on 24 November 2000; The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, 2011.
- As an internal rule, the Ethical Code is, together with the generally binding legislation, particularly labour law legislation, and other internal rules, among the rules which are of utmost importance and represents a basic specification of the ethical norms applicable to every IBP employee, the IBP requires respect and compliance with these norms.
- Therefore, each IBP employee shall be aware that respect and observance of the ethical dimension of work and good reputation are extremely important for the institution to be perceived in a good light.
- The Ethical Code emphasizes that ethical awareness is an essential part of professional education and practice of all employees and that the ability to comply with the ethical norms and commitment thereto is an elementary aspect of the quality and high standard of research activities of the IBP.

- Therefore, the ethical principles and rules laid down in this Code must be based mainly on the values of democracy, human rights and social justice.

I. General principles of conduct

Each IBP employee must be aware that respect and observance of the ethical and moral dimension of their work activities at the IBP, as well as their own good reputation, are important for the overall reputation and respectability of the Institute, and consequently, they are obligated to respect and observe, in particular, the following principles of conduct when performing work activities at the IBP corresponding to their position in the organisation:

- a. to comply with generally binding legislation and internal rules of the Institute,
- b. to act honestly and in accordance with generally accepted moral and ethical principles,
- c. towards co-workers and research institutions or business partners and other persons with whom they come in contact when performing the work activities, to act with mutual respect and professional ethics, using the acquired experience and knowledge to ensure the highest possible quality when performing their work activities,
- d. to deal with all parties involved in the research project or other work assignment to the best of their ability and with the maximum possible effort to achieve the intended result,
- e. to avoid providing false data, deliberately misrepresenting facts, providing misleading information when performing work activities, or using deceptive or fraudulent practices,
- f. to observe such procedures when performing the work activities within the organisational system of the Institute that do not allow misleading interpretation of employee's qualifications, skills or procedures,
- g. to ensure personal data are protected in accordance with related legislation,
- h. to respect superiors, their instructions, as well as other persons authorised to give instructions,
- i. to comply with the principles of mutual trust and cooperation,
- j. to contribute to the good representation of the IBP through their personal approach and public appearances,
- k. to act to protect the legitimate interests of the IBP, within the limits of what can be reasonably demanded,
- l. to avoid and prevent situations in which it can be assumed that there may be a conflict of interest between the employee's personal interests and the interests of the IBP; each employee is obligated to notify the management of the Institute of any situation in which such conflict of interest may arise,
- m. to pay close attention to facts which may indicate a serious violation of the law, particularly criminal activities, offences, or other conduct which is harmful to the IBP or society at large,

- n. in case of suspicion of a serious violation of the law, particularly criminal activities, offences, or other conduct which is harmful to the IBP or society at large, to notify the management of the Institute without delay; wherein the employee and their identity is protected from any sanctions which could arise from such notification,
- o. in the event of damage or threat of damage to the Institute, to make every reasonable effort, according to their capabilities, to avert such damage or minimise consequences thereof and, at the same time, to inform the management of the IBP or person authorised to act on behalf of the IBP without delay and in an appropriate manner.

II. Principles of cooperation between the IBP and the employees

The IBP considers a fair and stable work relationship with all its employees to be of crucial importance and considers mutual respect, decency, honesty, and dignity to be at its core. To achieve that, the IBP, within its organisational structure and for the purpose of organising the work tasks, arranges and provides to its employees, in particular:

- a. a safe and healthy working environment, with constant efforts for continual improvements,
- b. equal opportunities for employees, regardless of race, skin colour, gender, nationality, religion, ethnicity, or other distinctive characteristics,
- c. anti-discrimination or anti-harassment measures,
- d. measures preventing the employment of persons under the age of 15 or any other limit specified by employment law legislation,
- e. measures preventing the use of forced or wage labour or another form of involuntary work,
- f. training and education opportunities which support current and future plans for the professional progress of the Institute's researchers.

III. Principles of cooperation between employees

Similarly as in the cooperation between the IBP and the employees, the Institute and the employees are required to have mutual respect, decency, honesty, and dignity also in cooperation between the individual employees of the Institute, regardless of their function and position within the organisational system of the Institute. In this respect, the employees of the Institute are particularly required:

- a. to ensure that employees who are directly managed by the Institute's management when performing work activities comply with the same principles and that they are able to identify the boundaries of their competence and responsibility,
- b. to not disregard work activities of other employees at the Institute or make derogatory comments about them in any other inappropriate manner; if they wish to express criticism, they shall do so in an appropriate, reasonable, and polite manner and in cooperation with the management of the Institute,
- c. to not abuse their role within the IBP organisational structure when dealing with other employees,

- d. senior researchers must treat subordinate employees equally, with an emphasis on evaluation based on work performed and results achieved.

IV. General principles applicable to researchers and non-researchers

An IBP employee:

- a. observes in his work fundamental moral principles and respects fundamental human rights and freedoms,
- b. avoids conflict of interest arising from their position at the IBP and activities performed in their private interest to occur;
- c. is devoted to the research with full professional and personal enthusiasm. The sum of their contractual employments does not exceed 1.5 full-time employment,
- d. requires co-workers to behave in compliance with these principles,
- e. does not justify or cover conduct which is in violation of the principles stated in this Code, not even by pointing out the obedience or loyalty required of them,
- f. considers science, research and related activities to be an integral part of culture and a basis for innovation, and defends them against possible questioning,
- g. opposes unethical and improper use of scientific findings,
- h. broadens and deepens their knowledge and strives to improve their expertise,
- i. keeps a critical mind when it comes to their own knowledge and results as well as the results of the co-workers and is open to discussion and factual arguments,
- j. advocates freedom of scientific thought, expression, exchange of views and information,
- k. rejects the use of non-scientific approaches and racist, religious, nationalist and political aspects in science,
- l. adheres to the principles of impartiality and independence from ideological and political pressures and the interests of pressure groups,
- m. recognises and shares among the members of the scientific community the principles of reliable, trustworthy scientific work and rejects any scientific dishonesty and violations of the principles stated in this Code,
- n. does not hesitate to notify the competent authorities of any misconduct in violation of the ethics of scientific and research work as soon as they become aware of such misconduct.

V. Principles of research work

A researcher:

- a. focuses their research on expanding the boundaries of scientific knowledge and ensures that their practical results contribute to society,
- b. conducts research in a manner which does not threaten society, environment, or cultural values,
- c. keeps the general principles of behaviour (Art. I.) in mind when acquiring, selecting, and evaluating data while simultaneously respecting the specifics of their discipline,
- d. is responsible for the accuracy and objectivity of the research and is aware of the limits of the used methods of research,
- e. is responsible for the completeness and verifiability of published findings and results of their research activities concerning a certain issue and interprets them without bias,
- f. after publication of findings and results of the research, stores primary data and documentation of all important findings for a standard period unless other obligations or regulations prevent this,
- g. is responsible for purposeful and effective use of funds allocated for research and does not copy research performed elsewhere unless it is required to verify, supplement, or compare the results of research,
- h. transmits non-confidential results of the research to the community of professionals and acquaints the general public with the results only after they have been published in a specialised publication.

VI. Principles of publishing of findings and research results

A researcher:

- a. may be cited as author or co-author of a text or publication if they creatively contribute to the creation thereof, e.g. to the study designs and experiments and their implementation, to analysis, interpretation, theoretical processing or data modelling, or to the creation of the publication and if they agree to the co-authorship,
- b. recognises, in the text or publication, the scientific contribution of their predecessors and colleagues, which the researcher builds upon and provides a clear reference to the relevant source(s) when quoting the findings of other authors,
- c. cites significant works which are not in agreement with their own results,
- d. in case they find a significant error in their own published data, the researcher takes appropriate steps and adequate measures to remedy the situation, e.g. prints errata or other corrections,
- e. does not unnecessarily divide the results and findings into several texts and publications to artificially increase the number of published works,
- f. does not publish in an ethically questionable manner and does not use ethically questionable publishing platforms,

- g. publishes with the aim to transmit results and findings to the scientific community, not just for the purpose of reporting works as published scientific outputs.

In accordance with these principles, the IBP is determined and ready to guarantee that:

- research will be carried out in accordance with high ethical and moral standards,
- the fundamental human rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms will be respected,
- legal regulations and other generally binding standards will be strictly respected,
- there will be openness and willingness to act and communicate with third and affected parties in a serious and efficient manner,
- co-workers at the IBP and research, business, and contractual partners will, as part of their joint activities, comply with and respect the principles and rules laid down in this Ethical Code during the IBP research projects.

In the light of the above, the general principles of this Code should always be based on fundamental social values, thus enabling the Ethical Code to be a tool to raise the standard of conduct of IBP researchers, support the general development of ethics and constitutional culture, and help to improve and enhance interpersonal relationships in the workplace, thus contributing to the creation and preservation of the IBP reputation.

VII. Principles of conduct between researchers, co-workers and students

A researcher:

- a. communicates with others with mutual respect, decency, honesty, and dignity, regardless of their role and position at the IBP,
- b. does not denigrate the activities of other researchers/employees or make derogatory comments about them; in case of justified criticism, they must do so with due respect to their previous research activities,
- c. admits students and co-workers to research on the basis of objective evaluation of their intellectual, ethical and personality characteristics,
- d. in case the researcher leads a research team, ensures correctness and openness in mutual communication and avoids unjustifiably autocratic methods of management,
- e. assesses students and co-workers based on their achievements and treats them fairly; does not require activities which are part of their own duties and does not impose any requirements which are disproportionate to their abilities and capabilities,
- f. transmits their own experience, skills and principles of good behaviour as a scientist to the co-workers and students, both verbally and by their actions;
- g. is dedicated to teaching of students, develops their independent and self-critical thinking and responsible approach to work, and respects their right to freedom of speech when it comes to expressing their opinion on research,
- h. supports the qualification growth of subordinate researchers and students, their researching and publishing activities and international contacts, and cites them among authors of publication if they creatively contribute to the creation thereof,

- i. draws consequences from unethical behaviour of co-workers or students.

VIII. Principles of assessment, evaluation, opponent, and expert activities

A researcher:

- a. performs assessment or other evaluation activities assigned to them personally,
- b. protects the intellectual property of the authors of assessed written manuscripts, project proposals, and reports; does not use the data from the evaluated documents for purpose other than preparation of an expert opinion and does not provide these data to third parties,
- c. does not intentionally prolong the evaluation of the assessed work to gain benefit for themselves or third parties,
- d. refuses to prepare an expert opinion if conclusions thereof could be influenced by their own personal interest, or clearly points out this fact in advance; avoids other evident conflicts of interest,
- e. prepares the expert opinions responsibly, only the area of their expertise and does not succumb to possible outside pressures which could influence the opinion,
- f. during evaluation and opposition uses objective criteria, complies with the rules of the submitter, and requires the same from other participants.

IX. Principles of protection of experimental animals

A researcher / other specialist:

- a. treats experimental animals keeping as living beings capable of feeling pain and suffering and protects them from cruelty, harm to their health, and sacrifice in violation of the legislation governing the treatment of experimental animals,
- b. when using experimental animals in research, acts to eliminate pain, suffering, distress, or permanent damage to the experimental animals by means of anaesthetics, analgesics, or other methods; if this is not possible and the suffering cannot be avoided, seeks to minimise the cause of pain, suffering, distress, or permanent damage;
- c. strives to provide all experimental animals with placement, environment, feed, water and care appropriate to their health and good living conditions,
- d. strives to ensure that any restrictions that prevent the experimental animal from meeting its physiological and ethological needs are kept to a minimum.

X. Procedure for investigating cases of violation of principles of good conduct in scientific research work

- The following conduct is considered to be incompatible with the principles of ethical conduct in science and research: fraud, forgery, plagiarism, counterfeiting, misrepresentation, deliberate

deception and theft of another's work; at any stage of the scientific research work, i.e. from intention to the publication of results.

- Violation of the principles of proper conduct in scientific and research work includes among others:
 - a. obtaining special-purpose or other funds for research and development in a fraudulent manner (by stating fake qualifications, giving false information about previous results and practice, creating false and misleading impression of the results, etc.),
 - b. falsifying the results of research or their presentation,
 - c. infringing intellectual property rights or purposeful manipulation by disclosing parts of texts or facts published elsewhere by other authors without reference or acknowledgement,
 - d. consciously misinterpreting the research results, observations, or experiments,
 - e. presenting fictitious data as results of observation or experiment,
 - f. selecting data selectively, namely omitting certain data to support the hypothesis, etc.,
 - g. intentionally misinterpreting certain results or purposefully drawing misleading conclusions based on the results,
 - h. acting towards co-workers, students, or subordinates with the intention of influencing the results of their research (this does not include discussion of a particular research topic),
 - i. deliberately presenting other researchers' results in an incorrect and tendentious manner,
 - j. presenting oneself as the author or co-author without having significantly contributed to obtaining, interpretation, or processing of the research results,
 - k. not giving credit to authors who significantly contributed to the research and, on the contrary, including the names of researchers who did not participate in the research or publication at all or only minimally,
 - l. being negligent when conducting research,
 - m. unauthorized collection of personal data during research by pretending the data are not personal (e.g. by combining data in questionnaire or by requesting te personal data to be provided in an annex to anonymous questionnaire),
 - n. improper manipulation with confidential and sensitive information,
 - o. making copies of designs and software without permission,
 - p. and so on.

In connection with the above, a researcher:

- a. is obligated to report misconduct in violation of this Ethical Code directly to their superior; if that is not possible or the superior is not seeking to remedy the situation, the researcher is obligated to report such misconduct in violation of this Ethical Code to the director of the IBP. The management of the Institute assures that any employee who reports such conduct will not be disadvantaged or sanctioned in any way; the IBP will make maximum effort to maintain confidentiality with respect to the reporting person. However, if the report is proven to be manifestly false with the intent to harm another person, such a report will be considered a violation of this Ethical Code,
- b. if the director of the IBP does not act and does not seek to remedy the situation, the employee is entitled to contact the Commission for the Scientific Integrity of the Czech Academy of Sciences; this does not forbid the director from contacting the Commission for the Scientific Integrity of the Czech Academy of Sciences himself/herself,
- c. the conclusions of proceedings regarding the violation of this Ethical Code must be communicated to all the parties concerned, including the reporting person, and must contain remedial measures while simultaneously respecting and maintaining the privacy of all the parties.

XI. Inspection of compliance with the principles of good conduct in scientific research work

- Compliance with the rules of this Ethical Code is a primary concern for each researcher.
- Compliance with the principles and rules of the Ethical Code is continuously inspected by the director of the IBP or a person authorised by him/her within routine work activities but also in other special cases specified by the IBP, e.g. at third parties' initiative.
- The conclusions of the inspections are binding on the IBP and applicable to the possibility of taking measures necessary to remedy any deficiencies and increase the effectiveness of the IBP operation in accordance with this Code. The conclusions may also serve as a basis for evaluation of individual employees and further improvement of performance of their work duties.
- The IBP will thoroughly investigate all findings or suggestions concerning possible violations of this Code without undue delay and, in the light of the obtained results, will decide on the next course of action. If the inspections or other findings reveal a violation of this Code by a researcher or other employee, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with related legislation, in particular the Labour Code and the IBP internal rules and regulations.

XII. Effectiveness

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