



Guarantor: Academic Senate of UPJŠ FM

**CODE OF ETHICS  
FOR ACADEMIC STAFF  
OF PAVOL JOZEF ŠAFÁRIK UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE**

June 2016

## **Preamble**

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice (hereinafter referred to as UPJŠ, the University) hereby declares its mission as a public university in pursuing the principles of humanism, democracy, ethical and moral values in its educational and scientific research activities in the UPJŠ Code of Ethics (2009). It obliges UPJŠ employees to observe generally accepted ethical principles of behaviour and conduct in order to develop fair and honest interpersonal relations, a good working atmosphere and a good reputation of the University. The same principles underpin the Code of Ethics for Academic Employees of the UPJŠ, Faculty of Medicine (hereinafter referred to as FM or the Faculty), which considers the specifics of teaching and scientific research work in medicine. The academic employee (hereinafter referred to as employee) is aware that teaching medicine and the medical profession are associated in the public with the achievement of the highest level of not only professional knowledge and skills, but also morality and ethics of both the teacher and the graduate from the Faculty of Medicine. Honouring these public expectations, the adopted Code of Ethics commits the Faculty employee to the promotion and implementation of these underlying ethical and moral values:

- Fair and honest interpersonal relations, correct working environment.
- Loyalty to the Faculty, the University and teaching medical institutions and personal commitment to their reputation.
- High standards of quality and ethics in educational and research work.
- Responsibility in adhering to ethical standards, internal regulations and relevant laws both within and outside the academic milieu.
- Respect and regard for human rights, human dignity and patient rights.
- Zero tolerance for lying, cheating, corruption and deliberate damage to the reputation of the Faculty and the University.

## **Article I**

### **General Principles of Ethical Conduct for Staff Members**

1. In their actions, they shall be guided by ethical and moral principles generally accepted in society and shall fully respect the principles of this Code. The key ethical values are truth, justice and morality, and in relation to other members of the academic community of the Faculty (hereafter AC) honesty, integrity, respect and trustworthiness.
2. They shall not discriminate against co-workers, organisational subordinates, and students based on gender, age, ethnic, national, or social origin, religion, creed, sexual orientation, disability, political opinion, and economic status.
3. They shall not intentionally harm other AC members, other colleagues in the workplace, or through slander, innuendo, irony, or other forms of mobbing.
4. They shall abide by generally accepted rules of ethics in education and scholarly research activities and shall reject and call attention to unethical behaviour in these activities.
5. They shall recognise the necessity of developing his/her professional knowledge, skills and teaching abilities, and maintain the ability to be objectively critical of his/her own work and work of others.
6. They shall uphold freedom of thought, inquiry, and expression and, in the best traditions of the University, shall be committed to the upliftment of all of society, but shall reject and avoid the promotion of political parties and movements on campus.
7. They shall never knowingly act in a conflict of interest and shall inform superiors if they are unable to avoid such a situation.
8. They shall not smoke, consume alcohol, narcotics, or other addictive substances on campus.
9. They shall respect the prohibition against intimate relationships with students for whom he/she provides supervision, monitoring, and testing. They shall reject and are aware of the criminal consequences of sexual harassment.
10. They shall not engage in any activity for the benefit of third parties and institutions that are in a competitive position with the Faculty and the University.

## **Article II**

### **Ethical and Moral Principles of the Faculty Management and the Head of Staff**

#### **1. The Faculty Management:**

- (a) shall always strive to pursue the common good, welfare and benefit of teachers, researchers, students and other employees of the Faculty,
- (b) shall guarantee and create appropriate preconditions for the freedom of educational and scientific research work carried out in accordance with the Constitution and laws of the Slovak Republic and the ethical principles and values declared in this Code,
- (c) shall recognise the equal right of all the members of the AC to free access to information, education and employment and shall take care to remove obstacles leading to discrimination,
- (d) shall act fairly and transparently in matters of business and the market, in the distribution of subsidies, and in the awarding of personal salaries and bonuses to members of the management, other academic staff and employees,
- (e) a member of management shall not abuse his/her position for personal gain, for the benefit of third parties or for any form of discrimination. He/she shall not solicit or accept economic benefits from other persons.

#### **2. Head of Staff:**

- (a) shall treat subordinates and students without personal bias, respecting the unacceptability and possible disciplinary consequences of bullying, slander, humiliation, and other forms of bossing,
- (b) shall insist on adherence to moral principles by co-workers, subordinates, and students, shall not advocate or cover up unethical behaviour and actions, and shall not justify such behaviour and actions on the grounds of expediency, obedience and loyalty,
- (c) shall promote and create conditions conducive to subordinates and students for professional development, medical skills, and skill development,
- (d) shall not require subordinates and students to perform activities that are within the scope of his/her duties and shall not appropriate the results of their work,
- (e) shall not abuse his/her authority as a manager for his/her own benefit and enrichment.

## **Article III**

### **Ethical Principles of the Staff Member in Teaching**

- 1. He/she shall perceive the student as an equal member of the AC, shall treat him/her collegially, shall respect his/her dignity, shall not abuse his/her position to humiliate the student because of his/her ignorance or mistake. He/she shall draw appropriate consequences from any failures, unethical behaviour, or actions of the student.
- 2. As a teacher, he/she is responsible for the truthfulness and currency of the content and quality of teaching the course taught by him/her and shall willingly impart his/her knowledge, skills, and experience to students.
- 3. He/she is obliged to base his/her teaching of clinical courses on evidence-based medicine and presents his/her own assumptions and recommendations with a warning of this fact.
- 4. A patient may be included in clinical teaching only with his/her consent and after being thoroughly informed of what actions beyond treatment are involved. The patient shall have the right to refuse or withdraw his/her participation at any time without affecting his/her own treatment.
- 5. The teacher shall act impartially and objectively in grading learning outcomes and shall not be subject to pressure for grading that is inconsistent with the student's current knowledge and abilities.
- 6. The teacher shall respect the confidentiality of information obtained on students during teaching.

## **Article IV**

### **Science, Research, and Publication Activity**

The employee agrees to abide by the following ethical rules:

- 1. The employee shall consider scientific research activity as a means of increasing the level of knowledge while observing the laws of the Slovak Republic, the highest standards of honesty, accuracy, and objectivity.
- 2. When obtaining grants, he/she shall apply correct procedures and avoid conflicts of interest

and shall ensure the efficient use of funds and personnel resources of the workplace.

3. A research project with human participants or live animals and any other type of biomedical research at the Faculty of Medicine shall be reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Medicine and its implementation shall be in accordance with its rules. Clinical drug trials as well as any other type of biomedical research conducted by FM clinical teachers at a teaching medical facility shall be reviewed and approved by the Ethics Committee of the teaching medical facility with which the sponsor of the study is in a contractual relationship.
4. In research involving human participants, the investigator shall weigh the benefit to the participant against the potential for harm to the participant, respecting the dignity, rights, and ability to assess the distribution of risks for each individual research participant. It is unacceptable to modify, alter, or purposely omit findings and results, as well as to withhold results in the case of publicly funded research.
5. It shall be considered unethical and a violation of loyalty to the Faculty to disclose the results of scientific research to third party institutions or individuals for personal gain. The Faculty management shall inform if it has knowledge of such conduct.
6. The employee shall observe ethical rules related to respect for the copyright and intellectual property of others, in particular:
  - (a) he/she shall not knowingly commit plagiarism, shall not copy without acknowledging the source, shall not pass off the opinions of others as his/her own,
  - (b) he/she shall only present himself or herself as an author or co-author if he or she has achieved or contributed to them in a significant creative way,
  - (c) he/she shall recognise and promote the equal status of students as authors or co-authors,
  - (d) he/she shall attain scholarly rank with integrity and according to established rules,
  - (e) he/she shall act correctly in the application and transfer of technology,
7. As an author or co-author, he/she shall truthfully state or not conceal any facts which, in relation to the subject matter addressed, are or may be considered a conflict of interest.
8. He/she shall personally ensure correction of subsequently discovered erroneous data, results, or conclusions at the same level of publication as submitted.
9. He/she shall not obtain citations of his/her own work through collaborative agreement with other authors, nor shall he/she omit citations of others for competitive reasons or personal bias.

#### **Article V**

##### **The Relationship of the Employee to Patients and Collaborators in Healthcare Activities**

1. The teacher of a clinical course in his/her health care activities shall observe and follow the **Code of Ethics of a Health Care Professional** pursuant to Annex 4 of the Law Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic No. 578/2004 Coll. on Health Care, Services Related to the Provision of Health Care, and on Amendments and Addenda to Certain Law Acts.
2. The health care professional shall be treated in a collegial and respectful manner.
3. He/she shall comply with the internal regulations and orders of the management of the teaching health care institution with which he/she is employed and personally contribute to the promotion of its reputation.
4. He/she shall not commit medically unjustified favouritism of patients in medical activities and shall reject any form of corruption, including bribes and other personal benefits.
5. As a supervisor or mentor, he/she shall all-round support the qualification development and the development of medical skills of physicians in specialty training, postgraduate students and other colleagues.

#### **Article VI**

##### **Evaluation and Expertise Activity**

The staff member shall consider without bias or prejudice applications for scientific projects, manuscripts of scientific, professional and qualification theses (degree theses, dissertations and habilitation theses) and other documents. He/she shall present his/her personal opinion and shall not be subject to external pressures in the course of his/her assessment and expertise activities and in his/her capacity as a member of the selection committee. He/she shall immediately inform his/her supervisor, the applicant for an assessment or membership of the selection board of the existence or possible conflict of interest in the case concerned.

## **Article VII Corruption and Conflict of Interest**

1. Corrupt behaviour simultaneously impedes effective education and undermines the authority of the academic milieu as an independent and objective institution; therefore, corrupt behaviour by an academic staff member shall be deemed a serious breach of ethical and moral rules.
2. Facts and circumstances that may lead to biased evaluation or biased action in academic activities include a conflict of interest in the academic milieu. To prevent its occurrence or negative consequences, a Faculty employee shall immediately report an existing or potential conflict of interest to the Dean of the Faculty and follow the following guidelines:
  - A. Unauthorized testing, evaluative activities, and the position of supervisor
    - Relationship to the student (parent, sibling, grandparent, uncle, aunt, cousin, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, companion, spouse),
    - existing or previous intimate relationship with the student,
    - living in the same household with the student
    - current or former marriage to the student
  - B. Mandatory notification to the Dean of the FM:
    - membership in the advisory board of a commercial health care firm (once a year at the beginning of the school year),
    - corporate sponsored lectures, publications, and grants from commercial health care firms (once a year, at the beginning of the school year),
    - commercial interest of the employee in research results (immediately).

## **Article VIII Ethics Committee of the Faculty Academic Senate**

1. The AS Ethics Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) is an advisory body to the AS President, who appoints its members based on a vote of the AS members. A staff representative elected by a supermajority of the members of the Committee shall act as the Chairperson of the Commission.
2. The Committee shall be established for the purpose of discussing cases of violation of ethical rules by a member of the AC, except for those cases, the consideration of which falls within the competence of the Ethics Committee of the AB FM. In addition, it shall provide advice to AC members on ethical issues upon request.
3. A member of the AC of the FM may submit a complaint regarding a violation of ethical rules within the meaning of this Code to the Chairperson of the AS or to the Chairperson of the Ethics Commission; anonymous complaints shall be rejected. The complainant shall have the right to confidentiality of identity in agreement with the Chairperson of the AS.
4. The meeting of the Ethics Committee shall be convened by its Chairperson at least twice a year, or at the request of the AS President.
5. The Ethics Committee shall decide, as a rule, within six weeks from the date on which the complaint was submitted, whether a violation of the principles of this Code of Ethics has occurred in the case in question.
6. When a violation of the Code of Ethics is found by the AS Ethics Commission, the Chairperson of the Committee shall notify the AS President of this fact, and the AS shall vote on the motion for disciplinary proceedings.
7. In the case of a complaint of a violation of the ethical rules filed by the Dean or another member of the Faculty management, the severity of the violation shall be reviewed at a meeting of the AS of the Faculty.
8. The Dean shall be responsible for the inviolability and protection of the member of the AC submitting a legitimate complaint of a violation of ethical rules; in the case of a complaint against a member of the Faculty management, the AS President shall be responsible for the protection of the member of the Faculty.

## **Article IX Sanctions**

The Faculty employee understands and respects that a severe violation of this Code of Ethics leads to a loss of moral credit and credibility, which in significant cases may lead to the loss of the right to teach and educate a new generation of physicians and other health care professionals and may be grounds for termination of employment with the Faculty of Medicine. The following shall be considered as particularly severe breaches of ethics by an academic staff member:

- all forms of corrupt behaviour,
- knowingly acting in a conflict of interest,
- unethical and immoral behaviour which has led to damage to the reputation of the Faculty or the University,
- fraudulent conduct in scientific research activities,
- breaches of medical ethics,
- failure to respect the rights of the patient and human dignity.

## **Article X Final Provisions**

This Code of Ethics for the FM Academic Employees shall enter into force on the date of its signing by the UPJŠ FM AS President and the UPJŠ FM Dean.

In Košice, dated 23/06/2016

Assoc. Prof. MUDr. Peter Jarčuška, PhD., Extr. Prof.  
UPJŠ FM AS President

Prof. MUDr. Daniel Pella, PhD.  
UPJŠ FM Dean