Ethics and Integrity in Research

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European Charter and Code for Researchers

- The Charter highlights the ethics and responsibility of researchers.
- The code highlights open and merit-based recruitment of researchers.
- Implementation of the Charter and the Code is a condition for applications to European tenders.
- UM was the first Slovenian university to receive recognition from the European Commission for the compliance of the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) with the Charter and the Code.

HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

European Charter for Researchers

■ Ethical principles:

Researchers must adhere to recognized ethical practices and fundamental ethical principles appropriate to their discipline, as well as ethical standards as documented in various national, sectoral or institutional ethical codes.

European Charter for Researchers

- Professional responsibility:

Researchers strive to ensure that their research is relevant to society and that they do not duplicate research that has previously been done elsewhere. They avoid plagiarism and respect the principles of intellectual property and shared ownership of data in the case of research carried out in collaboration with other researchers. Researchers must ensure that, if they delegate any aspect of their work to another person, that person is competent to carry it out.

European Charter for Researchers

■ Good practices in research

Researchers must follow safe working practices in accordance with national legislation, including necessary safeguards for health and safety and for information technology disaster recovery, e.g. by preparing appropriate backup strategies.

They must also be aware of applicable national legal requirements regarding data protection and confidentiality requirements and take the necessary steps to comply with them at all times.

Commitment to comply with internationally established standards of professional ethics

- UM Strategy 2021-2030 - EU objective: Adherence to internationally established standards of professional ethics to establish a work culture in which employees will be encouraged to excel and actively implement the UM strategy.

- In July 2021, the Senate of the University of Maribor adopted the Code of Ethical Conduct of the University of Maribor.

Who is bound by the Code?

- university teachers and researchers who perform research, teaching and professional work at UM, either on the basis of an employment contract or on another contractual basis
  - except when the personal validity of individual provisions is narrower and refers only to certain groups of employees
- UM students, regardless of level and mode of study (full-time, part-time).

The content is divided into ten chapters

- Personal and substantive validity

- General principles of ethical conduct

- Avoiding conflicts of interest

- Accepting gifts

- Ethical attitude in educational work

- Ethics and integrity in research work

- UM Ethics Commission

- Student Disciplinary Tribunals

- Trustee for the UM Code of Ethics

- Transitional and final provisions

General principles

- Respectful mutual communication

- Respect for dignity

- Conflict resolution

- Protection of confidential information and personal data

- Strengthening the reputation of UM in the public

- Affiliation listing

- Relationship to UM property

- Attitude towards the environment

- Health protection

Anonymous charges

- The Code highlights the need to protect whistle-blowers at the UM, and we **generally refuse to resort to anonymous reports**.

- As a general rule, the Ethics Committee does not consider anonymous applications, **except in cases** where it deems that the application is **adequately supported by evidence** for alleged violations of this Code.

- The Code Trustee does not consider anonymous reports at all.

Conflicts of Interest

- If conflicts of interest are not adequately controlled, they may jeopardize the execution of the university's mission and mission;

- All circumstances in which the private interest of a UM colleague or student affects or could affect the impartial and objective performance of his duties at UM are considered a conflict of interest;

- By avoiding even the **appearance of bias**, we protect ourselves from public criticism, and thereby also protect the reputation of UM;

- When it is not possible to avoid conflicting roles, **we disclose conflicts in advance**, and if this is not possible, we draw attention to it **as soon as** the conflict of interests is detected.

The most common cases of conflicts of interest

- supervising the work of another person, both of whom are the same or related persons;

- deciding on employment, promotion, division of work, evaluation of work and assessment of work performance, and rewarding themselves or persons related to them;

- all forms of evaluation of study results of related persons;

- influencing goods and services to be purchased by UM from its affiliates;

- using confidential information obtained during his work at UM for private purposes;

- when researchers at UM publicly defend the interests of private or public financiers of their work under the guise of objectivity, this funding is not disclosed to the public when the scientific or professional work is published;

- when reviewers or editors decide on the publication, funding, appointment, promotion or remuneration of themselves or those associated with them.

Related persons

- immediate family members (spouse, children, adopted children, parents, adoptive parents, brothers, sisters and persons who live with the individual in a joint household, in an extramarital union or in a contracted or uncontracted partnership);

- persons with whom the UM employee shares financial or other personal interests.

- The declaration of conflict shall be made to the Dean;

- In case of doubt about the existence of a conflict, the opinion of the Ethics Commission can be requested. These opinions are published on the UM website.

Personal relationships between teaching staff and students

- Since they are adults, such relationships cannot be prohibited;
- they may be related to the inequality of power in the relationship (questions as to whether it is a truly consensual relationship);
- This can lead to accusations of favouritism or undermine confidence in the academic process.
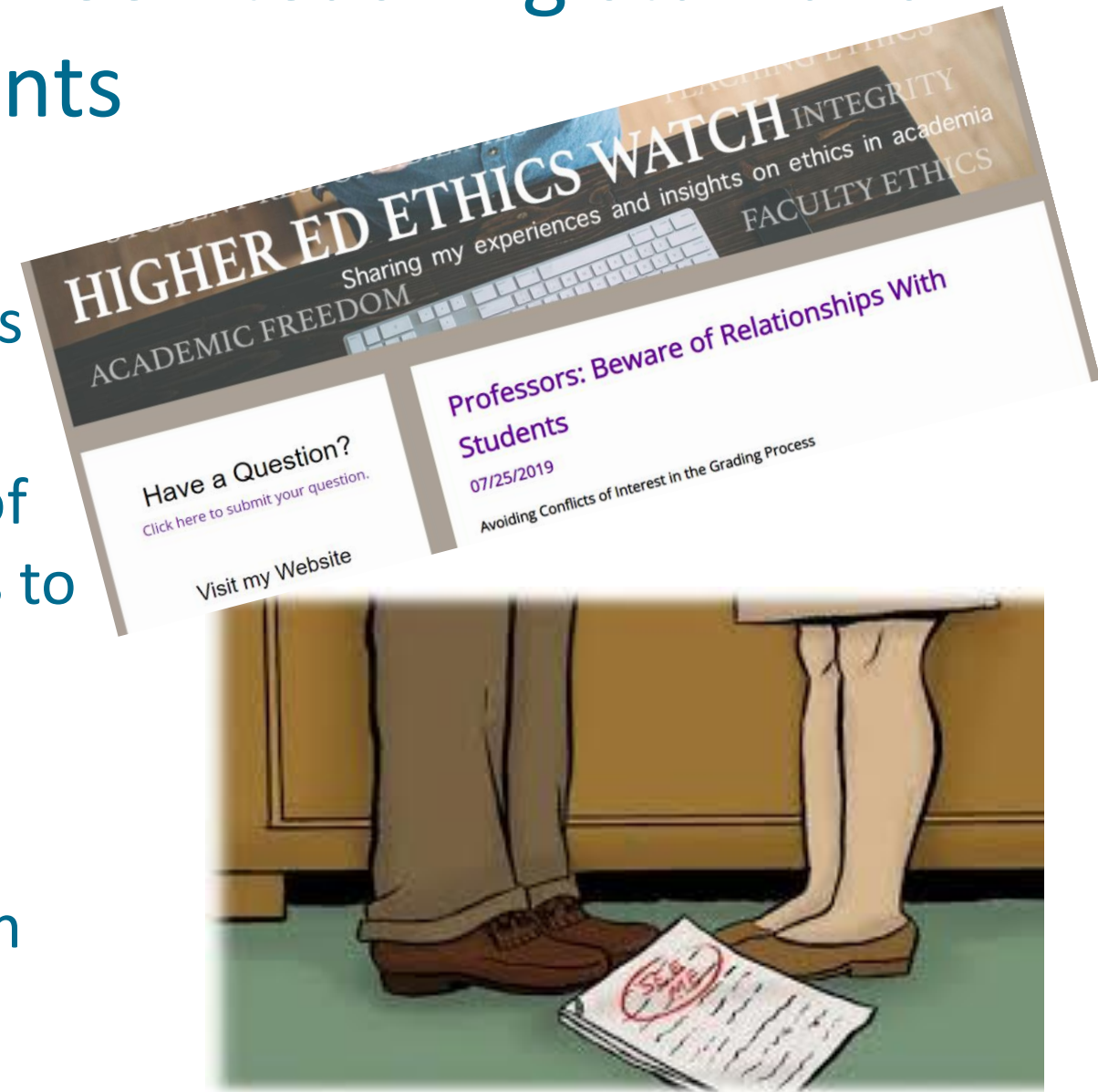
Personal relationships between teaching staff and students

- If such relationships occur, it is necessary to strictly observe the provisions on the <u>prevention of conflicts of interest</u> and to ensure that the relevant teaching staff is not responsible for any form of evaluation of the student's work.

- If a student receives **unwanted or inappropriate behaviour** from a UM teaching staff member or is involved in a relationship with a UM teaching staff member that he/she believes is **not truly consensual**, or if he/she believes that it was caused by an abuse of power, he/she can contact a trustee for the UM Code of Ethics or to the UM Ethics Commission.

Research Integrity

- As regards research ethics, the UM Code refers to the latest version of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity adopted by the Association of European Academies (ALLEA).

- The Slovenian version of the code is an annex to the UM Code.

- This means that it is not necessary to update the UM Code of Ethics every time the European Code is updated.

Criteria for authorship and co-authorship

■Special attention of the UM Code of Ethics
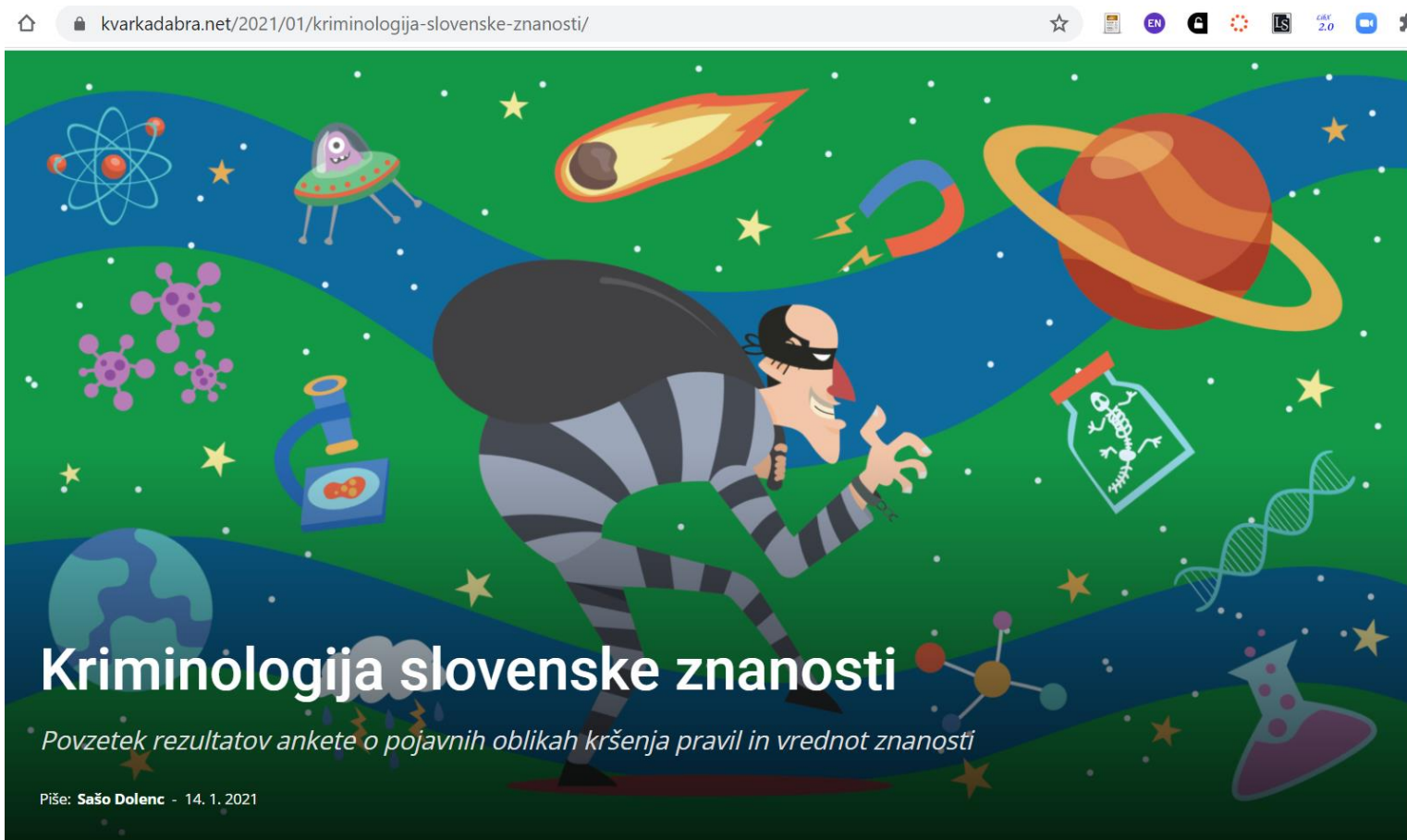
Most problems with co-authorship

violations of publication rules; signing/adding authors to articles/patents where they did not contribute anything at any stage; co-authorship on articles without basis; adding non-contributing authors to articles; adding people who did not contribute to the work as co-authors; signature of the manager on the article; adding co-authors only because department heads, although they did not contribute anything to the scientific work, did not even really allow research time for their co-authors; forcing the researcher to add the head of the section to his posts (after applying, he changed his job due to mobbing); signature under an article that was not their work…

Tednik, 24.3.2014

Forms

Half of the researchers have experience with it.

- Forced co-authorship from above

- Friendly co-authorship
    - Honourable or
    - Expecting a favour

- Co-authorship without knowledge/consent of the co-author (recognized researchers)

- Denial of co-authorship to persons with significant contributions to the work.

natureindex.com/news-blog/gift-ghost-authorship-what-researchers-need-to-know

The gift of paper authorship

Researchers seek clearer rules on crediting co-authors.

31 July 2020

Dalmeet Singh Chawla

Criteria for authorship and co-authorship in the UM Code of Ethics

(1) Authorship confers credit and has important academic, social, and financial implications.

(2) Authorship also includes responsibility for published work.

(3) Researchers therefore make sure that colleagues who have made a significant intellectual contribution to the work receive recognition from the authors, and at the same time, by cooperating as authors, we understand our role in assuming responsibility for the published work.

(4) Researchers should also not take advantage of students' work and present the latter as their own work.

Criteria for authorship and co-authorship

- Reference to the Vancouver Protocol on the Role of Authors and Co-Authors *(ICMJE, Recommendations for the Conduct, Reporting, Editing, and Publication of Scholarly Work in Medical Journals).*

Co-authorship tied to meeting <u>all four criteria</u>

- significant contributions to the design or design of the research or the acquisition, analysis or interpretation of research data AND

- drafting or critical review of a scientific article, thereby creating a significant intellectual contribution, AND

- final approval of version for release AND

- an agreement to take responsibility for all aspects of a scholarly work in terms of ensuring that questions about the accuracy or integrity of any part of it will be properly considered and resolved.

Criteria for authorship and co-authorship

(4) In addition to the fact that the author is responsible for the parts of the article that (s)he created, (s)he must also be able to **determine which co-authors are responsible for certain other parts of the article**. At the same time, authors are expected to **trust the integrity of the contributions** of their co-authors.

(5) Individuals who do not meet the conditions for author or co-author because they contributed to a lesser extent to the creation of the work or did not directly participate in the creation of the content of the article (for example, general administrative assistance, language review, editing of citation style, financial support for research, etc.) , are **listed in the acknowledgments**.

(6) especially in the case of interdisciplinary cooperation, it is necessary to discuss in **advance the expectations of the participants** regarding the classification of authorship.

Elsevier "CRediT author statement"

„CRediT (Contributor Roles Taxonomy) was introduced with the intention of recognizing individual author contributions, reducing authorship disputes and facilitating collaboration."

Term	Definition
Conceptualization	Ideas; formulation or evolution of overarching research goals and aims
Methodology	Development or design of methodology; creation of models
Software	Programming, software development; designing computer programs; implementation of the computer code and supporting algorithms; testing of existing code components
Validation	Verification, whether as a part of the activity or separate, of the overall replication/ reproducibility of results/experiments and other research outputs
Formal analysis	Application of statistical, mathematical, computational, or other formal techniques to analyze or synthesize study data
Investigation	Conducting a research and investigation process, specifically performing the experiments, or data/evidence collection
Resources	Provision of study materials, reagents, materials, patients, laboratory samples, animals, instrumentation, computing resources, or other analysis tools
Data Curation	Management activities to annotate (produce metadata), scrub data and maintain research data (including software code, where it is necessary for interpreting the data itself) for initial use and later reuse
Writing - Original Draft	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically writing the initial draft (including substantive translation)
Writing - Review & Editing	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work by those from the original research group, specifically critical review, commentary or revision – including pre-or postpublication stages
Visualization	Preparation, creation and/or presentation of the published work, specifically visualization/ data presentation
Supervision	Oversight and leadership responsibility for the research activity planning and execution, including mentorship external to the core team
Project administration	Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution
Funding acquisition	Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication

Elsevier "CRediT author statement"

It identifies 14 roles that an individual can play in the creation of an article, including:

Project administration

Management and coordination responsibility for the research activity planning and execution

Funding acquisition

Acquisition of the financial support for the project leading to this publication

Among the contributions, it also indicates an **indirect role** in the work and assumes that such roles are also listed next to the authors, with the content or method of their contribution being added next to each person.

An indirect role in the creation of the paper

If indirect contributions to the article are not accompanied by direct involvement in the preparation of the article in the sense of the Vancouver Protocol, the display of authorship or co-authorship is

- contrary to copyright law (Slovenian ZASP, Article 10:
  - (1) An author is a natural person who created an author's work.)
- inconsistent with ethical principles in research
  - for example, with the Singapore Declaration on the Integrity of Researchers, point 6.

Elsevier itself refers to the Vancouver Protocol

Elsevier – Publishing Ethics for Editors:

"Authorship should be limited to those who have made a significant contribution to the conception, design, execution, or interpretation of the reported study. All those who have made substantial contributions should be listed as co-authors."

https://www.elsevier.com/about/policies/publishing-ethics

"CRediT author statement" and Vancouver protocol complement each other

- The author must contribute to the content of the scientific article in such a way that it represents a significant creative individual contribution.

- Various roles from CRediT can be written under "contributions", but without a contribution to the content of the article according to the criteria from the Vancouver Protocol and ZASP, there is no co-authorship.

- CRediT defines different roles in the creation of the research, co-authors are encouraged to define what their contribution was, but without a key intellectual contribution to the creation of the article (ideas!), there is no co-authorship, just a thank you.

Procedures in the field of ethics at UM

- Code of Ethics breach by a UM staff: referral to the Trustee for the Code of Ethics (informal) or to the UM Commission for Ethics (formal);

- Code of Ethics breach by a UM student: referral to the Trustee for the Code of Ethics (informal) or to the Dean to refer a case to the Faculty Disciplinary Committee for Students (formal);

- Request for approval of ethical conformity of a research: Request at the Faculty Ethics Commission or to the National Committee for Medical Ethics or to the National Ethics Committee for Animal Experiments.

University Library Research Guide – Handling research data

Concluding remarks

- The revised UM Code of Ethics was widely supported in the academic community.

- Promotion among colleagues and students of UM.

- We want it to contribute to good relations between UM staff and students.
  - That the resulting conflicts will be resolved more easily;
  - That it will serve as a guideline of expected behaviour at UM, due to which violations will not occur or will occur on a smaller scale.

- The Code of Ethics is a living document that must respond to the current situation in academia and the wider community, so it will need regular updates.

Thank you for your attention!