



**UNIVERSITAT POLITÈCNICA
DE CATALUNYA
BARCELONATECH**

Code of Ethics of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya

**Governing Council Decision CG/2022/02, of 22 February
2022, approving the Code of Ethics and Good Practice
of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya**

UPC Ethics Committee

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PREAMBLE

In 2011, by Decision 106/2011 of the Governing Council, the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (hereinafter, the UPC), as a leading institution that seeks to ensure the proper functioning of the public services it provides, approved the Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Staff and Students of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya. That document defined a set of values and principles that serve to inspire and motivate the good practice of UPC staff and students in the performance of their activities.

Along the same lines, in 2020, the University established the UPC Ethics Committee (Governing Council Decision CG/2020/02/17, of 1 April 2020, approving the establishment of the UPC Ethics Committee and the definition of its functions and organisation). The main functions of the UPC Ethics Committee include drafting and periodically updating the UPC Code of Ethics.

The aim of updating the Code of Ethics is to adapt to the current context the principles that emerge from the UPC's guiding values, which are set out in its Statutes and govern the actions of all members of the university community. In this way, the UPC aims to strengthen its commitment to society, bolstering quality teaching and stand-out research and transfer that are aligned with the values of society.

As an institution in a member state, the UPC bases its values and principles on those of the European Union (EU). Article 2 of the EU Treaty states that the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the member states in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.

The new code replaces and repeals the current Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Staff and Students of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, approved by Governing Council Decision 106/2011.

For all of these reasons, the Code of Ethics of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya (hereinafter, the Code) is hereby approved.

TITLE I. General provisions

Article 1. Subject matter and scope

The purpose of this code is to set out the principles that should guide the conduct of every member of the UPC university community (teaching and research staff, administrative and service staff and students) in all of the activities they carry out in their areas of action. It also applies to any other parties participating in joint actions. The principles defined are based on values shared by the UPC community and expressed in the UPC Statutes, which are periodically updated, namely, social responsibility, equal opportunities, sustainability, cooperation, solidarity and a focus on putting technology at the service of human development.

TITLE II. Guiding principles

Article 2. Principles governing the Code of Ethics

In the performance of their respective functions, UPC staff and students, to whom this code applies, must comply with the UPC Statutes and other provisions of the legal order. In particular, they must respect and promote fundamental rights and public freedoms to the greatest extent possible.

Members of the university community must ensure that the actions and activities they carry out are in accord with the following principles:

- a) **Honesty:** They must not use the material or intellectual resources available to them by reason of their office, professional position or academic status for personal gain. They must act honourably.
- b) **Transparency:** They must publicise and provide information on the actions and obligations to which each member of the university community is subject. They must provide concrete and complete explanations to interested parties regarding decisions taken, based on verifiable data or facts.
- c) **Integrity:** They must work for the general interest of the university community and society in a manner that is free from any improper influence, and without taking any improper action.
- d) **Tolerance:** They must respect and value diverse opinions, ideologies and beliefs. They must put in place means for formulating constructive criticism and expressing disagreement within a framework of institutional progress and mutual cooperation.

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- e) **Equality:** They must treat people and their opinions in a non-discriminatory manner. They must not discriminate on the grounds of birth, ethnicity, gender, age, appearance, religion, ideology, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, social status, functional diversity or any other circumstance.
 - f) **Equity:** They must assess the needs and circumstances of individuals and groups in order to apply justice in a balanced and reasonable manner.
 - g) **Critical thinking:** They must promote constructive criticism based on reasoned argumentation and respect.
 - h) **Impartiality:** They must take decisions on the basis of objective criteria, without bias, prejudice or differential treatment for unjustified reasons.
 - i) **Culture of peace:** They must promote values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence, prevent conflict and promote peace.
 - j) **Sustainability:** In the performance of their individual activities, they must have an attitude and take measures that benefit human development and social progress, and make rational, balanced use of resources within the framework of the principles defined in the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - k) **Accountability:** They must honestly assume the consequences of actions they have taken and be accountable to the relevant groups or bodies.
 - l) **Confidentiality:** They must treat all non-public documentation and information to which they have had access as confidential.
 - m) **Reliability and independence:** They must demonstrate scientific rigour and act without any influence from individuals or institutions motivated by non-scientific considerations.
 - n) **Conflicts of interest:** A conflict of interest is deemed to exist when a situation arises in which the interests of one or more individuals—personal, professional, financial or of any other kind—interfere, or may be perceived to interfere, with the performance of their duties. Members of the university community must therefore abstain from participating in any matter in relation to which any of these circumstances apply. Under no circumstances may a member of the university community participate in a matter in which they have a legal duty to abstain from doing so.
 - o) **Respect:** They must treat all people with respect. This means listening to them attentively, using appropriate language in each case, and avoiding any kind of discrimination. They must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and avoid any kind of mistreatment, harassment or abuse.

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- p) **Cooperation:** They must collaborate with other people and public institutions in a respectful manner that is conducive to achieving the institution's objectives.
 - q) **Consistency:** They must ensure that their statements and their day-to-day actions are in accord.
 - r) **Co-responsibility:** They must abide by, comply with and enforce compliance with rules and regulations approved by the University's governing and representative bodies, with respect for legitimate disagreement.
 - s) **Austerity:** They must manage and use resources in strict compliance with legal requirements relating to the budget and, specifically, with real needs and the availability of resources.
 - t) **Effectiveness:** They must carry out their activities rigorously, in a way that serves to achieve their objectives.
 - u) **Efficiency:** They must manage the activities of individuals and work groups in a way that optimises the use and performance of available resources.
 - v) **Safety,** in two respects: 1. They must show firmness in what they do and say. 2. They must carry out the duties entrusted to them in a safe environment, avoiding any situation that could entail unnecessary risk to people and things, and supporting health surveillance.

TITLE III. Application of the principles

Article 3. Collegial bodies and university officers. Governance and management

- 3.1. Holding an office in a public institution such as the UPC—whether by appointment or election, and whether the post is consultative, representative, managerial or governance-related—entails a greater degree of involvement in carrying out its activities and greater co-responsibility for the institution's image and the achievement of its objectives. Institutional and representative duties must therefore be carried out with a high degree of exemplarity and integrity.
- 3.2. Members of collegial bodies and university officers undertake to comply with this code of ethics. They must communicate the Code to people within their sphere of responsibility and influence and anyone who reports to them, and they must ensure that it is respected.

- 3.3. In the performance of their duties, members of collegial bodies and university officers must take particular care to observe the principle of transparency while respecting the duty of confidentiality with regard to any non-public information they have knowledge of by reason of their office.
- 3.4. The duties of offices must be performed with honesty, integrity and efficiency. Decisions taken must be consistent, well founded, fair and transparent. They must also respect the principles of equality and fairness with respect to individuals and between them. Office holders should actively promote critical thinking and encourage internal coordination, respect for individuals and tolerance of dissenting views. They must effectively carry out all of the tasks entrusted to them by virtue of their office and those arising from the decisions of the University's governing bodies. They must abstain from taking decisions that directly or indirectly result in an illegitimate benefit for any individual, from restricting the freedom of any individual by means of threats or intimidation and from committing any kind of abuse of power.
- 3.5. Office holders must take special care to ensure that the objectives of the institution are achieved and to promote harmonious relations within the UPC community. They must attend the meetings of the UPC's governing and representative bodies to which they have been elected as representatives and participate actively in them. They must also scrupulously observe regulations approved by the University's governing bodies and disseminate them within the university community. They must perform the duties of their office with firmness and avoid an autocratic approach. They should be receptive to all forms of legitimate criticism and must be accountable for their actions in accordance with established procedures. They must also endeavour to resolve any personal conflicts that may exist or refer such matters to existing conflict resolution bodies.

Article 4. Teaching

- 4.1. In the performance of their teaching duties, teaching and research staff must show commitment to the learning process of students. This means providing them with rigorous, up-to-date knowledge, addressing their concerns and answering their questions and motivating and guiding them in the achievement of academic objectives. They must contribute to disseminating the scientific method and developing critical thinking among students. They must also be objective, fair and impartial when assessing students' knowledge and skills, scientific proposals and academic work.
- 4.2. For their effective education and training, students must make efficient, responsible use of all the resources, both tangible and intangible, that the University makes available to them. Thus, in addition to striving to attain the highest level of knowledge, they

should bear in mind the public nature of the resources that society invests in their education. They should demonstrate a willingness to participate in all training activities, facilitate the work of academic staff and actively participate in teacher evaluation processes. They should also make a concerted individual effort in all activities, act with honesty and integrity in assessment tasks and promote these attitudes among their fellow students. They should endeavour to participate in the University's representative and governing bodies that are open to them.

- 4.3. Research and teaching staff, as well as students, should bear in mind that training should not be limited to transmitting and acquiring knowledge, skills and competencies; it should also integrate the values set out in this code of ethics.

Article 5. Research and transfer

- 5.1. With respect to research and transfer activities, in accordance with the principles and precepts set out in the UPC Code of Research Integrity, research staff must act with rigour and follow the scientific method, understood as the means of generating valid, reliable knowledge, based on the originality, reproducibility and reliability of results. They should also seek to publish their research results in media within their area of knowledge and to put results at the service of society. In their publications, they must generously and honestly mention the institutions that have made their work possible and the people who have contributed to the achievement of their research results.
- 5.2. Experienced research staff should participate in the training of early career research staff and seek resources to support such training. Staff new to research should recognise the value of resources and training received from institutions and individuals who contribute to their research.
- 5.3. Research staff should contribute to transmitting the ethical principles of responsible research and the values of respect for people, all living beings and the environment.
- 5.4. In addition to observing this code of ethics within the university community, research staff and students must be committed to and capable of giving back to society—not only technical, scientific and artistic knowledge, but also values that will contribute to improving society and enable its transformation.

Article 6. Administration and services

- 6.1. Administrative and service staff must administer and manage basic services and

resources in a responsible manner in order to ensure effective delivery of the University's core service: the generation and transmission of knowledge.

6.2. Administrative and service staff must offer advice and support as necessary to the various groups that make up the university community. They must also provide the necessary assistance and support to users of the University's services.

6.3. In accordance with established procedures, administrative and service staff must address complaints and suggestions to the competent bodies so that they can be dealt with.

Article 7. University community

7.1. In their day-to-day activities, members of the UPC community must observe this code of ethics and provide assistance as necessary to ensure that it is adopted and applied by the entire community. Members of the UPC community must report any breaches of the Code of Ethics that they observe to the competent bodies. The institution must ensure that anyone who reports a breach is protected so that taking this action does not lead to any negative consequences for them.

7.2. Members of the UPC community must perform their specific duties with respect and tolerance towards all people and must cooperate with other UPC staff to achieve the objectives defined for each member in the UPC Statutes. They must take special care to treat other members of the institution and outsiders with courtesy.

7.3. They must ensure that public resources are used in an efficient, sustainable manner.

7.4. They must implement the decisions of the governing bodies with co-responsibility and commitment towards the UPC and with diligence and efficiency.

Article 8. Implications for the University

8.1. As a public university, the UPC must be fully accountable for making the best use of the resources that society and public administrations make available to it. The UPC must also orient its activity in such a way that society feels satisfied and informed about how resources are allocated. In particular, the UPC must make every effort to ensure that society benefits from the investment made by contributing to scientific, technological, artistic and cultural progress and producing highly qualified professionals. The UPC must also facilitate the ongoing personal and professional development of members the university community.

8.2. The University must ensure the necessary conditions to encourage behaviour that respects the ethical values and principles set out in its code of ethics, thus facilitating their application.

TITLE IV. Monitoring and evaluation system

Article 9. Communication channel

9.1. The University must establish a communication channel so that any individual can report any irregularities, inappropriate conduct or non-compliance with regulations that they observe, and so that reports can be directed to the appropriate authority.

Article 10. Ethics Committee

10.1. The University has an Ethics Committee, which is responsible, among other things, for advising on and considering ethical issues that are relevant to the UPC's various areas of activity.

10.2. The Ethics Committee is available to any member of the UPC community to respond to queries concerning the interpretation of the Code of Ethics.

10.3. Any queries addressed to the Ethics Committee must be made in accordance with established instructions and procedures.

10.4. Reports issued by the Ethics Committee may not, under any circumstances, contradict this code.

ADDITIONAL PROVISION

Specific codes due to subject matter

Where appropriate, the Ethics Committee must support the development of codes of integrity or good practice in its various areas of activity and any other codes of conduct which, due to their subject matter, need to be developed in a separate document.

TRANSITIONAL PROVISION

Until the Ethics Committee is organised according to the various areas to which the Code of Ethics applies, its work will be limited to the scope of application of the University's Code of Research Integrity.

The functioning of the Ethics Committee will be regulated by rules of procedure.

REPEALING PROVISION. Repeal of previous code

The Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Staff and Students of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya, approved by Governing Council Decision 106/2011, is hereby repealed.

FINAL PROVISIONS

One. Interpretation

The Ethics Committee of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya is responsible for interpreting this code of ethics and good practice.

Two. Revisions and updates

This code will be subject to periodic revision and updating that must be carried out every two years, unless legislative, social, technological or other circumstances make it advisable to do so sooner. An earlier revision may be carried out at the request of one third of the members of the Ethics Committee.

Three. Entry into force

This code comes into force the day after its approval by the Governing Council of the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya.