

INTERNATIONAL BALKAN UNIVERSITY

No. 200.09/2024

25.01.2024, Skopje

Based on Article 94, Paragraph 1 Item 43 of The Law on Higher Education (“Official Gazette of Republic of North Macedonia” number 82/2018, 154/2019, and 178/2021) and Article 32 of the Statute of the University, the Senate of the International Balkan University, on 25.01.2024, adopted the following

CODE ON RESEARCH ETHICS

Article 1

This Code is intended to provide a self-regulatory framework for the academic community, to provide clear guidance and responsibilities for anyone conducting research in or for the International Balkan University, to ensure that they are able to fulfill their responsibilities according to the ethical, legal, and professional standards.

This Code defines the obligations of researchers in and for International Balkan University in all disciplines, the policies governing scientific research in this institution, and compliance with institutional, and regulatory requirements.

Article 2

This Code is suitable and applicable for all academic and scientific staff at International Balkan University, authors or part-time engaged staff as well as for students involved in research; for research projects financed by the International Balkan University, from public funding, grants or international collaborations, in accordance with the requirements set by institutional regulatory bodies, professional research guidelines and international frameworks on scientific research ethics.

Article 4

This Code has been compiled in accordance with the established ethical principles of scientific research, positive ethical practices from European universities, the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers¹, the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity², the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and the Code of Conduct - APA Style³, Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE)⁴.

This Code is of particular importance in biomedical research involving human tissue where the results may affect the status and reputation of individuals. In addition to this Code and applicable regulations, researchers are strongly encouraged to adhere to internationally recognized ethical rules and standards that apply to their specific fields of research.

Article 5

Each of the following commitments and rules in this Code imposes certain responsibilities on staff, researchers, mentors, collaborators, and students who conduct research or training at IBU, for IBU, or funded by IBU.

Academic Freedom and Academic Integrity

Article 6

Academic freedom is the freedom to teach and to pursue knowledge and research without unreasonable interference or restriction by law, institutional regulation, or public pressure. Its basic elements include the freedom of the researcher to choose any topic of intellectual concern, to present findings, to publish data and conclusions without control or censorship, and to teach in the way he/she deems most appropriate.

At the same time, integrity and responsibility in conducting scientific research is the basis of any academic activity, and violations of research standards represent serious offenses against the entire scientific community that promotes excellence in Europe.

¹ <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/charter/code>

² https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/other/hi/h2020-ethics_code-of-conduct_en.pdf

³ <https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>

⁴ <https://publicationethics.org/>

According to the Law on Higher Education of Republic of North Macedonia (“Official Gazette of Republic of North Macedonia” number 82/2018, 154/2019, and 178/2021), academic staff of accredited and licensed institution enjoy the freedom to publish the results of their research, but in accordance with the internal acts of the institutions in regarding of the use of intellectual property rights for the benefit of the institution and in accordance with the provisions of this law.

Article 7

Academic integrity means a commitment to the values of honesty, trust, justice, respect, responsibility, legality, and distribution.

To support academic integrity, we are committed to:

- a. Maintaining the highest standards of scientific research integrity in all aspects of research;
- b. IBU makes sure that the research is carried out according to the relevant ethical, legal, and professional frameworks, obligations, and standards;
- c. IBU supports a research environment based on a culture of integrity, good management, best practices, and institutional support for the development of staff and researchers;
- d. Using transparent, robust, and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct if they arise;
- e. We work together to strengthen the integrity of scientific research and the regular and open review of progress.
- p. Integrity and professionalism also means:
 - ethical and responsible behavior;
 - accuracy of results;
 - avoidance of conflict of interest;
 - preserving the dignity, safety, and well-being of the persons involved in the research or of the person you mentor.

Integrity in research

Article 8

Research activities are based on research freedom, academic freedom, professionalism, academic and personal integrity, and research honesty.

Article 9

Research integrity includes consistently respecting authorship, accurately acknowledging and citing the scientific achievements of other researchers; consistent use of appropriate research methods and objective examination/testing of scientific hypotheses; fair and professionally unbiased interpretation of results, and honest reporting of findings and data.

Article 10

Research methods, hypotheses, and results should be open to review and debate unless otherwise regulated by any contract requiring confidentiality.

Article 11

The scientific researcher must prove that he is familiar with the nature of the research when applying for external scientific funds on behalf of IBU; coordinate with the relevant scientific research office and prove that there is no conflict of interest or personal benefits on behalf of the institution.

Article 12

Any researcher who is a signatory to a funding application, whether funded by IBU or non-IBU funds, must ensure that the information submitted is clear and accurate and will be held responsible for any plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation.

Article 13

When an application involves collaborative work with individuals and organizations outside the IBU, the researcher must clarify the costs of the collaborator and any supporting letter or agreement must be transparent and monitorable by the institution.

Inadmissible Actions

Article 14

Unacceptable behaviors include the following points (the list is not exhaustive):

- a. Fabrication, falsification, fraud: creating false data or other aspects of scientific research, including documentation and participant consent;
- b. Inappropriate manipulation or selection of another's data, images, quotes, or any other type of deceptive behavior;
- c. Plagiarism: This includes copying or misusing ideas, text, software, data/results, or any combination thereof, without proper permission and citation. Researchers are strongly encouraged to agree in advance with any co-author or contributor to the study;
- d. Self-plagiarism (presenting a previously published work as if it were new)⁵. This is considered wrong behavior if we are dealing with a superficial reworking and updating, but presenting it as a completely new scientific product;
- e. Misrepresentation/misrepresentation of data/results knowingly or unknowingly, negligently or by presenting a wrong interpretation of data;
- p. Duplication of publication, including undetected copying during submission of manuscripts for publication;
- g. Non-disclosure of conflict of interest, including non-disclosure of material interests of either the researcher or the funders of the research, including failure to disclose the fact that the research is funded by any entity;

⁵ American Psychological Association (2010) *The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition*, p. 170.

- h. Wrong/false presentation of qualifications or scientific experience;
- i. Misrepresentation of authorship, such as inappropriate claims of authorship or denial of authorship or contribution;
- j. Academic misuse or misdirection of the master's candidates (of the topic) by the mentor;

Compliance with the Code

Article 14

The academic staff engaged in scientific research should familiarize themselves with this Code and its provisions and ensure that they and others working around them are made aware of the principles of the Code and adhere to these provisions.

Article 15

Staff responsible for teaching or supervising students, undertaking research, or mentoring postgraduates must ensure that students are informed of the essential principles of the Code.

Article 16

New scientific staff should seek to familiarize themselves with the provisions of this Code or consult with experienced colleagues.

Article 17

The scientific researcher, the mentor of a dissertation, the leader of a research project, etc., shows a willingness to monitor and evaluate the research activity that he directs or in which he participates. He cooperates with institutional or professional monitors and evaluators during the realization of these scientific or mentoring activities.

Article 18

Infringers of this Code will be subject to the disciplinary procedures provided by the relevant internal act of the IBU, the relevant regulations, and the responsibilities provided by the above-mentioned international codes and the employment contract.

The disciplinary procedure for the infringers of this Code is objective, fact-based, prompt, confidential, and fair.

Article 19

The staff must refrain from public-media statements or denunciations about the possibly unsatisfactory level of any collaborator involved in the research project, or disparaging statements about students.

Article 20

The institution protects the staff from accusations that are frivolous, malicious, or without substance. Appropriate action will be taken against any person found to have made malicious or reckless accusations.

Researchers found not to have committed research misconduct will be supported and appropriate steps will be taken to restore their reputation.

Project supervision

Article 21

The institution follows a clear policy for the design and implementation of research projects in cooperation with other scientific organizations, which requires reaching agreements before the start of project implementation.

The agreements cover aspects of financial management, protection of intellectual property, copyright, respect for creative originality (avoiding plagiarism), ensuring publication and distribution of scientific research results, prior ethical approval, and protection of personal data;

Article 22

The Committee of Research Ethics each year shall prepare a report on allegations of scientific ethical misconduct and their outcome, denunciations, or investigations.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Article 23

Conflict of interest represents family connections, by blood or marriage to another individual in the research; to any of the individuals being surveyed or studied; or to any partner institution or grant provider.

Article 24

Professional conflict of interest will be defined as a research having an interest in the outcome of the research that is not explicitly scholarly; by involving non-merit-based partners in the research project; or by having a prior financial, political, or social relationship with any partner in the research project that is not explicitly, and with priority, declared.

Article 25

All researchers working for, with, or on behalf of International Balkan University must declare openly any conflict of interest they may have. It is the responsibility of the individual researcher(s) to make this declaration.

All conflicts of interest must be declared openly before research begins. The Committee of Research Ethics will ascertain whether the declaration is sufficient to remove the conflict of interest, or whether the conflict of interest remains problematic. In such cases, the Committee of Research Ethics will provide a written decision limiting, or prohibiting, the researcher from participating in the compromised research. That decision is final.

Article 26

Should a conflict of interest be undeclared, but later emerge during or after the research period, the Committee of Research Ethics will conduct a review to establish whether or not the researcher knew that there was a conflict of interest and concealed it; or whether the researcher in good faith failed to declare a conflict of interest because of genuine ignorance of the conflict. In the latter case, the Committee of Research Ethics may recommend no action, or may consider the matter to issue a light reprimand.

In cases of willful failure to declare a conflict of interest, the Committee of Research Ethics is obligated to ask the Disciplinary Commission to investigate of the concealment, and to ask the Disciplinary Commission to recommend immediate termination of the contract for the researcher. An independent procedure will be followed before the Disciplinary Commission.

THE COMMITTEE OF RESEARCH ETHICS

Article 27

The implementation of the Code of Research Ethics will be supervised by the Committee of Research Ethics of International Balkan University.

Composition of the Committee of Research Ethics

Article 28

The Committee of Research Ethics consists of 5 members, of whom:

- Four Members from Health and Clinical Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences, Arts and Design, and Engineering areas of IBU who hold at least the title " Assisting Prof. Dr.";
- A professor qualified in academic publication, and intellectual property i.e. on copyrights.

Article 30

Choosing the Committee of Research Ethics

1. The members of the Research Ethics Committee are elected for a two-year term by the Senate among the candidates nominated by the rector.
5. The President of the Committee of Research Ethics is elected by the members of the Committee, from among themselves, with a secret ballot for two years.
6. The Committee of Research Ethics, within 2 months from the day of its constitution, drafts and approves the regulation of procedures for its operation.

The members of the College of Ethics enjoy the right to remuneration, the measure of which is determined by the decision of the Rector's board/Rector.

Article 28

This code of research ethics enters into force on the day of its approval by the Senate.

**International Balkan University
President of Senate**

Prof. Dr. Kire Sharlamanov