

Pompeu Fabra University

# Code of Ethics



Universitat  
Pompeu Fabra  
*Barcelona*

# Pompeu Fabra University

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# Code of Ethics

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Approved by resolution of the Board  
of Governors on 8 July 2020

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This draft Code of Ethics was prepared by the Committee to Review and Strengthen the Pompeu Fabra University Code of Ethics (CRAC-UPF), created by resolution of the UPF Board of Governors on 13 December 2017. The following people were members of the Committee: Cèlia Carola, Judit Carrera, David Felip, Mònica Figueras, Cristina Gelpí, Ramon López, Rosa Maria Pujante, Gema Revuelta, Lluïsa Rojas, Pere Torra and Enric Vallduví. Antoni Company, Lola Martínez, Tània Verge and Rosa Vacas also participated in one of the five CRAC work meetings, which were held on 1 March 2018, 9 July 2018, 14 February 2019, 15 November 2019 and 25 June 2020. In the period from 4 March 2020 to 16 June 2020, a participatory process open to the entire university community was held, during which numerous contributions were received and assessed and, in some cases, included in the proposed text

*A les paraules demano camins  
que ens assenderin les noves petjades.*

**Maria-Mercè Marçal**

## Foreword

Words loaded with an ancient and complex history require special care, even if pragmatism is the official and most acceptable linguistic doctrine. The noun *ethics* and the adjective *ethical* come from a family of ancient Greek words (*éthô* and *éthos*) that mean to be accustomed and custom. Far from our initial intuitions, they should be interpreted in the sense in which today we would say to have character or (and this is an ugly word simply because) personality. I have the custom of... It is what sets me apart, what constitutes my virtue, or what rightfully makes me an object of contempt.

In a way as arguable as any other when it comes to the historical formation of the titles that we use to identify ancient books, at least two of Aristotle's works ended up being called *Ethics*, that is, something related to *éthos*. Today, this whole chain of words invites us to think about the space of being aware of how we behave, of trying to follow rules that protect the principle of individual will and freedom. But the chain may not have anything to do with what drove the ancient Greeks, who, amongst other things, viewed the issues of will and freedom rather differently from our modern conceptions.

Now, faced with this uncertain space laden with meanings that are not always mutually coherent, UPF is publishing a code of ethics. The code's text is extraordinarily simple. I would like to thank everyone mentioned in the text itself for this exercise in restraint and, quite especially, the university's current general secretary, Mr Pere Torra. Because, in my opinion, the code of ethics that I am presenting recalls what I believe is the most authentic and irrefutable part of the word *ethics*, which coincides with its oldest meaning. What I mean is: esteemed colleagues, please have the character not to engage in an unseemly range of customs; esteemed members of the community, be strong enough not to use others as an excuse, but to treat them as an end in themselves.

Jaume Casals

Barcelona, November 2020

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# I. Preamble

## A new Code to strengthen UPF's ethical commitment

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This Code of Ethics is based on the first Pompeu Fabra University Code of Ethics, adopted in 2012, whose preamble aptly stated, ‘Over time, university life has become more complex. Inevitably reflecting the societies in which they operate, universities have historically been affected by the same social and political tensions as their respective countries. Against that backdrop, they have participated in numerous citizen-led movements to bring about social changes that have made society fairer. A desire for greater equity in society remains one of the public university system’s defining traits and is a factor in institutions’ ongoing active promotion of critical thinking. In Catalonia, universities have made a notable contribution to the recovery of democratic values and the self-awareness of the Catalans as a people, as well as to the spread of knowledge of the territory’s culture and history.

The principles on which that Code is based remain valid, but it needs to be revised and improved in order to strengthen the ethical commitment of the institution and the people linked to it. This need to revise the Code also stems from the changes undergone due to the evolution of both society and the university itself and the emergence of new laws containing numerous requirements in areas related to those covered by the Code of Ethics: equality, transparency, public information, good governance, personal data protection, public sector contracting, administrative procedures, etc. Thus, more than 25 years after the university’s founding, the principles and values set out in the Code of Ethics should be strengthened.

## **A new Code of Ethics by and for the whole community**

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**T**he commitments in the Code of Ethics must include all the groups that make up the university community: teaching and research staff, administrative and service staff and the student body, as well as any other person who participates in the institution's activity. Because the Code of Ethics formulates principles to be shared by all members of the university community, it is essential to open a participatory process, prior to its approval by the competent body.

## **A new Code of Ethics for all the university's activities**

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**T**he Code of Ethics of any institution cannot be an isolated act, but must be part of a policy of institutional integrity that includes all its activities and is based on the professionalism of all the people who work there. For this reason, the UPF Code of Ethics takes into account both teaching and learning and research and knowledge transfer; both management and the provision of services. The Code of Ethics must also apply to institutional outreach.

## **A new Code of Ethics with current content**

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**T**he goals set by the 2012 Code remain fully valid and necessary. They have been supplemented with references to various additional values more recently established by the UPF Strategic Plan (2016-2025). The Code of Ethics also includes sustainability, as a new principle in connection with current concerns and with the aim of going beyond the strict scope of the university institution.

## **A new clearly worded Code of Ethics**

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This Code of Ethics was conceived of to enshrine certain general principles without the need to address specific conducts in detail on a case by case basis. To this end, clear and concise wording was sought to facilitate its interpretation. The text has been significantly simplified compared with its predecessor. Additionally, all references to legal regulations (which are always subject to change) have been omitted, given the aim of going beyond the legal framework.

## **A new Code of Ethics for a public university**

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UPF's nature and vocation as a public university entails the assumption of the highest ethical standards. To this end, the text of the Code underscores transparency, also understood as a mechanism of accountability, and honesty in both the management of public money by the university's managers and its use by students occupying places in courses in high demand.

A list of the agents and instruments that give form to UPF's ethical commitment, a commitment that has existed since its founding, has been included in an annex. This list includes various bodies, action plans and instruments, whose activity especially impacts ethical aspects.

## **A new Code of Ethics with guarantees of compliance and review**

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As this Code was being drafted, UPF published the first UPF Sustainability Report, a demanding self-assessment system and an important exercise in voluntary transparency. Additionally, to ensure the full effect of the ethical principles the Code establishes specific and formal monitoring and review mechanisms. First, it creates an independent Integrity Committee of an institutional scope for the interpretation and continuous updating and enforcement of the ethical principles enshrined

in the Code. Second, it provides for the creation of a dedicated e-mail address ('Ethics Hotline') for queries and to report possible violations of the Code of Ethics principles. The Ethics Hotline will be confidential and shall operate in such a way as to ensure the rights of all affected parties. Additionally, notwithstanding these rights, the anonymity of reports will be guaranteed, if the reporting party so requests.



# II. Ethical principles underpinning university life

## 1. INTEGRITY

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Integrity refers to adherence to the ethical and good governance principles that the university community accepts as its own and consistency between these principles and individual and institutional behaviour. Integrity is manifested in reliable, honest and responsible decisions informed by good governance.

Behaviours related to research, teaching, learning and management must be in accordance with shared moral principles. It is necessary to act on the basis of consensus whenever possible, on the understanding that the various members of the university community have different roles, which does not exempt the authorities and academic and administrative managers from their specific responsibility.

Reliability is reflected in quality assurance in the design and analysis process and in the proper use of resources. Honesty is reflected in fair, complete and unbiased management, research, teaching and reporting. Responsible decision-taking is achieved through accountability to the academic community and society at each stage of the research and training activity.

## 2. ACADEMIC FREEDOM

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Academic freedom consists of the freedom to teach, study and research that leads to the altruistic search for truth and knowledge. It is a concept with an institutional and a personal dimension.

The institutional dimension is reflected in the autonomy afforded to universities in organizing education and research. It is expressed in the power to choose which subjects to include in curricula and the other ways in which educational content is organized.

The personal dimension refers to what academic freedom represents for university community members. For teachers, it entails university lecturers' right to express themselves freely in their teaching. This freedom must be compatible with the necessary restrictions to be established by the academic authorities to guarantee proper coordination and ensure that students are able to exercise their right to receive a quality education on an equal footing. For researchers, academic freedom refers to the right to freely generate scientific, technical and humanistic output. For students, it is reflected in the right to decide the learning track they deem most suitable in accordance with their personal interests, within the framework of the applicable academic regulations.



### 3. RESPONSIBILITY

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Responsibility affects the three main groups that make up the university community – teaching staff, administrative and service staff, and students – in all the activities they carry out in their areas of action.

Teaching staff must ensure their scientific excellence and teaching competence. The university must hire professionals who meet the optimal conditions, in objective, transparent processes that ensure the application of the principles of equal opportunity and equal merit and capacity. Additionally, it must ensure that new staff receive training and the necessary follow-up and support. The social responsibility of research is reflected in the creation of knowledge and its transfer to society, maximizing its impact and promoting open science, social communication and civic engagement.

Administrative and service staff must perform their duties with a commitment to public service and strive to ensure that their technical and personal skills are always up to date. The university must guarantee the principles of equality, merit and ability in recruitment processes, whilst offering a training plan that enables professional development.

Responsibility in learning is the main duty of all the university's students. In learning processes, the university must put into place the necessary tutoring resources to detect and address both students' learning difficulties and the needs of gifted and high-achieving students.

Academic officials and members of the governing bodies, regardless of which group they belong to, must perform their duties to the benefit of the university's interests and not carry out activities that might conflict with them.

## 4. HONESTY

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The resources that society makes available to the university must be used for their intended purposes and not for interests incompatible with its mission or for personal benefit. Community members have an obligation to use them responsibly and to keep them in the best possible condition.

The university has a duty to report to society on the resources it uses in a transparent way balanced with other obligations, such as personal data security and protection or respect for industrial and intellectual property rights.

UPF's good name and reputation are an asset built up by the students and teaching, administrative and service staff who have come before us. When acting on behalf of UPF, all members of the university community, notwithstanding their freedom of speech, must be especially aware that their actions, opinions and behaviours are associated with it.

## 5. EQUALITY

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The promotion of equality and respect for all forms of diversity must govern interpersonal relations.

The university defends the effective equality of women and men in all aspects and at all levels and has a duty to promote policies conducive to its achievement. The university also defends the right of lesbian, gay, bisexual, intersex and trans people to be and express themselves however they wish.

The university must take the necessary measures to ensure in all its areas fulfilment of the right to non-discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, origin, race, religious beliefs or social class. Sexism, gender-based violence, lesbophobia, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia, ableism, racism, religious discrimination and classism will not be tolerated under any circumstance at UPF.

All people have the right to equal opportunities. The university must establish the appropriate measures to ensure awareness and fulfilment of this right in general and in specific circumstances, such as access to study programmes and academic exams, access to jobs and promotion for all groups of employees. Transparency, objectivity and the absence of conflicts of interest must govern selection criteria and processes. People with special needs (educational or functional) must receive appropriate services to ensure equal opportunities.



## **6. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

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All people have a right to privacy and the protection of their personal information. The university must always process the personal data it manages to achieve its goals for specific purposes and in a way that is fair, lawful and transparent for the interested parties.

All members of the university community must take special care to respect confidentiality and privacy. This also applies to students in all their learning activities, including external internships at companies and institutions.

## **7. RESPECT**

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A true university community is only possible if its members work together to create and transfer knowledge, participate in the organization of learning, research and management processes, and treat others with respect in the performance of their duties. This principle entails the explicit rejection of acts of violence, intimidating behaviours, disorderly conduct, coercion or harassment; interference in the university's activities; and behaviours involving personal and social risk.

Respect is expressed by how we treat and regard colleagues, students, teaching staff, administrative and service staff, or any other person related to the university, their ideas and contributions, and the natural, social and cultural research environment. Respect is also reflected through solidarity within and outside the university.

## 8. SUSTAINABILITY

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The university must promote an effective policy in the area of sustainability, as well as the appropriate framework to help members of the university community include this principle in their decision-taking and the actions they organize. It is the responsibility of all community members to ensure the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the activities they carry out.

The university must specifically encourage and promote the struggle to overcome the climate emergency, as a means of ensuring the health and well-being of people and the planet as a whole, as well as ensure proper use and conservation of its heritage, always pursuing energy savings and efficiency.

### THE Impact Rankings SDGs 2020

**5th**

FOR PEACE,  
JUSTICE  
AND STRONG  
INSTITUTIONS

**12th**

FOR CLIMATE  
ACTION

**26th**

FOR GENDER  
EQUALITY

# III. Code of Ethics monitoring and review mechanisms

## 1. Integrity Committee

The Integrity Committee has the following duties:

- Disseminate the Code of Ethics to the UPF university community and enforce it.
- Promote training on, report on and raise awareness of ethical behaviours in both the UPF university community and society at large, encouraging all manner of actions, including a social media presence.
- Promote measures to prevent actions contrary to the principles of the Code of Ethics, make recommendations and propose improvements in the application of these principles.
- Respond to queries, observations and suggestions from members of the UPF university community regarding ethical conduct in the performance of their duties.
- Draft proposals or reports on reported violations.
- Annually review the content of the Code of Ethics and, if necessary, submit proposals to update it to the Board of Governors.
- Issue an annual report on integrity at UPF and on its activity as a Committee, the conclusions of which will be published on the UPF Transparency Portal.
- The UPF Board of Governors must approve the composition, operation and internal organization of the Integrity Committee. In doing so, it must ensure coordination with the UPF Ombuds Office.

## 2. Ethics Hotline

The Code of Ethics and regulations of the Integrity Committee must be available on the UPF Transparency Portal, which must have a dedicated e-mail address ('Ethics Hotline') for queries and to report violations that guarantees confidentiality and, if the reporting party so requests, anonymity. In all cases, it must facilitate the follow-up of the query or report by the person who made it and guarantee the rights of all interested parties.



## **IV. Annexes**

### **Annex 1. Main agents and instruments of UPF's ethical commitment**

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#### **Agents**

The ethical commitment is undertaken by the whole institution. The entire university, through its bodies and academic and administrative units, is involved in the ethical commitment. This list includes only the main agents with specializations directly related to the practical application of the principles contained in the Code of Ethics.

- Ombuds Office
- Data protection officer
- Institutional Committee for the Ethical Review of Projects (CIREP)
- Transparency Advisory Board
- Committee for Gender Equality Policies
- Permanent Committee against Gender-based Violence and LGBTI-phobia
- Equality Unit
- UCPI Corporate Responsibility Area
- Complaints Committee
- Office for Occupational Risk Prevention and Health Promotion (OPRLiPS)
- Committee to Review and Strengthen the Code of Ethics (CRAC)

## Instruments

- 2nd Isabel de Villena Equality Plan (2018-2022)
- Inclusion plan for people with special needs and at risk of socio-economic exclusion at UPF (2017-2021)
- Adaptation of maternity and paternity leaves for teaching and research staff
- Name change procedure for transsexual, transgender and intersex persons at UPF
- Transparency Portal
- Personal data protection
- Pompeu Fabra University Code on violent, discriminatory and harassing behaviours
- Protocol for preventing and solving conflicts involving gender-based violence, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia
- Protocol for preventing and solving conflicts involving workplace bullying
- Disciplinary regime for Pompeu Fabra University students
- UPF Sustainability Report
- UPF Inclusió
- UPF Sostenible (ethical sustainability)
- UPF Agenda 21
- UPF Solidària
- UPF Saludable
- Individual health surveillance protocol

## **ANNEX 2. Declaration of the University Senate on the respect, defence and promotion of freedom of expression at UPF**

**(Approved by resolution of the Board of Governors on 23 february 2022)**

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*On 26 January 2022, Pompeu Fabra University Senate approved the “Declaration by the university Senate on the respect for, defence and promotion of the freedom of expression at UPF”.*

*Point six of said Declaration expresses that it be included in the UPF Code of Ethics, under the framework of the promotion of integrity at the University.*

### **Declaration of the University Senate on the respect, defence and promotion of freedom of expression at UPF**

The University Senate, as the foremost representative body of the UPF community, hereby declares that:

**1.** Freedom of expression is a fundamental element of any democratic society and a basic condition for its progress and for people’s development. The main mission of a university is the search for and dissemination of knowledge, through research, teaching and transfer to society. Universities, as social institutions, are called upon for aspects that go beyond academic activity and are active agents in the processes of civic transformation. For a university to be able to fulfil its role there must be a free exchange of ideas, not only within its walls, but also with society and, therefore, it must be ensured that all people of the university community enjoy the highest level of freedom possible to listen, learn, write, speak, debate, express and spread ideas and thoughts across all media.

**2.** In this context, Pompeu Fabra University upholds a strong commitment to guarantee an environment in which people can express and listen to a diverse range of opinions and ideas, including those which may be viewed as controversial. The University must become an open space where people can test out new ideas, question values and change conceptions in a context

of civility and respect, while fostering a critical spirit. It must be more vigorous than society at large in its defence of freedom of expression and in the promotion of all kinds of debates. It therefore cannot accept complaints and pressure that seek to limit this.

**3.** The University will offer the broadest possible protection for people to exercise their right to freedom of expression and academic freedom, but this protection must be compatible with the duty to be responsible for and respect the rights of others. In line with the vision of the European Court of Human Rights, the right to freedom of expression does not include those expressions that defame a specific individual or group, effectively constitute a threat or harassment, or, without justification, infringe upon the fundamental interests of privacy and confidentiality.

**4.** The exercise of freedom of expression involves the entire community. The University's fundamental commitment to protect and promote free expression is linked with the duty of all members of the university community to respect such expression. Likewise, a university, as an educational institution, must encourage the participation of the university community in the debates that are organised there and try to ensure that dialogue is free, active and plural.

**5.** The University does not tolerate members of its community using internal complaints as an instrument to disparage people with different opinions, hinder their work or force them into self-censorship.



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