On the basis of Article 314 of the Statute of the University of Maribor (UM Statute -UPB 12, Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia, no. 29/2017) the Senate of the University of Maribor at its 26th regular session of 24 October 2017 has adopted the following

CODE OF CONDUCT OF RESEARCH ETHICS AND INTEGRITY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MARIBOR

1. Premise and purpose of the Code
The purpose of this Code, as per the Code of Professional Ethics of the University of Maribor, is to set up and strengthen high ethical standards in research at the University of Maribor. The underlying document of integrity of research at the University of Maribor is The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, Allea, 2017, Revised Edition, implemented in terms of subject matter in the text set out below.

2. Good Research Practices
We describe good research practices in the following contexts:
- Research Environment
- Training, Supervision and Mentoring
- Research Procedures
- Safeguards
- Data Practices and Management
- Collaborative Working
- Publication and Dissemination
- Reviewing, Evaluating and Editing

2.1 Research Environment
- The University of Maribor promotes awareness and ensures a prevailing culture of research integrity.
- The University of Maribor demonstrates leadership in providing clear policies and procedures on good research practice and the transparent and proper handling of violations.
- The University of Maribor supports proper infrastructure for the management and protection of data and research materials in all their forms (encompassing qualitative and quantitative data, protocols, processes, other research artefacts and associated metadata) that are necessary for reproducibility, traceability and accountability.
- The University of Maribor rewards open and reproducible practices hiring and promotion of researchers.

2.2 Training, Supervision and Mentoring
- The University of Maribor ensures that researchers receive rigorous training in research design, methodology and analysis.
- The University of Maribor develops appropriate and adequate training in ethics and research integrity and ensures that all concerned are made aware of the relevant codes and regulations.
- Researchers across the entire career path, from junior to the most senior level, undertake training in ethics and research integrity.
- Senior researchers, research leaders and supervisors mentor their team members and offer specific guidance and training to properly develop, design and structure their research activity and to foster a culture of research integrity.
2.3 Research Procedures
• Researchers take into account the state-of-the-art in developing research ideas.
• Researchers design, carry out, analyse and document research in a careful and well-considered manner.
• Researchers make proper and conscientious use of research funds.
• Researchers publish results and interpretations of research in an open, honest, transparent and accurate manner, and respect confidentiality of data or findings when legitimately required to do so.
• Researchers report their results in a way that is compatible with the standards of the discipline and, where applicable, can be verified and reproduced.

2.4 Safeguards
• Researchers comply with codes and regulations relevant to their discipline.
• Researchers handle research subjects, be they human, animal, cultural, biological, environmental or physical, with respect and care, and in accordance with legal and ethical provisions.
• Researchers have due regard for the health, safety and welfare of the community, of collaborators and others connected with their research.
• Research protocols take account of, and are sensitive to, relevant differences in age, gender, culture, religion, ethnic origin and social class.
• Researchers recognise and manage potential harms and risks relating to their research.

2.5 Data Practices and Management
• Researchers and the University of Maribor ensure appropriate stewardship and curation of all data and research materials, including unpublished ones, with secure preservation for a reasonable period.
• Researchers and the University of Maribor ensure access to data is as open as possible, as closed as necessary, and where appropriate in line with the FAIR Principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Re-usable) for data management.
• Researchers and the University of Maribor provide transparency about how to access or make use of their data and research materials.
• Researchers and the University of Maribor acknowledge data as legitimate and citable products of research.
• Researchers and the University of Maribor ensure that any contracts or agreements relating to research outputs include equitable and fair provision for the management of their use, ownership, and/or their protection under intellectual property rights.

2.6 Collaborative Working
• All partners in research collaborations take responsibility for the integrity of the research.
• All partners in research collaborations agree at the outset on the goals of the research and on the process for communicating their research as transparently and openly as possible.
• All partners formally agree at the start of their collaboration on expectations and standards concerning research integrity, on the laws and regulations that will apply, on protection of the intellectual property of collaborators, and on procedures for handling conflicts and possible cases of misconduct.
• All partners in research collaborations are properly informed and consulted about submissions for publication of the research results.

2.7 Publication and Dissemination
• All authors are fully responsible for the content of a publication, unless otherwise specified.
• All authors agree on the sequence of authorship, acknowledging that authorship itself is based on a significant contribution to the design of the research, relevant data
collection, or the analysis or interpretation of the results.

- Authors ensure that their work is made available to colleagues in a timely, open, transparent, and accurate manner, unless otherwise agreed, and are honest in their communication to the general public and in traditional and social media.

- Authors acknowledge important work and intellectual contributions of others, including collaborators, assistants, and funders, who have influenced the reported research in appropriate form, and cite related work correctly.

- All authors disclose any conflicts of interest and financial or other types of support for the research or for the publication of its results.

- Authors and publishers issue corrections or retract work if necessary, the processes for which are clear, the reasons are stated, and authors are given credit for issuing prompt corrections post publication.

- Authors and publishers consider negative results to be as valid as positive findings for publication and dissemination.

- Researchers adhere to the same criteria as those detailed above whether they publish in a subscription journal, an open access journal or in any other alternative publication form.

2.8 Reviewing, Evaluating and Editing

- Researchers take seriously their commitment to the research community by participating in refereeing, reviewing and evaluation.

- Researchers review and evaluate submissions for publication, funding, appointment, promotion or reward in a transparent and justifiable manner.

- Reviewers or editors with a conflict of interest withdraw from involvement in decisions on publication, funding, appointment, promotion or reward.

- Reviewers maintain confidentiality unless there is prior approval for disclosure.

- Reviewers and editors respect the rights of authors and applicants, and seek permission to make use of the ideas, data or interpretations presented.

3. Violations of Research Integrity

It is of crucial importance that researchers master the knowledge, methodologies and ethical practices associated with their field. Failing to follow good research practices violates professional responsibilities. It damages the research processes, degrades relationships among researchers, undermines trust in and the credibility of research, wastes resources and may expose research subjects, users, society or the environment to unnecessary harm.

3.1 Research Misconduct and other Unacceptable Practices

Research misconduct is traditionally defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism (the so-called FFP categorisation) in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results:

- Fabrication is making up results and recording them as if they were real.

- Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment or processes or changing, omitting or suppressing data or results without justification.

- Plagiarism is using other people’s work and ideas without giving proper credit to the original source, thus violating the rights of the original author(s) to their intellectual outputs.

These three forms of violation are considered particularly serious since they distort the research record. There are further violations of good research practice that damage the integrity of the research process or of researchers.
In addition to direct violations of the good research practices set out in this Code of Conduct, examples of other unacceptable practices include, but are not confined to:

- Manipulating authorship or denigrating the role of other researchers in publications.
- Re-publishing substantive parts of one’s own earlier publications, including translations, without duly acknowledging or citing the original (‘self-plagiarism’).
- Citing selectively to enhance own findings or to please editors, reviewers or colleagues.
- Withholding research results.
- Allowing funders/sponsors to jeopardise independence in the research process or reporting of results so as to introduce or promulgate bias.
- Expanding unnecessarily the bibliography of a study.
- Accusing a researcher of misconduct or other violations in a malicious way.
- Misrepresenting research achievements.
- Exaggerating the importance and practical applicability of findings.
- Delaying or inappropriately hampering the work of other researchers.
- Misusing seniority to encourage violations of research integrity.
- Ignoring putative violations of research integrity by others or covering up inappropriate responses to misconduct or other violations by institutions.
- Establishing or supporting journals that undermine the quality control of research (‘predatory journals’).

In their most serious forms, unacceptable practices are sanctionable, but at the very least, every effort must be made to prevent, discourage and stop them through training, supervision and mentoring and through the development of a positive and supportive research environment.

### 3.2 Dealing with Violations and Allegations of Misconduct

For purposes of dealing with violations and allegations of misconduct under this Code of Conduct, the University of Maribor shall establish a special permanent committee, acting on a University-wide level. The Committee shall adopt rules of procedure to govern its operations and ensure full implementation of principles set out in this Code of Conduct.

Committee operations shall be based on the fact that consistent and transparent treatment of violations is always in the best interest of society as a whole, as well as of the research community of the University of Maribor. The Committee shall observe and follow the principles set out below in all investigations of alleged violations and misconduct.

**Integrity**

- Investigations are fair, comprehensive and conducted expeditiously, without compromising accuracy, objectivity or thoroughness.
- The parties involved in the procedure declare any conflict of interest that may arise during the investigation.
- Measures are taken to ensure that investigations are carried through to a conclusion.
- Procedures are conducted confidentially in order to protect those involved in the investigation.

The University of Maribor protects the rights of ‘whistle-blowers’ during investigations and ensures that their career prospects are not endangered.

- General procedures for dealing with violations of good research practice are publicly available and accessible to ensure their transparency and uniformity.
Fairness

- Investigations are carried out with due process and in fairness to all parties.
- Persons accused of research misconduct are given full details of the allegation(s) and allowed a fair process for responding to allegations and presenting evidence.
- Action is taken against persons for whom an allegation of misconduct is upheld, which is proportionate to the severity of the violation.
- Appropriate restorative action is taken when researchers are exonerated of an allegation of misconduct.
- Anyone accused of research misconduct is presumed innocent until proven otherwise.

4. Applicability of other codes of conduct of research ethics and integrity at the University of Maribor

This Code of Conduct shall apply to all persons conducting research under the University of Maribor. Research institutions and organizations under the University of Maribor may also apply other codes of research ethics and integrity in their respective fields, however, these codes cannot supersede provisions of this Code of Conduct.

This Code of Conduct of Research Ethics and Integrity at the University of Maribor was adopted on 24 October 2017 at the 26th regular session of the Senate of the University of Maribor.

Rector of the University of Maribor
Prof. dr. Igor Tičar