An Ethical Analysis of Codes of Ethics

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1 WUT Code of Ethics and Academic Conduct

The **West University of Timisoara Code of Ethics and Academic Conduct** represents a set of principles and rules that must be applied by the whole community: teachers, students, and administrative staff. There are nine fundamental principles of ethics and academic conduct, each one being made of two sections: a set of rules and values and examples for violations of the principle. The principles of the WUT Code of Ethics and Academic Conduct are the following:

1. The Principle of academic freedom;
2. The principle of justice and equity
3. The principle of professionalism
4. The principle of honesty and intellectual correctness
5. The principle of transparency
6. The principle of professional and social responsibility
7. The principle of integrity
8. The principle of collegiality
9. The principle of loyalty

1.1 The Principle of Academic Freedom

The **principle of academic freedom** at WUT gives members of the university community the right to freely express their opinions within and outside the academic environment, as well as to carry out teaching, research, creative and administrative activities. Each member has the right to express his/her opinions without censorship and is responsible for his/her own scientific opinions.

The principle of academic freedom means fostering diversity of scientific opinion, encouraging constructive critical analysis of community members' activities, and promoting interpersonal collaboration. At WUT, political and economic pressures, religious proselytism, censorship, manipulation, and persecution are prohibited.

Teaching and research staff have the right to publish studies, articles, volumes, or works of art without restrictions on academic freedom. WUT protects the right to privacy of its members and promotes equality of opportunity, equal opportunities for women and men, people with disabilities and different sexual orientations, and opposes discrimination and harassment.

Violations of the principle of academic freedom include political propaganda within or about WUT actions, religious proselytism, promotion of extremist ideas, or defamation of members of the academic community. Other violations include the abusive exercise of academic rights, the promotion of attitudes that violate the principles of the Code, and any acts that harm the prestige of the academic environment or its members.

1.2 The Principle of Justice and Equity

The principle of justice and equity emphasises how members of the university are treated. Fair and equitable treatment is achieved through the fair allocation of university resources, the prevention and elimination of discrimination and conflicts of interest, and equality of opportunity.

This principle is violated when one or more members of the university are discriminated against, exploited, or abused. Furthermore, the principle of fairness and equity does not tolerate corruption, favouritism, and nepotism.

I consider that justice and equity in the West University of Timisoara are correctly applied. The professors are stimulating creativity, analytical, and critical thinking. In terms of resources, there are more digital resources than physical, but this aspect is beneficial for computer scientists. Creativity is encouraged by the university, and proof is that the university allows extracurricular activities organized by student associations.

Another positive aspect is that the university offers space for working students, by moving the master courses in the evening and allowing students to reduce their attendance percentage if they have a job. Also, practice in companies represents one subject in the second year, and the university presents job offers to the students in administrative departments and partners from the industry.

1.3 the Principle of Professionalism

The principle of professionalism assures that the academic and research quality is at performance levels. Each member is responsible for the quality of the educational process in which he is involved. Then, the principle mentions also what a teacher needs to be considered professional. The didactic staff needs to make sure that all of the activities are held in conformity with the schedule, the subjects are relevant, and coordinate the elaboration of projects and thesis done by the students. The exam and project results must be communicated within 72 hours after the finalization through the official platforms of the university.

There are many possible causes for the violation of this principle. Some of them are inappropriate conduct of the teacher, irrelevant discussions during the classes, or forcing students to adopt a particular point of view. These are just a few of them, but the list can be extended.

In my view, this principle is partially respected. It is not a question of individual violations, but some aspects can be improved to increase academic quality.

First of all, in English language study programs, not all students and teachers can conduct a fluent discussion in English. In these programs, all parties involved should have an intermediate or advanced level of English for the teaching activities to take place.

Secondly, some subjects are outpaced by the rapid advance of technology. A good example of this deviation from the principle of professionalism can be seen in the subject of artificial intelligence in year 3, where some technologies or programming methods are presented that have not been used in industry for a long time. There are other examples, but this one is relevant because artificial intelligence is increasingly permeating our lives.

1.4 The Principle of Honesty and Intellectual Correctness

As mentioned in the name, this principle is based on the fairness of university members in their academic activities. Most of the rules in this chapter are about how scientific or artistic work should be done and the procedures to be followed. Fraud, plagiarism, and infringement of intellectual property are just a few examples of violations of this principle.

In the three and a half years that I have been a WUT student, I have only heard of one case of intellectual property abuse by a professor, but for the most part, this principle is respected by professors. On the other hand, I am aware that students do not always respect the values mentioned above. A good example of the violation of ethical values is the misuse of artificial intelligence software for generating homework or projects.

An effective way to prevent plagiarism or cheating is to allow the use of course materials during the exam. This helps logical learning and excessive memorisation. Through this method, the student is encouraged to search for information. I believe that a searched information is partially learned, because the student needs to know how the subject is structured and where he can find the information he needs.

1.5 The Principle of Transparency

Transparency is characterized by the possibility of accessing information and its accuracy. The Code of Ethics refers to discipline sheets, regulations, selection criteria, and results. Violation of this principle is the concealment, falsification, or distortion of information to which members of the university community and the general public are entitled by law.

West University of Timisoara respects all the values and rules of this principle. All information can be found on the university website or on the faculty website.

1.6 The Principle of Professional and Social Responsibility

The **principle of professional and social responsibility** supports that community members are encouraged to be actively involved in the professional, economic, and social issues of the local community and society. This involvement is done through a positive attitude and responsible civic behavior. Members of the community must abide by this code of ethics. They may not express personal opinions that represent the official position of WUT. At the same time, they may criticize issues related to the university as long as they are well-argued and with good reasons.

Violations of the principle would be public denigration of study programmes and members university community and abusive exercise of rights.

I believe that this principle is respected within the university. These rules are more like moral laws, which should take into account the common sense of each individual.

1.7 The Principle of Integrity

The conduct of quality teaching and research at WUT is contingent upon the integrity of its members in the academic community. Conflicts of interest and incompatibility must be avoided according to the Code of Conduct. A member of the WUT community may have a conflict of interest if they are forced to make a decision that solely serves their interests. On the other hand, incompatibility is the holding of two legally banned positions concurrently. Academic community members are prohibited from engaging in corrupt activities or harming the institution's reputation, integrity, or academic atmosphere.

It describes the conflicts of interest that can result from different kinds of relationships or positions and emphasizes how these might give birth to nepotism and favoritism. When faced with a conflict of interest, people have to disclose it to the appropriate authorities and abstain from making choices or judgments that could negatively impact their interests. In the event of a conflict of interest about academic assessments or evaluations, educators are required to request replacements from the committees.

Strict guidelines on incompatibilities between academic posts have been developed, making it illegal for spouses, families, and relatives up to and including the fourth degree to hold management or evaluation roles concurrently. Individuals involved in such connections are not permitted to participate in competition procedures under specific circumstances, nor are they permitted to participate in choices that could impact their interests.

Academic integrity and the institution's reputation depend on respect for these regulations.

1.8 The Principle of Collegiality

The WUT community has rules of behavior designed to protect each person's dignity and respect. Among these guidelines is the provision of a harassment-, exploitation-, humiliation-, contempt-, and intimidation-free atmosphere. It's also advised to be tolerant of other people's opinions, beliefs, and intellectual preferences.

The job done by members of the university community necessitates respect, cooperation, and collegiality. Respect for fellow academics, reciprocal assistance in teaching and administrative tasks, collaboration on group projects, consideration for linguistic, religious, and social diversity, assistance for individuals with special needs, and maintaining the privacy of information exchanged amongst members are just a few of the duties imposed by the collegiality principle.

Violations of the principle of collegiality include discrimination or unequal treatment on irrelevant grounds, harassment in various forms, insulting behavior, discrediting colleagues, making inappropriate comments to students, advising students not to take a colleague's courses, making unfounded complaints against a colleague and using or disclosing confidential information in teaching or research.

1.9 The Principle of Loyalty

Loyalty towards the university sustains that all members of the community have the duty to action in the interest of WUT to sustain its goals and to help increase its competitiveness. Besides loyalty, attachment, and fidelity of the members are well received.

They constitute breaches of the duty of loyalty:

- the taking of actions intended to lead to the loss of property rights or actions aimed at the loss of legally acquired pecuniary or non-pecuniary rights;
- carrying out, in other universities or institutions, teaching activities or research activities that compete with those organized by WUT;
- advising students to abandon WUT courses in favor of another institution educational institution;
- engaging in activities outside WUT that significantly affect the time engaging in activities outside WUT that significantly affect the time devoted to the person's teaching and research obligations at WUT;
- carrying out actions aimed at discrediting WUT or affecting the image and image and prestige.

2 ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) developed a code of ethics and professional conduct, mentioned as "The Code" in the document. It contains three major chapters, followed by a set of case studies (fictionalized scenarios), that are used to emphasize the principles of the code. Each one of the chapters represents a set of principles, organized in different categories. All chapters contain principles that start with a bold phrase, similar to a motto for the principle. After the key phrase, the principle is briefly described.

The three chapters from the **The code** are:

1. General Ethical Principles
2. Professional Responsibilities
3. Professional Leadership Principles

2.1 General Ethical Principles

2.1.1 Contribute to society and to human well-being, acknowledging that all people are stakeholders in computing

The aforementioned principle highlights the obligation of computing experts to apply their expertise for the benefit of people, the environment, and society at large. It emphasizes the defense of individual autonomy, the advancement of human rights, and the reduction of harmful effects of computing, such as risks to one's health, safety, security, and privacy. The needs of those who are less fortunate should take precedence over competing interests. It is recommended that computing professionals take diversity, social responsibility, and wide accessibility into account when doing their work. The concept also highlights the promotion of environmental sustainability on a local and global level and urges people to actively participate in society through volunteerism and pro bono labor.

2.1.2 Avoid harm

"Harm" is defined as substantial and unfairly detrimental effects, including harm to the body or mind, information loss or disclosure, and harm to property, reputation, and the environment. Even when carrying out given tasks, well-intentioned activities might unintentionally create harm, which calls for measures to mitigate or repair it. The duty to prevent harm entails giving serious thought to how possible consequences might affect every affected party. Intentional harm needs to have an ethical justification, and harm should always be minimized. Computing professionals should consider the implications of data aggregation and emergent features in systems, and they should follow best practices unless there is a strong ethical argument against them. Professionals also must notify any indications of system dangers that could be harmful. If leaders don't handle these concerns, whistleblowing might be required. However, it should be used carefully to prevent erroneous or arbitrary reporting, necessitating a thorough analysis of the circumstances before acting.

2.1.3 Be honest and trustworthy

For those in the computer industry, honesty is a vital component of reliability. It is imperative to ensure transparency and full disclosure of the capabilities, limitations, and potential issues of the system. Code infractions include willful lying, data forgery, accepting bribes, and other unethical behavior. Professionals need to be upfront about their credentials and any constraints on their competency. It is necessary to fully disclose any situation that can lead to conflicts of interest or jeopardize independence. It is forbidden to misrepresent an organization's policies or procedures, and commitments should be kept. It is only acceptable to speak on behalf of an organization when given permission.

2.1.4 Be fair and take action not to discriminate

The ideals of justice, equality, tolerance, and respect serve as the foundation for this idea. Fairness is prioritized, necessitating channels for appeal in decision-making procedures. Promoting equitable participation is a duty of computing professionals, particularly for underrepresented groups. It is also against the Code to engage in biased discrimination based on unsuitable criteria. Sexual harassment and other forms of harassment are regarded as discriminatory practices that restrict equitable access to both virtual and real settings. Computing professionals need to make sure that methods and technologies are inclusive and accessible, and that the use of information and technology does not contribute to already-existing inequalities. It could be considered unjust discrimination to design without taking accessibility and inclusivity into account.

2.1.5 Respect the work required to produce new ideas, inventions, creative works, and computing artifacts

The guiding principle emphasizes the value that is produced for society when new concepts, innovations, artistic creations, and computer artifacts are developed. Contributors ought to anticipate receiving something in return, give credit to the original authors, and uphold intellectual property rights including trade secrets, patents, and copyrights. Computing experts should not unreasonably reject the usage of their intellectual works, even though they should recognize exceptions for the public interest. This idea is embodied in constructive contributions to society, like free and open-source software, and people shouldn't claim private ownership over labor that is given as a public resource.

2.1.6 Respect privacy

In the age of quick and frequently unrecognized personal information flow, computing experts have a tremendous obligation to safeguard privacy. They need to be aware of the many types of privacy and their rights and obligations. The proper use of personal data necessitates security measures to guard against illegal access and guarantee accuracy. Informed consent and data management need the establishment of transparent policies and procedures. Just the bare minimum of personal data should be gathered, and its retention periods should be made explicit. Integrating data collecting calls for extra caution to protect privacy aspects.

2.1.7 Honor confidentiality

Confidential information such as trade secrets, customer data, financial information, company plans, research data, scholarly articles, and patent applications are often handled by computing experts. The principle emphasizes the need to maintain secrecy, except for certain circumstances when disclosure would indicate a breach of the law, an organizational policy, or a code of conduct. In these situations, information should only be shared with the proper authorities, and experts are urged to carefully assess whether sharing information in this way is consistent with the Code.

2.2 Professional Responsibilities

2.2.1 Strive to achieve high quality in both the processes and products of professional work

Computing professionals have to maintain and advance excellent work standards for both themselves and their peers. They must uphold the dignity of each person impacted by the job, including users, clients, employers, and workers, at all times. Respecting the right to transparent communication regarding the project is vital. Professionals should reject any temptation to shirk this duty since they are aware that low-quality work can have major negative effects on stakeholders.

2.2.2 Maintain high standards of professional competence, conduct, and ethical practice

Maintaining professional competence is a duty that both individuals and teams must accept for high-quality computing. This calls for technical proficiency, social context understanding, communication abilities, and ethical awareness. It is essential to continuously develop one's skills through pursuits like independent study and conference attendance, with employers and professional associations providing support and encouragement.

2.2.3 Know and respect existing rules pertaining to professional work

Unless there is a strong ethical argument to the contrary, computing professionals are required to abide by national, state, and municipal laws as well as company policies. Before being broken, a rule that is thought to be unethical should be contested through the proper procedures. When a professional breaks the law, whether for moral or other reasons, they have to think about the repercussions and take ownership of their actions.

2.2.4 Accept and provide appropriate professional review

Professional review at every level is essential to producing high-caliber professional work in computers. Computing professionals should look for and make use of stakeholder and peer review whenever applicable. Reviewing other people's work critically and constructively is another duty of computing professionals.

2.2.5 Give comprehensive evaluations of computer systems and their impacts, including analysis of possible risks

Computing experts have to give unbiased, reliable assessments and testimony to different stakeholders as professionals in a position of trust. They should place a high value on objectivity, thoroughness, and perceptiveness when evaluating and providing system descriptions and alternatives. To detect and reduce possible dangers in machine learning systems, more care must be taken. A system should not be implemented if it is not possible to foresee future dangers with any degree of reliability. In this case, ongoing risk assessment is essential. Major risk issues need to be disclosed right away to the appropriate parties.

2.2.6 Perform work only in areas of competence

When assessing possible work assignments, a computing expert must take personal competence, advisability, and practicality into account. The professional is required to notify the employer or client if they at any time discover a lack of the required skills. After giving time for skill acquisition, the customer or employer might choose to move forward with the professional, delegate the task to someone else who possesses the necessary knowledge, or elect not to proceed with the assignment. The computing professional should use ethical judgment while determining whether to accept the assignment.

2.2.7 Foster public awareness and understanding of computing, related technologies, and their consequences

Computing experts should educate the general public about technical topics to increase awareness and comprehension of computers. Clear, polite communication that tackles significant topics like the advantages, disadvantages, and vulnerabilities of computer systems is essential. Professionals should also correct false or misleading information about computers.

2.2.8 Access computing and communication resources only when authorized or when compelled by the public good

Professionals in computing must respect people's and organizations' rights to limit access to their systems and data. Unless there is a strong public interest or a reasonable belief in authority, unauthorized access is discouraged. Professionals may, in rare circumstances, utilize illegal access to take down hostile systems, but safety measures must be followed to protect other people.

2.2.9 Design and implement systems that are robustly and usably secure

To stop damage from security breaches, strong security must be ensured during system design. It is recommended that computing experts perform due diligence, safeguard resources from misuse, and incorporate mitigation strategies after implementation. It is necessary to put precautions like vulnerability reporting, patching, and monitoring into place. In the event of a data breach, it is imperative to provide affected parties with instructions and prompt, clear communication. Users should find security features easy to use and intuitive, as this will deter unduly complicated or situationally unsuitable precautions. It could be wise to not use the system if abuse or harm is predictable and inevitable.

2.3 Professional Leadership Responsibilities

2.3.1 Ensure that the public good is the central concern during all professional computing work

The welfare of people and the general public should always come first in computers, impacting every phase from disposal to research. This idea is true irrespective of the approaches or strategies used by experts in computers.

2.3.2 Articulate, encourage acceptance of, and evaluate fulfillment of social responsibilities by members of the organization or group

Technical organization leaders need to understand their social obligations. These groups can reduce harm and increase awareness of the influence of technology by promoting quality, transparency, and a focus on societal welfare. It is imperative for leaders to proactively promote and deter computing professionals from failing to perform their societal responsibilities.

2.3.3 Manage personnel and resources to enhance the quality of working life

Leaders must improve, not diminish, the standard of working life. Leaders must take into account the personal and professional growth, accessibility needs, physical security, mental health, and human dignity of all employees. In the workplace, appropriate human-computer ergonomic guidelines ought to be implemented.

2.3.4 Articulate, apply, and support policies and processes that reflect the principles of the Code

It is recommended that leaders create unambiguous organizational policies that are in line with the Code and proficiently convey them to relevant parties. When policies are broken, they should take appropriate action and promote and reward compliance. It is unethical for leaders to create or carry out procedures that willfully or carelessly transgress the principles of the Code or tend to make such violations easier.

2.3.5 Create opportunities for members of the organization or group to grow as professionals

All members of the company should have access to educational possibilities, especially in computing, according to leaders. Professionalism, ethics, and technical specialization knowledge and abilities should all be improved by these possibilities. Professionals need to have experiences that acquaint them with the constraints and repercussions of the system. Computing professionals need to have a thorough understanding of the intricacies inside their sector so they may confidently take on tasks.

2.3.6 Use care when modifying or retiring systems

Leaders need to be very aware of how feature deletions and interface modifications affect user productivity. It is essential to thoroughly investigate alternatives and provide support during the transition to them. Risks should be communicated to users beforehand, and IT specialists should assist in keeping an eye on the viability of the system and encouraging prompt replacements as needed.

2.3.7 Recognize and take special care of systems that become integrated into the infrastructure of society

Stewardship duties for leaders of companies and groups creating computer systems integrated into society's infrastructure have increased. This entails monitoring the system's assimilation into society and creating equitable system access policies, particularly for people who were initially shut out. As adoption rates vary, so do ethical responsibilities, and ongoing oversight guarantees adherence to the Code's ethical requirements. Where suitable standards of care are not yet in place, computing professionals have an obligation to create them.