Decree No. 6/2026 of the Dean of the Faculty of Informatics, Masaryk University

SUPERVISOR'S CODE OF CONDUCT FOR DOCTORAL STUDIES

(as amended with effect from 23 October 2026)

Pursuant to Section 28(1) of Act No. 111/1998 Coll., on Higher Education Institutions and on Amendments and Supplements to Other Acts, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "Higher Education Act"), I hereby issue this decree:

Article 1
Subject matter

(1) The Faculty of Informatics at Masaryk University (FI MU) is committed to the principles of scientific excellence, research integrity, and respect for human dignity. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to foster doctoral studies as a key pillar of the Faculty's development and to affirm that FI MU views doctoral students as colleagues and partners in research and teaching. A successful doctoral journey is built upon professional relationships that require an active approach from the doctoral student and responsible guidance from the supervisor.

(2) This document defines the standards for the professional and ethical performance of the role of a supervisor. Its primary purpose is to:

a) Ensure a transparent and predictable environment for doctoral studies.

b) Strengthen a culture of mentorship and an emphasis on the professional and personal growth of the doctoral candidate.

c) Eliminate undesirable practices, such as the abuse of power imbalances, non-transparent decision-making, or inappropriate interference with the personal integrity of the doctoral candidate.

d) Provide supervisors with comprehensive information regarding the activities and collaboration with doctoral candidates expected and required by the faculty.

(3) This Code of Conduct elaborates on and specifies the more general principles contained in the MU Code of Ethics and aligns with European standards for the management and development of researchers. It serves as a binding guide for all supervisors of doctoral candidates at the Faculty of Informatics (FI MU), regardless of their primary workplace.

(4) When establishing mutual expectations and obligations, both the supervisor and the doctoral candidate are guided by the university-wide Principles and Recommendations for Effective and Quality Doctoral Studies at Masaryk University.Through the Doctoral Board and the Vice-Dean for Research and Doctoral Studies, the faculty ensures that the doctoral candidate is made aware of these principles at the very beginning of their studies and that they are incorporated into the compilation of the Individual Study Plan (ISP).

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Defining and Separating Roles

(1) A fundamental pillar of professionalism is the supervisor's ability to clearly define expectations regarding the course of study and the conditions for the completion of the doctoral studies.

(2) The supervisor strives to ensure maximum synergy between the doctoral candidate's activities directed toward their personal scientific development (the dissertation) and the work performed for the department or a specific project (employment). If such synergy is not present, the supervisor must clearly distinguish between these activities. Ideally, however, there should be a thematic overlap; this should be taken into account as early as the admissions process and during the planning of the doctoral studies. When properly aligned, both of these dimensions contribute to the professional and personal growth of the doctoral candidate, as well as to the development of the department.

(3) If a doctoral candidate is also employed on a project, their work duties are clearly defined in their job description. A supervisor must not make academic progress contingent upon the performance of any work outside the scope of the candidate's academic requirements. In cases where the supervisor is not the principal investigator of the project, the supervisor—in coordination with the doctoral candidate—shall consult with the project's principal investigator regarding the scope and content of the candidate's project-related activities, ensuring that these work tasks do not conflict with the fulfillment of the candidate's Individual Study Plan (ISP).

(4) The supervisor respects the time the student has set aside for independent research and study. Project-related tasks must not hinder the fulfillment of the doctoral student's Individual Study Plan (ISP).

Article 3

Professional communication and constructive dialogue

(1) The supervisor acts as a mentor who supports the doctoral candidate's personal growth and helps create a safe environment for open scientific discussion.

(2) A professional approach entails separating an objective assessment from personal biases, sympathies, or antipathies. Feedback provided by the supervisor is always focused on the work and professional development, rather than on the doctoral candidate as an individual. Criticism is constructive, fact-based, and aimed at improvement. At the same time, it is expected that the doctoral candidate will maintain a similarly professional approach toward the supervisor.

(3) The supervisor does not exert undue pressure on the doctoral candidate and maintains a professional framework for the relationship, even in crisis situations (for the procedure to be followed, see Art. VII).

(4) It is the supervisor's responsibility to provide feedback in a timely and transparent manner, ensuring that the doctoral candidate can respond to it during the course of their studies. The supervisor also records transparent, verifiable, and timely feedback in the doctoral candidate's semester evaluation within the IS MU.

(5) When supervising a doctoral candidate, the supervisor ensures adherence to the standard duration of study and assists the student in planning all academic requirements to prevent the study period from exceeding the standard 8 semesters (with a maximum extension of two additional semesters permitted solely for the completion of the dissertation). The supervisor

must not abuse their position to prolong the doctoral candidate's period of study for the purpose of securing assistance with research projects or other activities.

Article 4

The Ethics of Power and the Prevention of Abuse

(1) The supervisor is aware of their power advantage and actively prevents its abuse. A doctoral student must not be used to handle the supervisor's personal affairs, nor to perform tasks unrelated to their professional development within the context of their doctoral studies or their employment contract.

(2) The role of a supervisor includes strategically building the standing and reputation of a doctoral candidate within the academic community. The supervisor ensures appropriate attribution of authorship—including the candidate's status as first author, where relevant—particularly regarding outputs directly linked to the dissertation project. In doing so, the supervisor affirms the candidate's scientific independence and competence. It is unacceptable for a supervisor to appropriate a student's original ideas without proper citation. Furthermore, it is not a rule that a supervisor must be a co-author on every publication produced by their doctoral candidate. In justified cases, and in accordance with publication ethics, a doctoral candidate may publish work without the supervisor's involvement (for example, when collaborating with another research group). Should a disagreement regarding authorship arise between a supervisor and a doctoral candidate, the situation must be discussed with the Vice-Dean for Research and Doctoral Studies and the Chair of the Doctoral Board. Alternatively, the matter may first be addressed with the ombudspersons for doctoral studies, who can coordinate further steps with the aforementioned persons.

(3) A supervisor guides a doctoral candidate toward scientific independence while simultaneously encouraging active collaboration within the research team. The supervisor does not suppress differing scientific views—provided they are grounded in sound methodology and argumentation—nor does the supervisor abuse their position to enforce conformity with their own paradigm.

Article 5

Objectivity and Equal Access

(1) The allocation of resources (scholarships, travel, equipment, etc.) and the supervisor's attention are determined exclusively by professional criteria and performance, rather than by personal affinity or the doctoral candidate's socioeconomic background.

(2) The supervisor maintains a professional distance. They do not intrude into the doctoral candidate's private life and do not require the sharing of personal information. Should the doctoral candidate experience a personal crisis that affects their studies, the supervisor addresses the situation in a practical manner (e.g., by adjusting the schedule) rather than through personal emotional involvement. The level of formality in the relationship between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate is a matter for mutual agreement.

(3) The supervisor maintains an equal approach toward all doctoral students and avoids forming informal ties with individual students (e.g., frequent non-work-related activities within a small, exclusive circle) that could create a sense of favoritism for some and exclusion for others.

(4) The supervisor ensures that, in cases where multiple doctoral students contribute to a research output (such as a publication or software), their respective shares are allocated fairly based on the work performed. If these doctoral students are under the supervision of different supervisors, the supervisors shall reach a mutual agreement regarding the allocation of these shares.

Article 6
Commitment to Mentorship

(1) The supervisor guarantees the doctoral candidate time for consultations at pre-agreed intervals. These intervals may be adjusted flexibly, based on the current stage of the research and the needs of the dissertation project, as mutually agreed upon by both parties.

(2) The supervisor establishes and agrees upon clear rules with the doctoral student at the beginning of their studies (expectations, publication strategy, frequency of meetings).

(3) The supervisor provides feedback on texts submitted or conceptual questions raised by the doctoral candidate within a reasonable, pre-agreed timeframe, so as to prevent any stagnation in the candidate's progress.

Article 7
Procedure in the Event of a Breakdown in Mutual Cooperation

(1) In the event that a doctoral student repeatedly fails to meet agreed-upon deadlines, does not respond to feedback, or demonstrates insufficient progress, the supervisor shall formally notify the student of this, specifying deadlines and a timeframe for corrective action. If the situation is not rectified, the supervisor shall immediately address it using the established mechanisms for doctoral studies—specifically through the evaluation of the Individual Study Plan (ISP) and by referring the matter to the Doctoral Board of the Faculty of Informatics.

(2) In the event of a discrepancy between practice and the principles of this Code, the primary objective of the parties involved shall be to resolve the situation amicably—primarily through dialogue between the supervisor and the doctoral candidate, or by involving third parties expected to strive for an amicable resolution.

(3) If the situation is not rectified, both the doctoral candidate and the supervisor have the right to contact, among others, the Chair of the FI MU Doctoral Board, the Vice-Dean for Research and Doctoral Studies, or the Dean of the Faculty. The doctoral candidate also has the option to contact the ombudsmen for doctoral students, who are appointed by the FI MU Doctoral Board.

(4) The faculty commits to providing supervisors with methodological support and a space for sharing good practice, with the aim of minimizing the risk of problematic situations arising in the supervisor–doctoral candidate relationship.

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Article 8

Final Provisions

(1) This Code of Conduct serves as a binding methodological guideline for all supervisors at the Faculty of Informatics, Masaryk University (FI MU), including consultants and external collaborators who supervise doctoral students at the Faculty.

(2) The Faculty Board at FI MU, in coordination with the Vice-Dean for Research and Doctoral Studies, is responsible for ensuring compliance with the standards defined by this Code of Conduct.

(3) This Code supplements the internal regulations of FI MU and Masaryk University.

(4) This measure shall take effect on 23 October 2026.

Jiří Barnat
Dean of the Faculty of Informatics
Signed electronically