



Strategy for the prevention and combating of plagiarism at Babes-Bolyai University

1. Preamble

Under Art. 6 (1) of UBB Charter, UBB is a comprehensive university of advanced research and education with the goal of advancing science and preparing all members of the academic community for today's society and the future.

According to the UBB Charter, academic ethics policy is based on the following fundamental principles: academic freedom, competence and professionalism, integrity, intellectual honesty, collegiality, loyalty, justice and fairness, non-discrimination and equal opportunities, accountability.

UBB promotes academic and research ethics and professional conduct at all levels: teaching staff, undergraduate, master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral students. The strategy for the prevention of plagiarism at UBB is aimed at pre-empting and stopping plagiarism at all levels and represents a strategic benchmark adopted by the members of the UBB academic community.

2. Statutory rules applicable to plagiarism

- National Education Law 1/2011, as amended and supplemented;
- Law No. 206 of 2004 on best practices in scientific research, technological development, and innovation, as amended and supplemented;
- Law No. 8 of 1996 on copyright and associated rights, as amended and supplemented;
- Government Decision no. 681 of 2011 approving the Code for doctoral studies, as amended and complemented;
- Order No. 5110 of 2018 approving the minimum national standards for granting the title of doctor;
- Order No. 5229 of 2020 on the approval of methodologies for granting qualification certificates, awarding doctoral degrees, and handling appeals of non-compliance with quality or professional ethics standards, including plagiarism in doctoral dissertations;
- Order No. 5255 of 2021 on compliance check regarding academic ethics and professional conduct in writing doctoral dissertations between 1990 and 2016;
- The 2021 Charter of Babes-Bolyai University and the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (Addendum to UBB Charter);

- Regulation for the Organisation and Operation of Babeş-Bolyai University Ethics Committee.

3. Strategy objective

The objective of this strategy is to prevent and combat plagiarism by reinforcing commitment to the **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**, which expresses legally binding rules and is a reflection of the ethics of Babeş-Bolyai University as a leading institution committed to fostering and implementing national, European, and universal values, as well as diversity and alterity. The **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct** is intended to assist and guide the development of ethical relations in the professional environment involving members of the academic community (students, master's students, doctoral students, teachers and researchers, auxiliary teaching staff, non-teaching staff).

The strategy also aims to effectively implement effective monitoring and disciplinary mechanisms designed to prevent plagiarism.

4. Responsible in-house structures

From an institutional perspective, there are several structures involved in monitoring academic ethics, including plagiarism.

Academic ethics policies, breaches of academic ethics and conduct, and scientific research conduct are outlined in the **Code of ethics and professional conduct** approved by the University Senate. The Senate monitors breaches of academic ethics both *motu proprio* and as a follow-up to the findings of the UBB Ethics Committee report which is referred to the Senate plenary. The Senate deliberates on any incidents and resolves to amend or update policies in the area of academic and research ethics.

The university rector monitors academic ethics and professional conduct on an ongoing basis, and the annual report of the university will also cover compliance with academic ethics and professional conduct. The university rector may recommend measures to reinforce academic ethics and professional conduct based on their own observations or the Ethics Committee Report.

The UBB Ethics Committee is an independent structure from the Senate and the Rector's office and operates under the National Education Law No. 1 of 2011, as amended and supplemented, and Law No. 206 of 2004 on ethical conduct in scientific research, technological development and innovation, as amended and supplemented.

The university Ethics Committee has the following responsibilities:

- a) reviews and handles complaints of breaches of academic ethics, acting on complaints submitted or on its own initiative, as provided for in the UBB **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**;
- b) prepares an annual report on compliance with academic ethics and research ethics, which is submitted to the Rector and the University Senate and constitutes a public document;
- c) contributes to the developing and amending of the **UBB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**, which is approved by the University Senate;
- d) performs the duties established by Law No. 206 of 2004, as amended and supplemented;
- e) other duties provided for by law or established under the **UBB Charter**.

In terms of plagiarism, the Ethics Committee has the authority to investigate and sanction

a breach of research ethics. However, the Committee also plays a proactive role in terms of education, prevention, and raising awareness among the academic community in relation to ethical misconduct. To that end, the Committee has developed a comprehensive guide against plagiarism for students at all levels of study and will continue to disseminate guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism, promote good citation practices, and tackle unethical practices identified in scientific research. The Ethics Committee also adheres to the principles of the [Plagiarism Detection Guide in Research Papers](#) developed by the National Council for Ethics in Scientific Research, Technological Development, and Innovation (CNECSDTI), disseminates its guidelines and reviews complaints against the standards defined in this document.

The University Ombudsman is an internal body of UBB operating under the principles of confidentiality, impartiality and independence, providing informal support to all members of the academic community, in accordance with the UBB **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct** and the **Guide for Combating Discrimination at UBB**. The university ombudsman shall be impartial, acting as a neutral facilitator or mediator, and shall not become an advocate for any party. The Ombudsperson acts independently of the UBB management and other administrative authorities. The Ombuds does not have the power to make binding administrative decisions. However, the Ombudsperson is actively involved in preventive measures against research misconduct by raising awareness of ethical rules and advising members of the academic community on potential breaches of research ethics, particularly plagiarism.

At the level of the faculty, the Faculty Council, in conjunction with the Dean, the Heads of Departments, and/or the Director of the Doctoral School(s) within the faculty, the Ombuds is responsible for quality assurance and compliance with academic ethics. They may set up committees to investigate breaches of research ethics, including suspected plagiarism, and may propose sanctions.

The Institute for Doctoral Studies and the Doctoral Schools may take measures to prevent and sanction breaches of scientific, professional, and academic ethics, in accordance with the **Regulation governing the organisation and operation of doctoral studies** and the **UBB Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**. Doctoral supervisors are responsible for informing doctoral students about research ethics and for checking compliance with it, especially compliance with anti-plagiarism guidelines when writing doctoral dissertations. Reported cases of plagiarism are investigated, handled, and sanctioned by the Doctoral School or the Ethics Committee, following a complaint or on its own initiative.

UBB provides clear guidelines for checking doctoral dissertations. Under art. 29 of the [Regulation governing the organisation and operation of doctoral studies](#), the specific regulation of each doctoral school must provide for measures to prevent academic fraud, including plagiarism. Art. 35 of the regulation reiterates the legal liability of the doctoral supervisor and doctoral student for plagiarism, and art. 67 provides for the sanctioning of plagiarism under the **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**. Additionally, Addendum 1 of the **Regulation on the organisation and operation of doctoral studies** provides a similarity analysis procedure for doctoral dissertations, which details instructions for verifying doctoral dissertations to be defended by doctoral students. The doctoral dissertation may not be defended before the guidance committee without the Similarity Report.

Pursuant to Order No. 5255 of 2021 issued by the Minister of Education, the Institute for Doctoral Studies organises the process of checking compliance with academic ethics and professional conduct when writing doctoral dissertations by reviewing all doctoral dissertations defended between January 1990-June 2016, as well as by training instructors on ethics and integrity through the Office of Doctoral Integrity and Quality Assurance.

5. Measures to reinforce the prevention and sanctioning of plagiarism

UBB stands by its strong academic culture and by adequate mechanisms for preventing, identifying, and sanctioning plagiarism.

At the level of undergraduate and master's degrees, university teachers are required to instruct students on anti-plagiarism guidelines, which are further detailed and given context during courses on academic and research ethics or ethical principles in general. They are also under an obligation not to grade any papers that have been plagiarised.

At the level of doctoral studies, the doctoral schools, through their doctoral supervisors, will inform doctoral students about research and academic ethics and will monitor compliance with these standards both during the course of the advanced university programme and the research programme as part of the doctoral studies, as well as during the writing of the doctoral dissertation. Emphasis will also be placed on raising the profile of the guidance committee in terms of informing doctoral students on matters pertaining to academic ethics and professional conduct. In addition, the course on academic ethics and professional conduct will be included as a mandatory component in the doctoral student's learning agreement.

The originality of scientific papers, research reports, and doctoral dissertations is checked, in compliance with Addendum 1 of the **Regulation for the organisation and operation of doctoral studies**, with an anti-plagiarism software. With this software, each doctoral student may, under the guidance of their doctoral supervisor, request a similarity check of their scientific research reports, scientific papers, and doctoral dissertation. The Institute for Doctoral Studies will constantly monitor and assess these practices at doctoral level by implementing quality assurance mechanisms.

The Ethics Committee, the Institute for Doctoral Studies, and the faculties at UBB will develop and disseminate informative materials on academic ethics and professional conduct, especially in relation to plagiarism. Information workshops on anti-plagiarism guidelines will be regularly organised, and students from all levels of study will be encouraged to attend.

The University Ombuds mechanism enables UBB to focus on advisory services aimed at preventing potential violations of the **Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct**, with the Ethics Committee only imposing sanctions for ethical violations as a second priority. The Ethics Committee will reinforce the role of the University Ombuds, a mediator and arbitrator of academic conflicts settled through confidential, independent, informal, and unbiased procedures.

The focus will be on eliciting regular feedback from doctoral students on the operation of ethical mechanisms as part of quality assurance processes. Consideration will also be given to including a chapter on doctoral school activities in the annual report of the Quality Assessment and Assurance Committee (CEAC).

Specific reports of plagiarism submitted to the Ethics Committee will be handled in accordance with the procedure set out in the committee's Regulation, in compliance with the **Guide for the detection of plagiarism in research papers**, published by CNECSDTI, and will be included in the committee's annual report. The annual report of the Ethics Committee will include recommendations based on the handling of complaints on plagiarism, which will provide examples of risks or best practices, as applicable, for the academic community. The Ethics Committee will disseminate case studies illustrating the handling of specific situations and methods for avoiding breaches of ethical principles in research.

6. Planned stages for implementing the strategy for preventing and combating plagiarism at UBB

The key steps considered in order to meet the objectives set out in Order No. 5255 of 2021 and their implementation timeframes are as follows:

I. Inventory of doctoral dissertations dating from 1990 to 2016 (October 2021-March 2022)

This action aims to establish the material situation and location of the approximately 5,500 theses defended during this period:

- dissertations that are only available in physical format;
- dissertations that are also available in electronic format.

The digital/physical storage medium of the theses will be assessed and other features that will be needed in later stages will be inventoried.

II. Setting up the Office for Ensuring the Integrity and Quality of Doctoral Degrees (November 2021)

This Office (with five vacancies and one position of head of office) was established by Senate Decision No. 155/15.11.2021, in accordance with Order No. 5255 of 2021 on the monitoring of compliance with academic ethics and professional conduct in the production of doctoral dissertations between 1990-2016. The staff responsibilities and structure will meet the technical and logistical needs and will ensure both the verification of compliance with academic ethics and professional conduct in the production of doctoral dissertations from 1990-2016, and the implementation of training for trainers programmes in the field of academic ethics and professional conduct.

III. Creation of a digital library/platform for doctoral dissertations defended at UBB from January 1990 to June 2016 (starting March 2022)

A protocol will be developed for the digitalisation of doctoral dissertations in a standardised format, allowing for their later scrutiny, including through similarity detection software, with data published up to the public defence date. In this framework, the possibility of establishing a partnership with the Lucian Blaga Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca will be explored.

IV. Setting up committees for the review of doctoral dissertations at the level of doctoral schools and CSUD, consisting of experts in the doctoral fields assigned to the doctoral school (March 2022).

V. Anti-plagiarism analysis of all doctoral dissertations defended at UBB between January 1990 and June 2016, with identification of dissertations requiring in-depth analysis and formulation of related resolutions (beginning in March 2022)

This stage will first require the committees set up at doctoral schools level to review all doctoral dissertations defended at Babeş-Bolyai University between January 1990 and June 2016, using professional anti-plagiarism software. The second part of this stage will involve a detailed analysis by committees set up at doctoral schools level of those doctoral dissertations which, following analysis using anti-plagiarism software, may cause doubts. The committees at doctoral school level will submit a detailed report to the CSUD committee detailing compliance/non-compliance with academic ethics, quality, and professional conduct in the doctoral dissertations reviewed. The committee set up at the CSUD level will compile the information collected from doctoral schools into a detailed report on compliance/ non-compliance with academic ethics and professional conduct in the doctoral dissertations reviewed, which will be submitted to the line ministry.

VI. Analysis, decision-making, and implementation of training programmes for trainers in ethics and professional conduct (starting October 2022)

The main objective of this strategy component is to train, with priority, to the highest quality standards, the staff responsible for managing and implementing academic conduct rules within UBB. The secondary objective is to contribute to raising the quality of doctoral degrees at Babeş-Bolyai University by reinforcing quality standards in the field of academic integrity at the institutional level. UBB will analyse, determine, and then implement training programmes for academic integrity trainers, which will be supported by specialists/trainers in the fields which define and shape the concept of academic ethics and professional conduct. The trainer will design, conduct, and assess theoretical and practical activities within the framework of training and development of professional skills in the field of academic integrity. The training of trainers in academic ethics and integrity will be conducted at UBB, through the ISD's Office for Ensuring the Integrity and Quality of Doctoral Degrees.

Based on these stages, the necessary investments, related personnel expenses, and other associated costs will be determined.

7. Final provisions

The present strategy takes effect on the date of its approval by the UBB Administrative Council.