



# Ethical Guidelines for UMB

## Contents

1. Basic values
2. Working and learning environment
3. Research and research ethics
4. Administrative and commercial activities
5. Whistleblowing and dealing with non-compliance
6. Guideline revision and maintenance

## PREFACE

Employees and students at UMB have to deal with difficult dilemmas and cope with situations in which the choice between right and wrong is not obvious. A clash of interests is inherent in many ethical issues: many different norms must be weighed and modified in relation to other considerations, and the correct decision must be determined on a case-by-case basis. UMB's ethical guidelines shall lay a solid foundation for reflecting on ethical questions and serve as a guide when students and employees are faced with complex choices. The guidelines apply to all of UMB's employees, students, temporary personnel and governing bodies.

This document contains an overview of UMB's ethical framework. Additional resources, such as laws and case studies, may be found as a supplement to the guidelines themselves. The guidelines are the result of a wide-ranging process in the organisation and among the students. The guidelines articulate a number of values in the form of both general and specific principles. They are supplementary to laws and regulations, and range from unconditional requirements to important considerations. The guidelines are meant to raise awareness and act as a guide for ethical reflection in specific cases. Using the guidelines will always entail personal discretion. Such discretion is best exercised within a collegial and social context.

In addition to supporting students' and employees' ethical reflection and judgment, the ethical guidelines also serve externally as important signals that describe how UMB wishes to appear and how it wishes to manage its relations with society at large, politicians, authorities, students, partners and prospective national and international alliances. UMB's employees and students shall in their work also follow society's laws and rules, commonly accepted scientific methods and the norms and rules of research ethics, so as to behave in an ethically acceptable manner that does not damage UMB's reputation.

The individual employee has an obligation to familiarise him or herself with these guidelines and is personally responsible for following them. Conversely, UMB as an institution is responsible for making the guidelines known to students and employees and making employees aware of what the guidelines entail for each individual. The guidelines shall be a living document that inspires discussion and reflection at the university. Uncertainties regarding ethical dilemmas are to be taken up with the most immediate line manager or reported to the UMB's Ethics Advisory Board (<http://intern.umb.no/?viewID=21094>).

Ås, December 2008

Rector

Administrative Director

# 1 Basic values

The vision of the University of Life Sciences (UMB) is to help secure the basis of existence for present and future generations through education and research. UMB is based on democratic notions of universities as independent and critical public institutions. The university shall be characterised by a high level of ethical awareness, openness and reflection. UMB's working and learning environment shall combine creative cooperation, dissemination of socially beneficial knowledge and critical appraisal.

UMB manages considerable public resources and is involved in research that may have a substantial national and global impact. With its activities, UMB aims to promote sustainable development and a more equitable allocation of resources. A key component of UMB's basic values is respect for the environment, animals and present and future generations of humans.<sup>1</sup>

## 2 Working and learning environment

### 2.1 UMB's working environment and organisational culture

UMB shall facilitate a good working environment pursuant to the Working Environment Act.<sup>2</sup> All employees and students are entitled to a working environment free from verbal, sexual or other forms of harassment.<sup>3</sup> Employees and students shall keep themselves informed of and respect Norwegian laws and norms related to discrimination and harassment. Those who feel they have been bullied, harassed or discriminated against are to report such incidents to their line manager or supervisor.<sup>4</sup> Employees and students shall show respect for each other and for human diversity.

UMB and its employees are jointly responsible for preventing injuries, developing a good working environment, maintaining a high quality and safety level when carrying out their work and ensuring that daily operations take environmental concerns into consideration. Employees are obligated to notify their employer, safety representative and, when necessary, co-workers about errors or deficiencies that might pose a risk to life and limb.

UMB is responsible for promoting diversity at all levels of the organisation in terms of gender, age, ethnicity, disability, etc. UMB aims to be an inclusive workplace for both employees and students.

Leaders have a particular duty to safeguard their employees' well-being. They shall be supportive of their colleagues' work situation and assignments, emphasise the strengths of

---

<sup>1</sup> Numerous other values and objectives are articulated in steering documents, such as e.g. the Strategic Plan (<http://intern.umb.no/12293>) and UMB's Values Seminar from 2006 (<http://www.umb.no/?viewID=21098>). The Ethical Guidelines summarise the basic values that can be inferred from such documents.

<sup>2</sup> Working Environment Act: <http://www.lovdato.no/all/hl-20050617-062.html>; Gender Equality Act <http://www.lovdato.no/all/hl-19780609-045.html>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the Student Office's information to the students (<http://www.umb.no/?viewID=9356>) and UMB's action plan against sexual harassment ([http://www.umb.no/adm/laeringsmiljo/hp\\_seksuell\\_trakasering.pdf](http://www.umb.no/adm/laeringsmiljo/hp_seksuell_trakasering.pdf)).

<sup>4</sup> Cf. UMB's documents relating to discrimination <http://intern.umb.no/?viewID=26492> and bullying (<http://intern.umb.no/?viewID=26492>).

others and allow mistakes to be made. Leaders must be aware of their function as role models in regard to adhering to laws and regulations, including the ethical guidelines.

Management should promote participation in the form of processes where employees are heard and involved in decision making. Loyalty should at the same time be shown to the decisions taken by the governing bodies. Disagreements and conflicts should be managed with the desire to find appropriate solutions. UMB strives to maintain a healthy climate of free expression where it is possible to critically discuss the university's activities.

## 2.2 Teaching

UMB is obligated to provide high quality teaching and supervision to all students.<sup>5</sup> Students are entitled to a fair assessment of their work.

Students shall use updated, accepted and lawful methods in their studies. No form of cheating, including plagiarism, is accepted.<sup>6</sup> Lecturers and supervisors shall provide thorough training in what is considered to be cheating and what is considered to be the correct usage of source material.

Students have ethical obligations also in regard to each other, e.g. in regard to a fair distribution of labour in team projects.

## 2.3 Student supervision

Both the supervisor and the student shall respect one another's personal and professional integrity and abstain from any act or utterance that might violate the other party's dignity. This entails that:

- The supervisor bears the main responsibility for the supervision taking place in an even-handed and professional manner, and he or she should be aware that the supervisory role potentially entails a position of power in relation to the person being supervised.
- The supervisor must not exploit his or her position of authority to obtain benefits in relation to the person being supervised, or to obtain private favours or services. Professional knowledge shall not be used to violate or repress others.
- The supervisor shall be cautious in commenting on the student's personality, appearance or gender. The student shall show a corresponding respect for the supervisor as a person.
- The supervisor shall avoid discussing collegial matters with the student/PhD candidate, similar to how all employees shall exercise discretion in regard to colleagues and students. Personal and confidential information that has been disclosed in the course of supervision shall be treated with discretion by both parties.
- The supervisor should not discuss the affairs of the person being supervised with other students/PhD candidates. The student should show similar consideration to the supervisor.

---

<sup>5</sup> Cf. UMB's quality assurance system for its educational activities: <http://www.umb.no/3441>.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. UMB's guidelines regarding plagiarism: [http://www.umb.no/statisk/sit/forskriver/norske/plagiering\\_norsk.doc](http://www.umb.no/statisk/sit/forskriver/norske/plagiering_norsk.doc).

Private relationships that are incompatible with the professional relationship should not take place. This entails that:

- It is up to the supervisor to ensure that the necessary professional distance is upheld and that situations are avoided that might lead to this distance being compromised.
- The supervisor and the student/ PhD candidate shall not have personal ties of love or kinship, nor shall they have shared financial interests in their personal finances. If such relations should arise then the supervisor must relinquish his or her supervisory role.
- The supervisor shall not receive any form of remuneration for his or her supervision beyond what has been agreed upon with UMB.

UMB is obligated to provide supervisors with the adequate training in regard to their obligations.

### 3 Research and research ethics

All research and scientific activity is based on trust. Both the scientific community and society at large must be certain that the research is conducted in accordance with recognised demands to accuracy and objectivity. The supervisors have a particular obligation to convey the basic rules of research ethics that apply to the discipline. Students and PhD candidates are for their part obligated to actively orientate themselves in matters of research ethics.

#### 3.1 Academic freedom and responsibility

The fundamental ethos of research is the search for truth, along with the related values of accountability, integrity and openness. Academic freedom is a basic value. Academic freedom can be defined as the freedom to pursue truth and insight by researching, teaching, lecturing and publishing without interference or punishment, based on the norms and standards that apply to academic activity.<sup>7</sup> This entails:

1. The freedom to ask questions – also in regard to what the authorities deem to be established knowledge and understanding, and in regard to issues and theses that are linked to strong interests or emotions.
2. The freedom to decide what resources and methods one wishes to utilise to find an answer, or more precisely, a *true* and *tenable* answer.
3. The freedom to put forth hypotheses, results and arguments in public.<sup>8</sup>

At the same time, research ethics underlines that research has a broader social responsibility. Researchers and the various research communities should critically assess whether one's own research directly or indirectly might benefit society and whether it is in accordance with fundamental human rights. The researcher must also take into consideration the potential consequences the chosen methods might have for those the research affects.

Academic freedom shall not be used as an ulterior motive for forsaking one's obligations to one's employer.

#### 3.2 Sound research practice

##### *Accountability*

Research should be reproducible. Methods and findings shall be documented in a comprehensible and complete form, and researchers should make data accessible for others to control after a certain period.<sup>9</sup> The choice of method shall be justified and in keeping with scientific practice.

Researchers develop their ideas in interaction with the thoughts and ideas of others. Peers and sources that are important for a researcher's work shall be acknowledged. Whether such sources are criticised or cited in support of one's work, researchers shall endeavour to present

---

<sup>7</sup> Definition from a *Global Colloquium of University Presidents* in 2005, as cited in NOU 2006: 19 *Academic Freedom*.

<sup>8</sup> From NOU 2006:19 *Academic Freedom*. <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/NOUer/2006/nou-2006-19.html?id=392466>.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. UMB's guidelines and routines for storing research data (<http://intern.umb.no/23569>).

them in an unbiased, balanced and truthful manner. Researchers shall also endeavour to present their own research in an unbiased and truthful manner. It is important that researchers communicate any uncertainty regarding their own research, especially if the results are to be used as for the basis for various public and private decisions.

### *Integrity*

All research should be truthful and presented in an honest and professional manner. Researchers must not compromise their basic values when conducting research or communicating results.

### *Openness*

Publishing is an important aspect of the international research community. Within the restrictions imposed by confidentiality and professional secrecy, researchers shall strive to publish results and disseminate them to the public – in scientific as well as in popularised forms. Unequal access to scientific knowledge on a global basis is a problem, and particularly in regard to research that is relevant for Third World countries one should consider publishing in publically accessible journals or perhaps consider including the cost of securing open access in grant applications.<sup>10</sup>

UMB's scientific activity shall be based on solid research methods and relevant regulations.<sup>11</sup> UMB's employees and students shall be familiar with and adhere to research ethics guidelines<sup>12</sup>.

## **3.3 Scientific misconduct**

Research data shall be generated by fair, honest and scientifically accountable methods. Any form of fraud is unacceptable.

Scientific misconduct includes violations of good research practice and significant deviations from accepted practice within the discipline. This includes, although not exclusively, altering or manufacturing data, plagiarism, and gross negligence while applying for funds, carrying out research or reporting the findings. Other acts of scientific misconduct include:

- deliberate suppression of undesirable results;
- deliberately misleading use of statistical methods;
- deliberate dishonesty about who contributed to the research and the extent of the participants' contributions;
- intentional or negligent suppression of methodological details;
- deliberate misinformation about scientific qualifications in applications;
- intentional destruction of research material to prevent investigations when scientific misconduct is suspected.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.saih.no/Kampanje/Retten\\_til\\_fri\\_og\\_global\\_utveksling\\_av\\_kunnskap/index.html](http://www.saih.no/Kampanje/Retten_til_fri_og_global_utveksling_av_kunnskap/index.html)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions ([http://www.uhr.no/documents/EtiskeRetnLinjer2\\_2.pdf](http://www.uhr.no/documents/EtiskeRetnLinjer2_2.pdf)).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the NENT and NESH guidelines (<http://www.etikkom.no/guidelines/nent/> and <http://www.etikkom.no/guidelines/NESHguidelines>), as well as the Helsinki Declaration (<http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm>).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Ot. Prop. no. 58 (2005/2006) *On the Act on Treating Ethics and Integrity in Research*, <http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/kd/dok/regpubl/otprp/20052006/Otprp-nr-58-2005-2006-.html?id=187808>.

UMB's employees and students have the right and the duty to blow the whistle on scientific misconduct. There are general rules and regulations and also routines for whistleblowing at UMB (see Chapter 5 below), as well as rules for dealing with cases related to scientific misconduct.

Scientific misconduct must be distinguished from mistakes in research and from the internal criticism and control of research findings performed by the scientific community itself. UMB should not help spread unfounded suspicions or blow cases out of proportion. Employees who are suspected of scientific misconduct are entitled to a thorough and fair process. The case processing should be performed in such a way as to protect both the defendant and the complainant in accordance with privacy norms.

### **3.4 Publication, authorship and co-authorship**

Researchers are to respect the contributions from other researchers or students and follow standards for authorship and cooperation. Employees and students shall familiarise themselves with and follow the guidelines for authorship and co-authorship that are generally accepted within the scientific community. Individual responsibilities should be clarified as early as possible and in a joint collaboration involving all the participants. Colleagues who have contributed significantly to the work are not to be omitted as co-authors. Honorary authorship is unacceptable.

According to the Vancouver Convention, authorship credit should be based on three main criteria that must all be fulfilled for authorship to be legitimate<sup>14</sup>:

- a) substantial contributions to conception and design, *or* acquisition of data, *or* analysis and interpretation of data.
- b) drafting the manuscript itself *or* significant parts of the manuscript *or* a critical revision of the manuscript's intellectual content.
- c) final approval of the version to be published.

Each co-author must have participated sufficiently in the work to take public responsibility for the given part of the content.

Institutional affiliation must be correctly acknowledged, especially for researchers with dual employment. The individual researcher is responsible for stating the appropriate correspondence address for the work that has been carried out.

One should strive to publish negative results as well.

Corresponding norms apply with regard to supervisory work on theses and dissertations. If the supervisor wants to use the student's unpublished data or research results in his or her own publications or research, the student shall give his or her consent. Similarly, the supervisor's consent is required if a student wants to use his or her supervisor's unpublished data or results.<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> The Vancouver Convention was originally defined within medicine, but has won wide acceptance within other disciplines. It has been modified several times, and there are a number of reformulations. See <http://www.icmje.org/>.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. UMB's quality assurance system for its education activities: <http://www.umb.no/3441>.

### 3.5 Contract research

The increasing dependence of research on external funding is a potential threat to the independence of research in regard to a client's desires and interests. UMB's researchers shall resist direct or indirect pressure from clients or others to modify methods, findings or conclusions, and the execution and reporting of results from contract research. The same applies to consultancy work and evaluations for companies, special interest groups and public institutions (within the boundaries of professional secrecy and confidentiality). If necessary, such issues shall be discussed with the line manager. UMB's standard contract for contract research shall be used.<sup>16</sup>

As a general rule, research shall be published. If a time-limited agreement on exclusive user rights by the client has been made, it is the researcher's right and duty to ensure the publication of the research findings upon the agreement's expiration. No unlimited exclusive user rights to research findings should be granted.<sup>17</sup>

Employees who, on the basis of either their position at UMB or the expertise this position presupposes, take on consultancy work (e.g. studies, evaluations or similar ventures) shall strive to deliver truthful and complete information to their employer. The researcher shall in such cases account for uncertainty and deficient knowledge and what consequences this might have. This applies regardless of whether the employer is a public agency, a private enterprise or a special interest group. Employees who take on such work need not abstain from criticising the employer when such criticism is a natural part of the assignment. Nor shall the demand for truth and completeness be compromised due to future work prospects.

### 3.6 Protection of test persons

Employees and students shall base their work on a fundamental respect for human dignity, respect the test persons' integrity, freedom and right of co-determination, and follow the rules on informed consent. Caution must be exercised when carrying out research on vulnerable groups or individuals with a reduced or lacking capacity to give their consent. The research shall potentially create benefits for the test subjects or for the group in the long run.<sup>18</sup> The necessary permits shall be acquired from the Ombudsman for Privacy in Research, the Data Inspectorate or similar bodies. When relevant, research projects shall be independently assessed by the Regional Research Ethics Committee for Medicine and Health Services (REK).<sup>19</sup> Research in the social sciences shall adhere to the guidelines from the National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities (NESH).

In regard to research that has consequences for indigenous peoples or other groups in particular need of cultural protection, special consideration should be taken to their culture, and the research should be adapted in a dialogue with representatives for the groups. Research that is based on indigenous peoples' knowledge of natural resource values must ensure that the indigenous population maintains access to and control of their knowledge.<sup>20</sup> This includes

---

<sup>16</sup> Cf. [http://www.umb.no/statisk/okonomihandbok/kap\\_1\\_5/standardkontrakt\\_umb.doc](http://www.umb.no/statisk/okonomihandbok/kap_1_5/standardkontrakt_umb.doc).

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the proposed Act on Academic Freedom, Section 1-5, Subsection 5.

<sup>18</sup> See also the Helsinki Declaration on ethical principles for medical research that also includes human subjects: <http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm> or <http://www.etikkom.no/guidelines/helsinkideklarasjonen>.

<sup>19</sup> REK evaluates medical and health-related research projects that include human subjects. For other research projects that involve human subjects, it is possible to contact NESH, NENT or the Ethics Advisory Board at UMB for an ethical evaluation of the project.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. the UN Convention on Biological Diversity: <http://www.cbd.int/>.

evaluating how the research is planned and carried out, who distributes the results and who benefits from these results. The general ideal is a collaboration where the research is adapted to the given culture and the results are relevant for the participants. As with all participants in research projects, it must be ensured that the local population has not been exploited in the research process or when using or disseminating the research results (e.g. through patent protection that obstructs the local populace in their traditional use of resources).<sup>21</sup>

### 3.7 Protection of animals

Animals have an intrinsic value and shall be treated with respect. Employees and students shall exercise diligence and respect for animal welfare, and shall account for the necessity of the experiment.

Current laws and guidelines on the use of experimental animals shall be followed.<sup>22</sup> The three R's of animal experimentation ("reduce, refine, replace") should serve as overarching principles for the use of experimental animals.

Research at UMB can directly or indirectly impact on the welfare of other animals as well (domestic animals and game), or on stocks. Employees and others working on animals should critically assess their work in terms of its consequences for the environment and animal welfare.<sup>23</sup> Researchers that carry out animal experiments shall have permits as Category C researchers. This means in practice that every researcher who is to conduct research on animals shall have taken a course on experimental animals, at either UMB or corresponding institutes of higher education (the Norwegian School of Veterinary Science or the Universities of Oslo, Bergen and Tromsø).

A researcher planning to carry out animal experimentation shall apply for permits in those cases where there is reason to believe that the experiment will affect the animal's normal course of life or cause pain or discomfort that is "neither minor nor momentary"<sup>24</sup>. The application shall be sent to the National Panel on Experimental Animals, and it shall be written in the electronic application system FOTS.<sup>25</sup> The application will then be processed by the person of authority at UMB, who will then grant or deny permission to the experiment and notify the National Panel on Experimental Animals of the decision.

### 3.8 Protection of the environment

UMB's research shall not be detrimental to the environment. The researchers shall endeavour that their research shall help preserve or create a healthy environment in both the short and the long term. This includes e.g. showing consideration to biodiversity, the stability of ecosystems and cultural landscapes.<sup>26</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> WHO: Indigenous peoples and participatory health

[http://www.who.int/ethics/indigenous\\_peoples/en/index6.html](http://www.who.int/ethics/indigenous_peoples/en/index6.html)

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Norwegian Animal Welfare Act (<http://www.lovdatab.no/all/hl-19741220-073.html>) and the Regulation on Animal Experimentation (<http://www.lovdatab.no/for/sf/ld/ld-19960115-0023.html>).

<sup>23</sup> See also the Report to the Storting No. 12 (2002-2003). *On Animal Husbandry Animal Welfare* (<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/lmd/dok/regpubl/stmeld/20022003/Stmeld-nr-12-2002-2003-.html?id=196533>).

<sup>24</sup> From the Regulation on Animal Experimentation.

<sup>25</sup> See [www.fdu.no](http://www.fdu.no)

<sup>26</sup> See NOU 2004:28: *Act on the Protection of the Natural Environment, Landscape and Biological Diversity*.

It is usual to follow the precautionary principle when evaluating the environmental consequences of the research.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> There are many versions of the precautionary principle, with one of the most frequently quoted being from the Rio Convention: “Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation” (UNEP 1992, [www.unep.org](http://www.unep.org)). In recent decades the principle has been reformulated to also cover consequences for health and society, e.g. in UNESCO’s report on the precautionary principle: “When human activities may lead to morally unacceptable harm that is scientifically plausible but uncertain, actions shall be taken to avoid or diminish that harm.” <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001395/139578e.pdf>.

## 4 Administrative and commercial activities

UMB shall run its operations in a manner that ensures openness in all processes so as to facilitate the general public's access to and control of UMB's operations. Employees and students shall in their work act in accordance with UMB's interests.

### 4.1 Freedom of information and confidentiality

#### *Freedom of information*

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, case processing and the university's operations shall be documented and made available in a public register.<sup>28</sup> This also applies to e-mail of a more formal nature, such as case documents, in the same manner as for paper documents. It is therefore important to be consciously aware of the form and content of e-mail that is sent on behalf of UMB.<sup>29</sup>

The allocation of research funds at UMB shall be based on objective criteria. Fund allocations shall be carried out in an open manner. Funding criteria shall be publicly accessible, and specific allocations shall be documented and justified.

UMB's hiring procedures shall be followed<sup>30</sup>.

#### *Active obligation to provide information*

As a public institution, UMB has an active obligation to provide information pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act. This entails that we must always provide correct and complete information to authorities, companies, organisations and citizens. This must nonetheless not conflict with requirements regarding confidentiality.

#### *Confidentiality and professional secrecy*

UMB's employees and students shall observe all statutory provisions and regulations concerning confidentiality<sup>31</sup> and privacy<sup>32</sup>, and are to treat confidential information with diligence. The circulation of confidential documents via internal mail or e-mail may compromise confidentiality, and the correct use of central registration systems is therefore encouraged.

### 4.2 Disinterest, gifts and procurements

#### *Disinterest*

UMB's employees administer the resources of the community and should therefore not behave in a manner that weakens public confidence in our impartiality. Private relations, such as kinship, cohabitation/marriage and friendship, or close working relations shall not unduly

---

<sup>28</sup> Cf. the Freedom of Information Act: <http://www.lovddata.no/all/nl-19700619-069.html>.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. also UMB's Archive Plan: <http://intern.umb.no/?viewID=26337#4.1%20Postbehandling>.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. UMB's Personnel Handbook: <http://www.umb.no/5926>.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. the Public Administration Act, Section 13: <http://www.lovddata.no/all/nl-19670210-000.html>.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. the Personal Data Act: <http://www.lovddata.no/all/hl-20000414-031.html>.

influence work-related actions or provide the grounds for suspicions of such matters. It is the individual's duty to disclose potential conflicts of interest.

#### *Gifts and other benefits*

Pursuant to the Civil Service Act, UMB employees must not use their position to obtain unauthorised benefits for themselves or others on the basis of their employment at UMB if the gift might foster a dependent relationship or provide a basis for suspicions regarding such a relationship.<sup>33</sup> UMB's employees should also not give or offer gifts or other benefits that are meant to or could influence the recipient's actions.

Moderate forms of hospitality and social activity are a natural part of polite business dealings. Such attentiveness must not, however, be cultivated to the degree that it influences decision-making processes or provides due cause for suspicions of such influence. The frequency and degree of attentiveness must be in a reasonable proportion to the commercial/professional needs.

When suppliers and other commercial enterprises offer visits to private companies, field trips to exhibitions, etc., it is a prerequisite that UMB will cover travel and accommodation expenses. Trips shall always be approved by a superior.

#### *Proprietary interests*

Employees who have considerable owner's shares in enterprises that are either UMB clients or suppliers must notify their immediate line manager thereof. The same applies to persons who are close to UMB employees. All employees are encouraged to register their proprietary interests.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Procurements*

UMB's employees must not exploit their position for their own personal benefit by participating in or influencing procurements to UMB from his or her own or a close associate's firm. In the university's procurement processes, employees have the opportunity of submitting a tender based on the stipulated terms. Only in the most extraordinary of circumstances, however, can a tender from an employee come into consideration, and then only as the result of an ordinary and open tender process.

Employees who have a personal stake in a given procurement, whether financial or otherwise and whether directly or through a close associate, shall not participate in drafting the tender terms or otherwise influence their formation.<sup>35</sup>

During the preparatory phase, UMB's employees shall also not participate in or seek to influence a procurement through descriptions or decisions of a procurement need, that might be considered to be or engender a conflict of interest. This might also be in regard to a personal stake in the procurement, whether financial or otherwise or whether directly or through a close associate.

Information that has been received from the market about tenders shall be treated confidentially and not be exploited e.g. in relation to competing tenders. Legal requirements

---

<sup>33</sup> Cf. the Civil Service Act: <http://www.lovddata.no/all/nl-19830304-003.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. UMB's rules for registering employees' proprietary interests.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. the University of Oslo's Ethical Guidelines for Employees Regarding the Procurement of Goods and Services and Contact with Suppliers.

that buyers shall act in accordance with sound business practice, follow a high standard of business ethics and ensure an equal treatment of suppliers apply.

Tools for ensuring competitive tenders for procurements at UMB shall be used in accordance with existing guidelines.

As a 'green' university UMB shall prioritise environmental values, also in regard to its procurement policy. UMB shall require that the UN's human rights and the ILO's core convention are adhered to in the entire chain of value. UMB shall, wherever possible, give priority to purchases of "fair trade products". Documentation and follow-up will take place in the form of written statements, external verification, follow-up conversations and announced/unannounced controls. When the standard for private and public enterprises' social responsibility (ISO 26000) is operative, UMB will evaluate demands for documentation of social responsibility in accordance with this standard.

#### **4.3 Loyalty to the institution and respect for the integrity of individuals**

UMB greatly values its employees, students and partners and respects their integrity. Conversely, employees and students are obligated to be loyal to the institution and not act in the course of their work in a manner that might be considered offensive.

It is important for UMB's reputation that guidelines exist for dealing with the media in cases that relate to UMB as an institution.

##### *Personal convictions and the right to refuse participation*

In line with what was stated above about academic freedom, all employees can reserve the right to refuse participation on projects that conflict with their religious or moral convictions.

##### *Public debate and freedom of speech*

UMB's employees and students are encouraged to contribute to the public debate by providing scientific arguments, but also be clear about what UMB's or the institute's viewpoints are in a given case and what are the researcher's own viewpoints.

UMB's employees and students have the right to express themselves critically about the university's operations and other conditions of public interest.

##### *Respectful relations with all partners*

UMB's employees and students shall treat all partners respectfully and honestly.

Employees and students who are involved in projects in other countries or in collaborations with foreign organisations should obtain knowledge about and respect the culture, norms and customs of these countries, as long as these are not in conflict with other parts of UMB's ethical guidelines (e.g. in regard to giving or receiving gifts or other benefits). The purchase of sexual services on official trips shall not take place<sup>36</sup>.

##### *Information technology*

---

<sup>36</sup> Cf. the Ethical Guidelines for Government Administration.

The use of UMB's computer systems, information and online services shall be based on professional needs. Information that might be deemed offensive or inappropriate shall never be downloaded, stored or forwarded

*Dual employment*

UMB employees cannot engage in additional employment or functions, board positions or other paid assignments that conflict with UMB's interests or that might weaken public confidence in UMB. There must be openness about dual employment and secondary income that may be significant for the fulfilment of an employee's duties and about other commercial activities competing with UMB's operations.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Cf. the Civil Servant Act, Section 20, as well as the special agreement UMB has with the Norwegian Association of Researchers (reproduced in UMB's Personnel Handbook): <http://www.lovdato.no/all/nl-19830304-003.html>.

## 5 Whistleblowing and dealing with non-compliance

### 5.1 Whistleblowing

Employees and students are obligated to report incidents that could cause damage or loss to UMB, so that steps can be taken to avoid or limit damages.

UMB's employees and students have the right and duty to blow the whistle on unacceptable conditions within the university.<sup>38</sup> Internal whistleblowing shall take place in accordance with current guidelines. Such whistleblowing should at the outset take place in the normal chain of command, unless special reasons dictate that this is not advisable. Before external whistleblowing takes place, attempts should be made to address the matter internally. UMB is responsible for promoting a healthy climate for expression so that cases that might arise can be addressed before there is a need for further whistleblowing, without employees having to fear the consequences of opening the matter up for discussion. Such a climate entails that space must be allowed for making mistakes.

Appropriate mechanisms for protecting the whistleblower and the accused are described in separate guidelines.<sup>39</sup> The person of authority who has been notified is obligated to pursue the matter, and also to inform the whistleblower of how the case will be processed and of the final outcome of the case.

### 5.2 Procedures for dealing with non-compliance

Violations of the guidelines may involve different degrees of seriousness, and must be punished in different ways. Certain violations are crimes and shall be treated as such. UMB seeks good solutions for students and employees who are involved in the violation of the guidelines. For more information on various transgressions that have been punished, see the online resources that accompany this document.

#### *Employees' and students' roles and responsibilities*

Violations of the ethical guidelines shall be dealt with at the lowest possible level. The immediate line manager is to be alerted if it is not possible to solve the issue at a lower level. If, for whatever reason, it is not possible to involve the line manager, the case is transferred to the next level of management. Students can also notify their representatives or the Student's Committee, who will subsequently take the case further up in the system.

#### *Line manager*

Line managers shall be aware of and as soon as possible deal with potential violations of the ethical guidelines that arise in the working and learning environment. The line manager is responsible for the issue's resolution and for ensuring that all the involved parties are heard.

Upon suspicion that the ethical guidelines have been violated, the line manager shall as soon as possible, and before the case is reported to others, notify the person concerned. The

---

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Working Environment Act, Section 2: <http://www.lovdata.no/all/tl-20050617-062-002.html#2-4>.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. internal guidelines for whistleblowing at UMB: <http://intern.umb.no/?viewID=23952>.

obligation to provide information is in regard to the persons involved in the case, and the rules on confidentiality apply.

In case of a serious violation, the line manager shall notify his or her immediate superior.

### **5.3 Responsibility for the guidelines and dealing with non-compliance**

#### *Rector and managing director – university management*

The rector and managing director are responsible for ensuring that the university's ethical guidelines are adhered to and continuously evaluated. They can address issues of non-compliance, either on their own volition or on request. In such cases, the rector and managing director shall seek advice from UMB's Ethics Advisory Board, the National Commission for the Investigation of Scientific Misconduct or other research ethics committees.

The rector and managing director are responsible for contacting the police if the nature of the case requires such involvement.

The university management is in charge of communication in cases relating to serious violations of the ethical guidelines, unless this responsibility has been delegated to others.

#### *University board*

UMB's ethical guidelines have been adopted by the university board. Cases concerning the ethical guidelines can be presented to the board for due processing. The Ethics Advisory Board advises the board on such issues.

#### *The Ethics Advisory Board*

The Ethics Advisory Board can deal with cases submitted by employees and students. The Ethics Advisory Board has an advisory role in cases concerning ethical issues.

#### *Consequences of non-compliance*

Violations of the ethical guidelines may affect employment status. Exceptionally serious violations can lead to a dismissal with or without notice pursuant to the provisions of current employment laws and regulations.

## **6 Guideline revision and maintenance**

The ethical guidelines shall be a living document that generates discussion and reflection within the university. The guidelines shall be subject to continuous evaluation. Suggestions for guideline revisions shall be made by the managing director. Changes in the document must be adopted by the university board.

## Appendix: Sources and process

It is important that the ethical principles and guidelines are perceived as reasonable and in accordance with principles and guidelines that apply at other, similar institutions. The work on the document drafts has therefore been based on already existing ethical guidelines:

- Ethical Guidelines for the Civil Service, drafted by the Ministry of Modernisation, 2005
- Noragric's Code of Conduct
- Guidelines for Research Ethics in Science and Technology, drafted by the National Committee for Research Ethics in Science and Technology (NENT), 2007
- Ethics in SINTEF, SINTEF Media 2006
- Ethical Guidelines from the University of Stavanger
- The University of Oslo's Ethical Guidelines for Employees Regarding the Procurement of Goods and Services and Contact with Suppliers.
- The University of Oslo's Supervision Guidelines

Ethical guidelines must at the same time be rooted in those people to whom the guidelines will apply. A wide-ranging consultative process was therefore conducted when drafting the guidelines, where among others the following UMB bodies were heard:

- the Ethics Advisory Board
- the University Board
- central leader teams
- institute leader teams
- the Personnel Forum
- the Financial Forum
- the civil servant organisations
- the Forum for Doctoral Students at UMB (FODOS) and students
- the Research Committee
- the Study Committee