

APPROVED BY  
Resolution No. S-2018-4-4 as of 17 April 2018  
of the Senate of Vilnius University  
(version of Resolution No. SPN-54 as of 21 October 2020  
of the Senate of Vilnius University)

## **CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

Vilnius University,  
fostering the traditions and values of the past, promoted by today's challenges and passed on to future generations, ensuring the variety of opinions of the academic community, openness to ideas, mutual respect, trust, tolerance, alignment of autonomy with accountability to the state and society, encouraging cooperation between Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the University) and other Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions, public authorities, business community and public organisations, educating active and responsible citizens and leaders of society, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Statute of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Statute), the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts effective in the Republic of Lithuania, and having regard to international experience related to the implementation of the regulations of academic ethics,  
shall adopt this Code of Academic Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Code).

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Code shall be applicable to all members of the University's academic community in accordance with the Statute, as well as all the members of the governing bodies of the University (hereinafter referred to as members of the community). Members of the community must follow the highest ethical standards within the University and outside of it. The Code shall also be applied in cases when members of the community independently provide intellectual services to third parties, even if these services are not directly related to the University's activities. This Code shall not apply to non-academic relations of members of the community, violations provided for in Chapter IV of the Code, for which penalties are imposed in accordance with the University's regulatory framework for science, art and studies, as well as labour disputes and disputes investigated by other commissions or other entities operating in the University within their competence.

2. The University is governed by the principles of transparency of the study and scientific process, academic integrity, equality, non-discrimination, fairness, intellectual property protection, presumption of innocence and other universally accepted principles established in the Statute.

3. Members of the community shall be guaranteed the right to openly express their thoughts, create and carry out scientific research. The University aims to protect each member of the community from unjustified restrictions, create conditions for academic freedom, mutual trust and respect between members of the community, and creativity. To achieve these objectives, the Code established principles of ethical conduct and liability for failure to follow them.

### **CHAPTER II GENERAL ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS**

4. The University shall aim to ensure fair and transparent employment of members of the community and evaluation of their work results. The University shall guarantee that decisions regarding employment will be passed, scientific degrees will be granted, students and unclassified students (hereinafter jointly referred to as students) will be accepted and their academic results will be assessed according to pre-published criteria by applying them equally to everyone.

5. Members of the community shall be guaranteed academic freedom. Academic freedom means the right of members of the community to openly voice their attitude towards lecturing, the organisation and administration of studies and scientific research and express their critical ideas, freedom to develop scientific activities, choose the subject of research, hypotheses, sources and methodology. The University aims to protect members of the community from restrictions, possible pressure and influence, as well as to foster the traditions of the atmosphere of critical thinking and open discussions. The responsible use of this academic freedom requires that members of the community would recognize the same freedom for other members of the community. The following shall be incompatible with the responsible use of academic freedom:

5.1. Disrespect expressed towards opinions of other members of the community;

5.2. Restriction of the right of members of the community to voice and defend their opinion in decisions of the University;

5.3. Restriction of the right to respond to criticism or accusations;

5.4. Participation in scientific research or tests that are known or presumed to cause damage to a human being, the environment, society or culture;

5.5. Other actions that restrict academic freedom.

6. When concluding agreements with persons who do not belong to the University's community, members of the community must assess the content of such agreements in terms of ethics, and refrain from concluding agreements which may not comply with such requirements of academic ethics due to their source of funding, the reputation of partners or co-workers, nature of activity, desired outcome, the purpose of the use of work or due to other reasons.

7. Relationships between members of the community shall be based on the principles of mutual respect, fairness, impartiality, non-discrimination and collegiality, loyalty to the University, academic cooperation, openness and transparency. These principles shall be violated by:

7.1. Discrimination of members of the community of any form, as well as tolerance of such discrimination;

7.2. Humiliation of members of the community;

7.3. Derogation of the abilities, views or personal qualities of a member of the community;

7.4. Abuse of persons who are more vulnerable (due to subordination or other social relations);

7.5. Withholding of information intended for members of the community or imposing obligations on other members of the community not to disclose such information;

7.6. Initiation or instigation of conflicts at the University;

7.7. disclosure or discussion with other persons of information considered confidential in accordance with laws or legal acts of the University (orally, in writing, electronically or by other means and ways), excluding cases when a person is a candidate for a position at the University according to the procedures established at the University, and discussions on his/her academic and career achievements, experience, professional and personal qualities are necessary in order to assess such person's suitability to assume the offered position;

7.8. Actions that have signs of harassment, intimidation or other adverse effects;

7.9. Requirement of any type of remuneration when this requirement is related to (non)acceptance of certain decisions, as well as giving and acceptance of such remuneration.

7.10. Other actions that demean the name of a member of the community.

8. Members of the community must:

8.1. Follow academic integrity in study and scientific activities;

8.2. When initiating and/or implementing projects associated with the name of the University, aim that their results would serve the objectives of the University and would be publicly available to the extent possible;

8.3. Inform, within their competence, the University's Central Academic Ethics Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) or the Academic Ethics Commission of Core Academic Units of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Unit Commission) about any possible violations of academic ethics based on reliable sources;

8.4. Avoid conflict of interest, resolve possible situations of conflicts of interest honourably, by following the procedures established at the University, and inform their immediate superior about a conflict of interest (or possible conflict);

8.5. Refuse to exercise their right to vote where the issue related to funding, sanction or incentive to family members or persons who are close to the members of the community is considered.

9. Members of the community must use the financial, material, human and intellectual resources of the University in an economical, fair and responsible manner and only for the purposes related to the activities of the University. It shall be prohibited to use the resources of the University for political activities, private business or for satisfying personal needs. It shall be prohibited to damage or destroy the University's property in any form.

### **CHAPTER III ETHICS OF SCIENTIFIC AND PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES**

10. The behaviour of teachers and researchers (in either science or arts) (hereinafter referred to as the academic staff) must be an example of academic ethics for other members of the community.

11. Relationships between the academic staff and students must be based on principles of good morals, mutual respect, integrity, impartiality, non-discrimination, academic cooperation, openness, transparency and other principles listed in Paragraph 7. These principles shall be violated by:

11.1. Development of an intimate relationship between an academic staff member and a student, with whom the staff member is connected through the course unit being taught;

11.2. The assumption of academic result assessment or management/leadership functions in respect of a family member, relative or other person who is close to the academic staff member;

11.3. Requirement of any type of remuneration when this requirement is related to the assessment of knowledge or other results significant for the studies, as well as the giving and acceptance of such remuneration.

12. The academic staff must provide all students with equal conditions for academic opportunities. The academic staff must be impartial in respect of his/her students and treat all students equally regardless of personal preferences, student's political, religious or other beliefs, gender, race, disability, sexual orientation, economic or social situation, and must not grant privileges to any student in respect of other students.

13. The assessment of the student's knowledge and skills shall be fair, honest and compatible with the requirements and criteria specified in the description of the study subject.

14. The academic staff must provide the administration of a Core Academic Unit of the University with justified and reliable information about cases of students' dishonesty, such as plagiarism, copying, data falsification, forgery of results of examinations or credits, use of third-party assistance during an examination or credit, submission of another person's written paper (or part of it) as one's own, earning money from writing papers for other students, buying papers written by other persons and their submission to an academic staff member for assessment, or other dishonest acts of students.

15. Assessment of a student's study achievements and academic achievements of the academic staff may not be linked with (non)participation in political, public or other activities.

16. During the study process, the academic staff must enable students with special needs (with visual, hearing, movement or other impairments) or learning disabilities to be able to carry out tasks under conditions that would best suit their specific needs.

17. The academic staff must comply with the requirement of confidentiality of data about a student's study achievements. For this purpose, the academic staff:

17.1. is prohibited from disclosing information about the student's academic performance or other information related to studies to any third parties, excluding cases when the student provides a written consent;

17.2. is prohibited from discussing the non-depersonalised study achievements of a student without the student's consent, excluding cases when a student's appeal is examined regarding the assessment of the student's study achievements, when discussing depersonalized study achievement assessment results of students, or when addressing other study related issues the resolution of which is not possible without discussing the study achievement results. In all cases, an academic staff member must be polite and respectful when commenting the achievements of students;

17.3. is prohibited from using information of a private nature about the student for the purposes of teaching or research, excluding cases when a written consent of the student is received for such use;

17.4. must ensure that any remarks and comments on the student's written paper that is not submitted for public defence shall be unavailable to any third parties.

18. Research activities at the University must be carried out in an honest, moral and responsible manner. Research must not harm man, society, nature or culture. Members of the community carrying out scientific activities must follow the principle of academic integrity. The principle of academic integrity in research activities shall be violated by the following actions:

18.1. Forgery and falsification of signatures, certificates, report data or results, as well as other data and documents significant for scientific activities;

18.2. Deliberate specification of a non-existent source or source description element;

18.3. Concealment of received data contradicting the research hypothesis and/or questions, and/or research conclusions;

18.4. Provision of deliberately misleading information about research methodology and/or sources of funding;

18.5. Granting of unreasonable co-authorship or failure to indicate co-authorship;

18.6. Denial or concealment of the contribution of other persons whose contribution was significant in scientific activities;

18.7. Theft of or deliberate damage to research data, computer programs, samples of empirical materials or manuscripts;

18.8. Deliberate concealment of the real author or co-author by presenting the work in one's name with or without the consent of the real author;

18.9. Specification of a person as a co-author without his consent;

18.10. Other actions which may be considered as plagiarism as defined in Paragraph 19 of the Code, or other violation of the principle of academic integrity.

19. Plagiarism is prohibited at the University. Typical cases of plagiarism shall include the following:

19.1. Where a person uses the ideas, illustrative materials, extracts from written and non-written (video, audio, etc.) sources and other information of other persons without indicating the source;

19.2. Where a person uses the statements of a paper prepared by another person by slightly changing the words or sentence structures without indicating the source or indicating it inaccurately, and presents such a paper as his/her own;

19.3. Where the text by another person is presented without any quotation marks or other type of highlighting;

19.4. Where a person carries out academic reproduction or other dishonest actions which may give reason to believe that the plagiarism prohibition was violated.

20. The core academic units of the University may provide additional or more specific quotation rules.

## **CHAPTER IV ACADEMIC ETHICS OF STUDENTS**

21. During the study process, students shall comply with the general requirements of the principle of academic integrity. The violation of the principle of academic integrity during the study process shall comprise the following:

21.1. Where a student copies during study achievement assessment or allows another student to copy his work;

21.2. Where a student prompts, uses notes, electronic or virtual communication means and other technologies, disregards instructions given by the examiner or the student's behaviour is otherwise unfair during the assessment of study achievements;

21.3. Actions violating the principle of academic integrity in scientific activities established in Paragraph 18 of the Code;

21.4. Actions that comply with the signs of plagiarism specified in Paragraph 19 of the Code;

21.5. Where the same paper and other works which were already assessed and scored are submitted when reporting for several course units, excluding cases when term papers or other written works (or their parts) are used in the final work;

21.6. Where reporting is done on behalf of another student;

21.7. Other student behaviour that does not comply with the requirements of integrity established in the Code.

22. The University encourages the practice where students confirm in all of their papers and written works that their work was carried out independently and honestly.

## **CHAPTER V IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THE CODE**

23. The supervision and control of the implementation of the Code shall be carried out by the Commission and Unit Commissions, based on their competence, acting in compliance with the regulations of the Commission and the Unit Commissions approved by the Senate. Information on the composition of the commissions, decisions and contacts of the commissions is publicly available on the University website.

24. Gross violations of academic ethics shall be deemed to be violations recognized as such by a reasoned decision of the Commission or the Unit Commission, taking into account their impact, extent, damage, recurrence and other characteristics.

25. Upon determining that a member of the community violated the academic ethics requirements, the Commission and Unit Commissions shall confirm or refute that a violation (including gross violation) was made based on their competence and in accordance with the regulations approved by the Senate of the University, and/or make another decision provided in the regulations of the Commission or the Unit Commissions.

## **CHAPTER VI FINAL PROVISIONS**

26. The Code shall be approved, amended and repealed under the resolution of the Senate of the University

27. The Code shall be published on the website of the University.

28. This Code must be read by newly employed members of the community, members of the community who assume a new position at the University or who begin studying at the University.

---