

APPROVED BY
Resolution No. S-2018-4-4 as of 17 April 2018
of the Senate of Vilnius University
(version of Resolution No. SPN-55 as of 21 October 2020
of the Senate of Vilnius University)

REGULATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMISSION OF CORE ACADEMIC UNITS OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Regulations (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) of the Academic Ethics Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) of the Core Academic Units (hereinafter referred to as the Unit) of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the University) shall regulate the formation, competence and organisation of work of the Commission.

2. In its activities, the Commission shall adhere to the Statute of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Statute), the laws of the Republic of Lithuania, the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Code of Academic Ethics), and these Regulations.

CHAPTER II FORMATION AND COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION

3. The Commission shall consist of 6 members: 4 members of the Commission shall be appointed under the resolution of the council of the Unit from lecturers and science (art) employees of the Unit, and 2 members shall be appointed and recalled according to the procedures established by the Students' Representation of the University.

4. The council of the Unit shall form the Commission and appoint the Commission chairman and his deputy from its members, i.e. lecturers and science (art) employees of the University, with consideration to proposals of the chairman of the council.

5. Members of the governing bodies of the University, members of the standing commissions formed by the Senate and members of the Central Academic Ethics Commission may not be appointed members of the Commission.

6. Members of the Commission shall have equal rights, except in cases where, pursuant to these Regulations, the Commission chairman's vote is the decisive vote.

7. Members of the Commission, excluding delegated members of the Students' Representation of the University, shall be appointed for a two-year term of office. Members of the Commission, excluding student representatives, may be appointed to the same position for no more than 2 consecutive terms.

8. Only persons of impeccable repute may be appointed to be members of the Commission.

9. Persons who were appointed to be members of the Commission must sign a pledge of confidentiality and a declaration of impartiality, the forms of which are established by the Rector of the University (hereinafter referred to as the Rector) or his authorized person.

10. A member of the Commission may be removed from this position prior to expiry of his/her term of office, if he/she commits a violation of academic ethics or another violation of legal or moral norms, which is incompatible with the position of a member of the Commission. The decision concerning removal of a member of the Commission shall be passed by the unit or institution that appointed or delegated the member. Additional grounds and procedures for the removal of students' representatives from the Commission may be established by the Students' Representation.

11. Should a member of the Commission resign from his/her job or complete his/her studies at the University or present to the unit or institution that appointed him/her an application to resign

from the Commission, or is removed according to Paragraph 10 of the Regulations, according to the procedures established by these Regulations, a new member of the Commission shall be appointed for the remaining part of the term of office.

12. The material and organisational conditions necessary for the activities of the Commission shall be ensured by the head of the Unit, by whose decision the Secretary of the Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Secretary) shall be appointed, and who shall not be considered a member of the Commission. If the Secretary is not able to participate in a meeting of the Commission, another person who is able to assume the functions of the Secretary shall participate in the meeting. The Secretary shall be subject to the requirements set out in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Regulations.

CHAPTER III ORGANISATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

13. The Commission shall examine complaints about actions of members of the academic community working or studying in that Unit, which may violate academic ethics, except for complaints about possible violations of research ethics, the examination of which is assigned to the Central Commission for Academic Ethics.

14. The form of work of the Commission shall be meetings organized in the following cases:

14.1. Upon receipt of an appeal from a member of the University community;

14.2. In order to provide proposals to the governing bodies of the Unit regarding fostering of academic ethics;

14.3. In order to initiate supplements and amendments to the Code of Academic Ethics;

14.4. In other cases provided in these Regulations.

15. Meetings of the Commission shall be convened and chaired by the chairman of the Commission. If the chairman of the Commission withdraws due to circumstances provided in Paragraph 16 of these Regulations or is not able to participate in the meeting, the meeting shall be convened and chaired by a deputy chairman of the Commission or another member of the Commission appointed by the chairman of the Commission if the Commission does not have a deputy chairman.

16. A member of the Commission shall be obliged to withdraw from the discussion of issues during the meeting under at least one of the following circumstances:

16.1. The discussed issue is directly related to the member of the Commission himself;

16.2. The discussed issue is related to persons who are close family members of the member of the Commission;

16.3. The discussed issue is related to persons who are spouses, partners or carers of the member of the Commission;

16.4. A member of the Commission, his/her spouse (cohabitant) or his/her close relatives are directly or indirectly interested in the outcome of the decision regarding the discussed issue;

16.5. There are also other circumstances which raise doubts about the impartiality of the member of the Commission.

17. Appeals to the Commission may be presented by any member of the University community.

18. Appeals may be lodged no later than within one month from the date when the possible violation of academic ethics was committed or established. This deadline may, by the decision of the Commission, be extended in the presence of valid reasons due to which the deadline was not met and in the presence of a motivated request of the applicant, provided that no more than six months have passed since the date on which the violation was committed or established.

19. Appeals shall be submitted to the Commission in the following ways:

19.1. printed and signed appeals and complaints are submitted to the secretary of the Commission;

19.2. Appeals and complaints signed with an electronic signature in the University document management system or created in the University study information system;

19.3. Appeals signed sign and scanned or sign with a qualified electronic signature via the E-delivery system.

20. An appeal must include:

20.1. the name, surname of the applicant, position held or the department where the applicant is studying, the e-mail address provided by the University (if it is not provided – other e-mail used by the applicant) and the telephone number;

20.2. a description of the possible violation of academic ethics and specification and attachment of the available information or circumstances confirming that the violation was actually committed;

20.3. A specific request of the applicant;

20.4. The applicant's signature, excluding cases when the complaint is submitted in the University's information system.

21. Anonymous appeals or appeals that do not comply with other requirements specified in Paragraph 20 of the Regulations shall not be examined, however, after considering the information provided in them, the Commission may start an investigation regarding the violation of academic ethics or transfer the information about a possible violation of academic ethics to be examined by the Central Academic Ethics Commission or another unit or employee of the University within their competence. The Commission shall have the right to return the appeal to the applicant to remedy the deficiencies within a reasonable period of time (minimum 5 working days), specified by the Commission.

22. The Commission must examine the received appeal and make a decision no later than within 30 calendar days after its registration in the Unit according to the procedures established at the University. The deadline specified in this paragraph does not include the summer holiday period provided for students in the legal acts of the University.

23. A meeting of the Commission shall be deemed lawful if it is attended by at least two thirds of the members of the Commission. Meetings of the Commission shall be closed. The parties to the dispute shall be entitled to attend the meeting of the Commission at the invitation of the Commission. The Commission shall have the right to invite other persons to attend the meeting at the request of the parties to the dispute or on its own initiative.

24. Parties to the dispute shall be informed about the contents of the appeal. In exceptional cases, at the applicant's justified request, the Commission may pass a decision by informing about the contents of the appeal without disclosing the applicant's identity to the other party to the dispute.

25. When investigating complaints about possible violations of academic ethics by undergraduate and graduate students, or in other cases where the opinion of specialists in the respective field of science is required, the Commission shall contact the head of the Unit to form an impartial expert group (hereinafter referred to as the Expert Group). The Expert Group shall be formed by the Rector from at least 3 persons not directly related to the analysed appeal. Before taking up their duties, the members of the Expert Group must sign and submit to the Commission a pledge of confidentiality and a declaration of impartiality in the form established by the Rector.

26. The Commission shall submit the task to the Expert Group with or without acquaintance with the content of the appeal addressed to the Commission. The justified and reasoned opinion of the Expert Group shall be submitted to the Commission within a time limit set by the Commission.

27. Upon receipt of the conclusion of the Expert Group, the Commission shall decide on the fact of the violation of academic ethics or its absence or, if it identifies significant shortcomings in the formation of the Expert Group, re-apply the head of the Unit for a new Expert Group.

28. Upon receipt of a request to investigate a possible violation of academic ethics by persons other than those referred to in Paragraph 25 of these Regulations, the Commission shall forward the issue and all related information to the Central Academic Ethics Commission and shall not conduct an investigation into the violation of academic ethics.

29. The decision signed by the Chairman of the Commission and registered in accordance with the procedure established by the legal acts of the University shall be sent to the parties to the dispute by e-mail provided by the University no later than 5 working days after its adoption. The

decision may also be signed electronically. When the Commission makes recommendations or suggestions in its decision, the Commission shall communicate the decision to the addressees of the recommendations or suggestions.

30. The Commission shall examine appeals in accordance with the principles set out in Article 25(5) of the Statute. The Commission must provide the parties to the dispute with an opportunity to be heard. This right may be exercised in writing or orally by decision of the Commission.

31. Minutes of meetings of the Commission shall be drafted. The minutes prepared by the secretary of the Commission within 3 working days from the meeting of the Commission shall be signed by the Chairman of the Commission (in his absence – the Chairman of the meeting) and the secretary of the Commission. An audio recording of the meeting shall be made during the meeting of the Commission. The minutes and audio recordings of the Commission meetings shall be stored in accordance with the procedure established by the legal acts of the University.

CHAPTER IV COMMISSION DECISIONS

32. After examining the appeal, the Commission shall:

32.1. Having established that such a proposal is in the best interests of the parties and the University, suggest that the parties reconcile or withdraw the appeal and resolve the conflict by other means;

32.2. establish the fact of presence or absence of a violation of the academic ethics or a gross violation of academic ethics;

32.3. Appeal to the Unit's Dispute Resolution Commission regarding the course unit assessment revision;

32.4. forward the appeals that do not fall within the scope of the Commission's investigation or their part to Central Academic Ethics Commission, the Dispute Resolution Commissions or another entity operating at the University, and inform the applicant thereof;

32.5. Address the head of the Unit recommending to address the Rector to remove a student or listener from the University (in case of a gross violation of the academic ethics) or to impose other penalties provided for in the legal acts of the University on students and listeners;

32.6. After establishing that a gross violation of academic ethics was committed, the Commission shall provide recommendations to the head of unit to appeal to the Rector of the University in order to terminate the employment agreement signed with the employee who committed the violation or to impose other penalties specified in the legal acts of the University;

32.7. appeal to the Rector of the University regarding the initiation of procedures for the annulment of the granted qualification or pedagogical degree and related diplomas;

32.8. initiate procedures for the revocation of authorship of scientific work;

32.9. recommend that a member of the academic community refuse to participate in an ongoing research and experimental (social, cultural) development project;

32.10. Provide suggestions to the administration or other parts of the Unit concerning the improvement of the organisation of research and study activities in terms of the application of the Code of Academic Ethics;

32.11. Provide suggestions to the University's Central Academic Ethics Commission concerning the improvement of the Code of Academic Ethics and its application process.

33. Decisions of the Commission shall be passed by a simple majority of votes of members of the Commission attending the meeting. In the case of an equal distribution of votes, the vote of the chairman of the meeting shall be decisive.

34. A decision of the Commission may be appealed to the University's Central Academic Ethics Commission within 14 calendar days from the date of its presentation. This deadline may, by the decision of the University's Central Academic Ethics Commission, be extended in the presence of valid reasons due to which the deadline was not met and in the presence of a motivated appeal of

the applicant, provided that no more than 30 calendar days have passed since the date of delivery of the decision.

35. Until the Commission has taken a decision and the time limit for appealing against that decision has expired, no decision shall be taken against the applicant by the head of the unit or his delegates, and enforcement of the decisions taken until then shall be suspended.

36. The Commission shall periodically provide summary information on its activities to the Central Academic Ethics Commission in accordance with the procedure established by the Commission.
