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APPROVED
by Resolution No. S-2016-05 of 13 June 2006
of the Commission of the Senate of Vilnius University
(wording of Resolution No. SPN-54 of 20 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 the 'University') and other Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions, public authorities, the 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 the 'Statute'), the Law on Higher Education and Research 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 the 'Code').

CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. The Code shall be applicable to all the persons belonging to the University's academic community in accordance with the Statute, as well as all the members of the governing bodies of the University (hereinafter collectively the '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 apply 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 Regulatory Framework for Research, Artistic Activity and Studies (hereinafter the 'Reguliaminas'), 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 principles established in the Statute and universally accepted.

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 and create conditions for academic freedom, creativity, mutual trust and respect between members of the community. To achieve these objectives, the Code establishes 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 recruitment of members of the community and evaluation of their work results. The University shall guarantee that decisions regarding recruitment will be passed, scientific degrees will be granted, students and unclassified

students (hereinafter jointly the ‘students’) will be admitted and their learning outcomes will be assessed according to pre-published criteria, which will be applied 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 research 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 the members of the community to recognise 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 opinions in decisions of the University;
- 5.3. restriction of the right to respond to criticism or accusations;
- 5.4. participation in scientific research or experiments 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 that 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 good morals, mutual respect, fairness, impartiality, non-discrimination and collegiality, loyalty to the University, academic cooperation, openness and transparency. These principles shall be deemed violated by:

- 7.1. any form of discrimination against members of the community, 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. exploitation 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 the 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 their academic and career achievements, experience, professional and personal qualities are necessary in order to assess such person’s suitability to assume the said position;
- 7.8. actions that have characteristics of harassment, intimidation or other adverse effects;
- 7.9. demanding remuneration of any nature when this demand 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 research 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 made, to the extent possible, publicly available;
- 8.3. provide, within their competence, the University’s Central Academic Ethics Commission

(hereinafter the ‘Commission’) or the academic ethics commission of a core academic unit of Vilnius University (hereinafter the ‘Unit Commission’) with any reliable information on potential violations of academic ethics;

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 (or possible conflict) of interest;

8.5. refuse to exercise their right to vote when an issue related to awarding funding or an incentive or imposing a penalty on a family member or a person whom they are close to 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 RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGICAL ACTIVITIES

10. The behaviour of lecturers and researchers (in either science or arts) (hereinafter the ‘academic staff’) must set an example of academic ethics for other members of the community.

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

11.1. development of a close relationship of a personal nature between an academic staff member and a student when the persons are linked by an academic bond;

11.2. undertaking the function of assessment of learning outcomes or management in respect of a family member, relative or other person who is close to the academic staff member;

11.3. demanding remuneration of any nature when this demand 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 students and treat all students equally regardless of personal preferences, student’s political, religious or other beliefs, gender, race, age, 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 comply with the requirements and criteria specified in the description of the course unit.

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 pass/fail assessments, use of third-party assistance during an examination or assessment, submission of another author’s research paper (or part of it) as one’s own, earning money from writing research papers for other students, buying research papers and submitting them to an academic staff member for assessment, or other dishonest acts of students.

15. Assessments of learning outcomes of students 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 (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 the learning outcomes of students. For this purpose, the academic staff:

17.1. is prohibited from disclosing information about the results of the assessment of learning outcomes of a student or other information related to their studies to any third parties, excluding cases when the student gives written consent;

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

17.4. must ensure that any remarks and comments on the student's research paper that is not submitted for public defence are 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 a person, society, nature or culture. Members of the community carrying out research activities must follow the principle of academic integrity. The principle of academic integrity in research activities shall be deemed 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 research activities;

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

18.3. concealment of obtained data contradicting the research hypothesis and/or questions, and/or concealment of research conclusions;

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

18.5. granting of ungrounded co-authorship or failure to indicate co-authorship;

18.6. denial or concealment of the contribution of other persons whose contribution was significant in research activities;

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

18.8. deliberate concealment of the real author or co-author by presenting the work under their own name with or without the consent of the real author;

18.9. specification of a person as a co-author without their consent;

18.10. the use of artificial intelligence or other technological tools of a similar nature in research activities without disclosing the fact of such use, except where such non-disclosure of the fact of such use is permissible in accordance with the University's legal acts;

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

Amendments to the Item:

by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-25 of 16 April 2024.

19. The University prohibits plagiarism that is characterised by the following:

19.1. a person uses ideas, illustrations, extracts from written or non-written (video, audio, etc.) sources or other information generated by other persons, artificial intelligence, or other technological means of similar nature without acknowledging the source;

Amendments to the Item:

by Resolution of the Senate of Vilnius University No. SPN-25 of 16 April 2024.

19.2. a person submits a work under their own name that uses statements from another person's work, generated by artificial intelligence or other similar technological means, with minor changes to words or sentence structures and with no or inaccurate acknowledgement of the source;

Amendments to the Item:

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- 19.3. a person submits a text written by another person without any citation marks or other form of distinction;
- 19.4. a person carries out republishing of academic production 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 citing 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. a student cheats by copying during the assessment of learning outcomes or allows another student to cheat by copying their work;

21.2. a student prompts, uses notes, electronic or virtual communication means and other technologies, disregards instructions given by the examiner or behaves in an otherwise unfair manner during the assessment of learning outcomes;

21.3. actions violating the principle of academic integrity in research activities established in Item 18 of the Code;

21.4. actions that correspond to the characteristics of plagiarism specified in Item 19 of the Code;

21.5. the same research paper and other works which have already been assessed and scored are submitted for several assignments, excluding cases when term papers or other research papers (or their parts) are used in the final thesis;

21.6. a student replacing themselves by another person in the assessment, or a student participating in the assessment on behalf of another student;

21.7. any 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 research papers and written assignments 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 subject to the approval of the Senate. Information on the composition of the commissions, decisions and contacts of the commissions shall be made publicly available on the University website.

24. Gross violations of academic ethics shall be deemed to be violations recognised 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 requirements of the academic ethics, the Commission and Unit Commissions, based on their competence and in accordance with the regulations approved by the Senate of the University, shall confirm or refute that a violation or a gross violation of academic ethics was made, and/or make another decision provided for in the regulations of the Commission or the Unit Commissions.

**CHAPTER VI
FINAL PROVISIONS**

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

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

28. Members of the community must be familiarised with the Code upon their recruitment, assuming a position or starting their studies at the University.
