

APPROVED by
Vilnius Gediminas Technical University
Senate's Resolution No 81-2.5 of 5 May 2015

VILNIUS GEDIMINAS TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY'S CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Vilnius Gediminas Technical University's Code of Academic Ethics (hereinafter referred to as – Code) aims at promotion of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University's (hereinafter referred to as – University) studies and scientific work quality culture, and socially responsible behaviour, upholding academic integrity, transparency and responsibility in regards to the interested parties.

2. This code intends to contribute to the science and study mission outlined in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania, implementation of Lithuanian science and studies policy, and sustainable science and studies system development and deployment.

3. Terms used in the Code:

3.1. **Academic community** – University's administrative, pedagogical and scientific personnel, students and unclassified students.

3.2. **Academic ethics** – moral principles recognised by academic community and established in this code, ensure transparency of science and studies process, fair competition, ethical scientific practices and security of intellectual properties.

3.3. **Law and Ethics Commission** – University Senate's formed collegiate body that carries out the supervision of the code of academic ethics.

3.4. **Fundamental values of academic ethics** – academic honesty, responsibility, equality, justice, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, sustainable use of resources, academic freedom, fairness of scientific works assessment, trust, respect.

3.5. **Socially responsible behaviour** – University's and its academic community member's conscious, based on ethical principles. Mature behaviour in the surrounding – outer and inner – environment.

4. Other terms used in this code shall be understood as terms used in the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and other legal acts.

II. PURPOSE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS CODE

5. Objectives of the code:

5.1. To promote ethical behaviour – prevention shall be the most important action but not the punishment for unethical behaviour.

5.2. To draw the lines of responsibility – code shall clearly regulate academic community members' responsibility and protect them from unlawful decisions and actions (taken and (or) not taken).

5.3. To perform a moral education function – code may be used for formal and informal ethical behaviour teaching process, with the aim to promote academic community members to act on the principles of academic ethics.

5.4. To discipline academic community members – on the basis of code, conduct the supervision and control of academic community members' activities and decision-making quality in regards to ethical standards.

5.5. To increase public confidence – targeted institutional values and standards set out in the code must be ensured by real actions, strengthening the belief that members of academic community

are trustworthy, as their activities are guided by the imposed requirements and academic ethics principles.

5.6. To regulate the behaviour of academic community members – help academic community members to assess and cope with specific real life academic situations, in which questions related to academic ethics arise.

6. Functions of the code:

6.1. To perform regulative functions, protect the needs and interests of those to whom it is addressed, combine organizational behaviour with society values and academic ethic principles.

6.2. To be a fundamental measure which ensures academic ethics at the University.

6.3. To help academic society members perceive their mission in the society and be socially responsible.

6.4. To help achieve higher level of University activity transparency at the University.

6.5. To show the society that University cares about responsible, professional behaviour.

6.6. To form (and preserve) University's image.

6.7. To establish criteria by which academic community members are guided when building interrelationships.

6.8. To promote the community's honest and efficient performance of its functions

6.9. To promote academic community to rely on personal and institutional value perception.

6.10. To specify behaviour regulating measures (e.g. positive sanctions – reward, acknowledgment etc., negative sanctions – a temporary suspension from academic activity, exemption, etc.).

6.11. To be the measure for forming competent professional gatherings and bases for discussions (e.g. initiation of ethical behaviour trainings).

6.12. To help achieve high level of academic consciousness and social responsibility.

III. NORMS OF ACADEMIC COMMUNITY'S ACADEMIC ETHICS

General Norms of Ethics

7. Academic community norms of ethics shall be consolidated by fundamental ethical subject (academic) conduct provisions, which show the University's academic ethics policy directions by which implementation shall be ensured by the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania, contracts and University's internal policy documents.

8. Academic freedom shall mean the right of academic society members to openly express their opinion in regards to the organization and administration of studies and scientific researches, to make uncensored remarks and be freely involved in academic activities with chosen methods. University is committed to protect the members of academic community from restrictions. The responsible exercise of this right requires that members of academic community would recognize the same right applied to other members of the community, maintain the tradition of critical thinking and the atmosphere of open discussion at the University.

9. Responsible exercise of the academic freedom is contrary to:

9.1. Intolerance to other opinion and reasoned criticism of members of academic community;

9.2. Disregard or other restriction of academic community members' right to express and defend personal opinion when making decisions, significant to the University's academic community, its subdivision or its member personally;

9.3. Disregard or other restriction of right to respond to the criticism or accusations;

9.4. Participation in scientific research or experimentations, related to the harm of humanity, nature, society or culture.

10. Membership in the academic society commits the members to comply with general interests of the University and, in regards to the possibility, to contribute to the reach of University's established study and scientific research goals. In terms of ethics, academic community members must:

10.1. Actively pursue academic honesty standards and open access principle in the study process and scientific activities.

10.2. On the initiation and (or) conduct of projects associated with University's behalf, seek to have their results serve common University interests, and have them publicly available.

10.3. Report to the law and ethics commission on the cases that may be related to the corruption or an attempt to commit illegal impact on the University's community member.

10.4. Submit the information to the law and ethics commission and (or) ombudsman of academic ethics and procedures of the Republic of Lithuania, on the investigation of possible violations of academic ethics and (or) procedure.

10.5. Refuse to use a right to vote when University's autonomous institutions address the questions of financing, imposing a penalty or promotion, which may cause the conflict of interests.

10.6. Use University's name and work status at the University for political activities only on the occasion of written consent received from the University.

11. Relationships of academic community members are based on respect, goodwill, impartiality and non-discrimination. These principles are violated when:

11.1. Academic community members are discriminated against by language, actions or academic assessment, also when such discrimination is tolerated;

11.2. Academic community member is belittled by someone exercising ones primacy.

12. Interrelationship of academic community members is based on collegiality and principles of academic solidarity, which intend to ensure quality of studies, scientific research and creative atmosphere. These principles are violated when:

12.1. Professional competition between the colleagues gain unfair forms, one participates in unlawful, dishonest (shameful and otherwise evil) transactions, information meant for the academic community members is concealed, conflicts and intrigues are being promoted and (or) caused;

12.2. Member of academic community belittles the absent colleague's pedagogical and (or) academic work skills, theoretical views and personal qualities;

12.3. Reference to personal, business or political relation rather than efficient assessment of submitted work and professional characteristics of the candidate when recommending to grant an academic degree, academic title, award or award in other forms for colleagues activities;

12.4. Member of academic community is put under psychological pressure in order to achieve personal recognition or conceal unfair academic activities;

12.5. Confidential information about the members of academic community (e.g. academic achievements, salary, career intentions, personal matters and so on) is made public or is publicly discussed;

12.6. Name of the academic community member is systematically (consistently, orderly) belittled, violating University's order established by the inner documents.

13. The use of University's scientific base and other resources must be sustainable, responsible and intended for fulfilment of scientific and studies institution's undertaken obligations. This principle is violated when:

13.1. Material, human and financial University's resources are used for political activities, private business or personal needs;

13.2. University's resources are abused when conducting projects;

13.3. University's property is destroyed.

Ethics of Pedagogical Activity

14. Relationship between teacher and students shall be based on principles of academic cooperation and transparency. Binding with non-academic nature responsibilities may cause conflict of interests. For this reason, ambiguous relationships with students should be avoided. These principles are violated when:

14.1. Students or teachers aim to establish non-academic nature relationships, respectively with teacher or student, with whom relations comes through taught course, supervision of research work or in any other way is manifested by direct academic relationship;

14.2. Teacher's role assumed in regards to a family member, close friend (who has direct, close relations, relationships), business partner (examination, supervision of written works and so on), when there is a possibility to avoid such role;

14.3. Directly or indirectly (through other persons) given gifts and (or) non-academic or academic services directly not related to the studied courses are demanded and (or) accepted from the members of academic community.

15. Student's knowledge and skills must be assessed correctly and honestly, consistent with the objectives of the taught course:

15.1. Teacher must react with integrity and inform the University or its departments (faculty, institute, department) administration or law and ethics commission on students' dishonesty cases, such as plagiarism, cheating, document falsification, fabrication, forgery of examination or credit results, use of outside help during the examination or credit, submission of another's written work as their own, making money for preparation of written works for other students, purchase of written work and its submission to the member of academic community for assessment, submission of the same written work when accounting for a different course etc.

15.2. Teacher must decrease the opportunities for manifestation of student's academic dishonesty during the examination.

15.3. Teacher does not have to demand a personal document from a student or teacher in group discussions except the cases envisaged in the Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data of the Republic of Lithuania.

15.4. Teacher must keep the student's personal data in accordance with the procedure outlined in the Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data of the Republic of Lithuania.

15.5. Teacher must avoid the student's knowledge assessment based on student's participation (non-participation) in the political or social activities acceptable (unacceptable) to the teacher.

16. Atmosphere of trust is damaged by the exposure of confidential information about the student. Principle of information confidentiality requires:

16.1. To disclose the confidential information to the third parties about the student's academic assessments or punishments only on the occasion of student's written consent or if there is a legal basis for such action due to supposed harm caused to other persons.

16.2. To avoid discussion of various student's achievements, except in cases when students' appeals are being evaluated, results of examinations and credits are being discussed and other academic issues, when objective decision justifies their discussion.

16.3. To use private nature information for teaching, studies or scientific research purposes, only on the occasion of student's written consent.

16.4. To ensure that remarks concerning the student's written work, not presented to the public defence, would not be available to third parties.

Ethics of Scientific Activity

17. Scientific activity must be based on honest research and aim for truth. The researcher's behaviour must be morally and socially responsible. Scientific research cannot cause any harm to the society and environment. Acknowledging the truth and cognition as the supreme foundation of the scientific activity, in hope of trust and fair assessment of achievements, members of academic community, conducting the moral activity, commit to be guided by the principle of academic honesty. Academic honesty principle is violated during scientific activity when the following occurs:

17.1. Counterfeiting, forgery or manipulation (e.g. creation of non-existent data, adjustment of existing data with the aim to improve or worsen the results). Typical counterfeiting, forgery or manipulation cases:

- 17.1.1. Counterfeited signatures, certificates, reports' data or results, and other documents (e.g. academic tasks' (laboratory, course or other works) data or results);
- 17.1.2. Non-existent source, erroneous source page, site visit date or any other data of the source description is specified;
- 17.1.3. Concealment of received data, contradicting the hypothesis and (or) questions of study and (or) research findings;
- 17.1.4. Deliberately presenting misleading information about the empirical research methodology;
- 17.1.5. Ungrounded (undeserved) co-authorship imposed on the students, colleagues, subordinates or superiors;
- 17.1.6. Unjustifiable denial or concealment of people's intellectual and (or) financial contribution and (or) assistance in scientific activities;
- 17.2. Stealing or deliberately damaging empirical research data, computer programmes, empirical data examples and (or) manuscript;
- 17.3. Plagiarism i.e. ideas, data or words are presented as one's own without the reference to the author. Typical cases of plagiarism:
 - 17.3.1. Presentation of another's text without quotation marks – quotes or other forms of isolation from the whole text (e.g. separate paragraphs or italics);
 - 17.3.2. Exact source is not provided when retelling or quoting another's idea, illustrational material or data;
- 17.4. Incorrect, biased criticism of colleague's work and deliberate downplay based on personal antipathy, competition, political or other motives that are not related to professionalism of assessed scientific work;
- 17.5. Help for a person conducting academic activities which violate the principle of academic integrity;
- 17.6. Academic bribery, i.e. offering or giving (personal or in group) a reward for academic services.

Student and Unclassified Student Code of Academic Activities

- 18. Students and unclassified students shall be guided by the principle of academic integrity within the process of studies. The principle of academic integrity is violated when the following occurs:
 - 18.1. Cheating or permission given to another person to cheat;
 - 18.2. Academic dishonesty is noted within the members of academic community and is left unreported;
 - 18.3. Prompts, blanks or other means unauthorized by the examiner are used;
 - 18.4. Plagiarism, i.e. another's written work is presented as their own;
 - 18.5. Other student's work or results are used during the examination;
 - 18.6. The same written work is submitted when accounting for several courses;
 - 18.7. Another person is employed when student is accounting for oneself or person is accounting for somebody else etc.
- 19. Each student admitted to the University shall sign the student's honesty declaration, which shall be valid during the entire period of a valid study agreement. This declaration may be also signed by unclassified students in accordance with the procedures established by the University.
- 20. Students and unclassified students shall commit to use of University's scientific and computer equipment, library and other resources responsibly, sustainably and for aforementioned resources intended purpose.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION OF CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

- 21. Ethical violations shall be examined on the basis of this code.

22. Penalties on violations of academic ethics shall be differentiated according to the gravity of violation, whilst law and ethics commission shall rely on the criteria for determination of penalties and other provisions, which enable an impartial and fair assessment of notification on possible violation of academic ethics circumstances, and submission of proposals for decision. Penalties may be identified as various behaviour regulatory measures (such as note, warning, disclosure of information about the academic community member's non-certification, offer of public apology, expulsion from the University without a right to return to continue studies for a certain period of time, obligation to study additional courses, revocation of diploma, revocation of degree etc.)

23. The code cannot foresee all cases of unethical behaviour instances, therefore the law and ethics commission, examining specific instances of inappropriate behaviour unregulated by the code, should decide whether particular action is compatible with academic community's recognised fundamental values of academic ethics.

V. SUPERVISION OF CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS

24. Code's supervision shall be ensured by the following procedures:

24.1. Code shall be supervised by the senate's law and ethics commission, in accordance with the University's statute, provisions of the code, as well as the University senate and its commissions activity and other internal University procedures regulated by the legislation.

24.2. Law and ethics commission shall be composed of the senate.

24.3. Members of the law and ethics commission must meet the following requirements: be of good repute, have experience in the field of implementing principles of academic ethics.

24.4. University Students' Representation may form a separate review commission for potential violations of ethics.

24.5. Law and ethics commission shall initiate additions or corrections of the code, and submit them for consideration and approval to the senate. Each member of the academic community or a group can initiate additions or corrections of the code, and submit them for consideration and approval to the senate.

24.6. Law and ethics commission shall admit and consider the notifications or information on possible violations of academic ethics.

24.7. Law and ethics commission shall meet at the receipt of the notification or information on possible violations of academic ethics or to initiate additions or corrections of the code. Law and ethics commission sittings shall be convened and lead by the chairman of the law and ethics commission. If received notification or information is related to the chairman of the law and ethics commission, or if the chairman of the law and ethics commission for any other reason is not able to convene and lead the meeting, meeting shall be convened and led by the eldest of the remaining members of the law and ethics commission.

24.8. Law and ethics commission shall not look into notifications or information on possible violations of academic ethics, except the violations mentioned in 17.1.2 and 17.3 sub articles, if more than 60 calendar days has passed from the day when possible violations might have happened, or the day it was disclosed, before the notification or the receipt of information. On the decision not to examine the notification or information, as well as the transfer of report or information to the academic ethics and procedure ombudsman of the Republic of Lithuania, law and ethics commission shall inform the person in writing, who submitted the notification or information, no later than 10 working days after the day of the receipt of the notification or information. Law and ethics commission shall report on decision not to examine the notification or information immediately and shall pass it on to the ombudsman of academic ethics and procedures of the Republic of Lithuania.

24.9. Notifications on possible violations of ethics shall be submitted to the law and ethics commission in writing. Only motivated notifications shall be accepted for consideration. Anonymous notifications shall be not considered. The following shall be the grounds for initiation of the examination of possible violations of academic ethics:

24.9.1. Person's (applicant's) written notification with facts and supporting documents;

24.9.2. When law and ethics commission becomes aware of information on possible violation of ethics.

24.10. Law and ethics commission must examine the received notification or information, make a decision, and in writing (signed by the chairman of the law and ethics commission) respond to the applicant or person concerned no later than 60 days from the date of notification or receipt of the information. Examination of notification or information term may be extended by law and ethics commission on the basis of reasoned decision.

24.11. Academic community member, in regards to whom the notification or information was received, is informed on its content, and submits the written explanation within 5 working days from the day of the information. In cases when academic community members, in regards to which the notification or information was received, request access to personal data related to subject material, access shall be made and, if necessary, it shall be depersonalized if other person related data is present. Law and ethics commission has a right to make a decision if member of academic community, in regards to which the notification or information was received, refuses to provide or does not provide explanations within the set timeframe.

24.12. Member of academic community, in regards to which the notification or information was received, has a right to participate in the law and ethics commission sitting, during which notification or information related to said member is being discussed.

24.13. Law and ethics commission must follow the confidentiality requirement and do not disclose (disperse) the information which is being examined and (or) information on the examined data, while the investigation is ongoing.

24.14. Law and ethics commission shall make a decision based on a majority vote of members of the commission attending the sitting. If the number of votes is equal, the chairman shall cast a vote.

24.15. In regards to the content of the received notification on possible violation of ethics, also on examined material and (or) information on examined material, in individual cases, law and ethics commission may address the senate's chairman with the proposal for investigation by the law and ethics commission of received notification or information and (or) examined material to include the following with the work:

24.15.1. A students' representative (representatives);

24.15.2. University or its department (faculty, institute, department) representative (s) of administration;

24.15.3. A specialist (specialists), who is an expert in the specific science, pedagogical or other field;

24.15.4. University's social partner or representative of social partner.

24.16. When law and ethics commission examines the notification or information and establishes the violation of academic ethics, it shall take into account the gravity of the offence and make the decision:

24.16.1. To inform the member of academic community in writing and publish depersonalized information on the University's web page regarding the decision of the law and ethics commission;

24.16.2. To recommend to the administration to impose one or several penalties from the University's statutory penalties;

24.16.3. To recommend measures to ensure academic ethics.

24.17. Law and ethics commission shall conduct the annual performance self-assessment and publicly publish annual report on the activities.

VI. FINAL PROVISIONS

25. The code is implemented by the University on free and conscious will.

26. Person who applies for admission, University student, unclassified students, person who claims position at University, University's personnel, partners, who have signed cooperation agreement are subject to these provisions set by the University's procedures.

27. University takes into account foreign countries and international experience related to questions of academic ethics regulation, implementation of the provisions of academic ethics, and practices for prevention of academic ethics violations.
