

APPROVED by  
Order No. A-62 of the Rector of  
Kaunas University of Technology  
of 17 February 2022

## **GUIDELINES FOR EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION THEREOF AT KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **FIRST SECTION PURPOSE AND TASKS OF THE GUIDELINES**

1. The Guidelines for Emotional and Social Welfare Policy and Implementation Thereof at Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – Guidelines) set out the application of the principles of emotional and social welfare and implementing measures thereof at the University by identifying the target groups of community members and the responsibilities of the persons involved in this process.

2. The objective of the Guidelines is to aim for the emotional and social welfare of the members of the community of Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – University) by creating an academic, research and work environment in which hostile, unethical, humiliating or offensive acts that threaten the honour or dignity of a person, or his/her physical or psychological integrity, and by increasing the accessibility of the services provided to achieve increased productivity and better academic performance.

3. Tasks of the Guidelines:

3.1. To provide the preconditions for an emotional and social welfare framework enabling consistent management of the emotional and social welfare measures offered to the community.

3.2. Define the emotional and social welfare measures available to the community.

3.3. Identify the emotional and social welfare measures available at the University and the responsibilities of the community members and individual departments of the University.

3.4. Create a culture favourable for balancing work/studies and personal life in which the implementation of the measures is the responsibility of each member of the University community and the commitment of the departments involved in emotional and social welfare activities.

3.5. Raise awareness of emotional and social welfare issues within the University community by ensuring timely information that is equally accessible to all.

4. The Guidelines are prepared following the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the European Council's Disability Strategy 2017-2023, the Law on Equal Opportunities of the Republic of Lithuania, and the European Commission's Guidelines on the Implementation of the European Commission's Programme "Erasmus+" and the European Solidarity Corps Inclusion and Diversity Strategy.

5. The University's internal documents directly related to the emotional and social welfare of the University's community are used in the activities for the emotional and social welfare of the University's community:

- 5.1. Guidelines for the Award of Scholarships at Kaunas University of Technology;
- 5.2. Guidelines for Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy and Implementation Thereof at Kaunas University of Technology;
- 5.3. Disability Policy (from 2022);
- 5.4. Principles of Universal Design (from 2024);
- 5.5. Guidelines for Application of Special Prices and Priority Allocation at the Dormitories of Kaunas University of Technology;
- 5.6. Guidelines for Provision of Psychological Support at Kaunas University of Technology;
- 5.7. Order No. A-672 of the Rector of Kaunas University of Technology "On Additional Social Benefits for Employees of Kaunas University of Technology" of 20 December 2018;
- 5.8. Guidelines for the Procedures for the Organisation of Partial Studies under the "Erasmus+" Programme and Bilateral Cooperation Agreements at Kaunas University of Technology;
- 5.9. Guidelines for the Organisation of Internships for Students and Graduates of Kaunas University of Technology under the "Erasmus+" programme;
- 5.10. Guidelines for the Organisation of Staff Mobility under the "Erasmus+" at Kaunas University of Technology.

## SECOND SECTION

### TERMS AND PRINCIPLES

6. The following terms are used in the Guidelines:

6.1. **Emotional and social welfare** – a favourable study, research and working environment allowing to generate positive emotions, moods, thoughts and feelings, and adapt when facing difficulties and stressful situations.

6.2. **Special needs** – special support needs resulting from a person's congenital or acquired long-term health problems or adverse environmental factors.

6.3. **Universal design** – an environment that is accessible to all community members, regardless of age, ability or disability. The environment (or any building, product or service within it) must be designed to meet the needs of all community members who wish to use it, with efforts made to remove existing barriers and avoid potential disruption. The design of the environment takes into account the varying needs of people ensuring that community members can access the services they want and reducing discrimination.

6.4. **The principle of justice** – services and means that are accessible and adapted to be used by people with different abilities.

6.5. **Work environment** – the conditions which are used by the entire University community - students, researchers, administrative employees - during the study process, research activities and work.

6.6. **Discrimination** – violation of equal rights on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability, age, race, ethnic origin, nationality, religion, belief, language, ancestry,

social status, views or attitudes, nationality, marital status, family status, or the intention to have a child or children.

6.7. **Direct discrimination** – treating a person less favourably than another person who, on grounds of age, sexual orientation, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, is, has been or would be treated in similar circumstances.

6.8. **Indirect discrimination** – an act or omission, a rule of law or an evaluation criterion, obviously neutral condition or practice which is formally identical but which, when implemented or applied, may, does, does or could result in an effective restriction on the execution of rights, or the granting of a privilege, advantage or preference to a person of a particular age, sexual orientation, disability, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief.

6.9. **University community** – students, academic community, employees from the administration and other non-academic departments of the University.

7. Other terms used in the Guidelines are interpreted as defined by other laws and legislation of the Republic of Lithuania.

## CHAPTER II

### VULNERABLE COMMUNITY GROUPS AND THEIR IDENTIFICATION PROCEDURE

#### FIRST SECTION

#### VULNERABLE COMMUNITY GROUPS

8. Emotional and social welfare at the University is implemented by including, instead of excluding, the most vulnerable groups in the community:

8.1. **People with disabilities** (physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which may prevent full and effective participation in community life on an equal basis with others).

8.2. **People with health problems** (health problems including serious illness, chronic illness, medical conditions or any other situation related to physical or mental health that prevents equal participation in study programmes or work activities).

8.3. **People who experience cultural differences** (lack of knowledge of a foreign language and fear of cultural differences, migrants or refugees, people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, sign language users, etc.).

8.4. **People facing social barriers** (low social skills, (ex-)convicts, (ex-)drug or alcohol addicts, etc. As well as obstacles due to family circumstances - single parents, guardians, orphans, people living in institutional care, etc.).

8.5. **People facing economic barriers** (low standard of living, low income, students who have to work to support themselves, poverty, debt, etc.).

8.6. **People experiencing discrimination** (related to gender, age, ethnicity, religion, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, etc.).

#### SECOND SECTION

#### PROCEDURE FOR THE PERSON'S ASSIGNMENT TO THE VULNERABLE GROUPS IN THE COMMUNITY

7. Formal assignment of a member of the University community to the groups indicated in paragraph 8 of the Guidelines only takes place upon the person's individual request and voluntary provision of personal information when it is necessary for the person's eligibility for financial support, material and non-material assistance or other potential benefits provided or administered by the University.

8. The Student Emotional and Social Welfare Commission (hereinafter - Commission) is established by the Rector's order and examines the applications, documents and data submitted by members of the University community, which are necessary for the person's assignment to the groups indicated in paragraph 8 of the Guidelines and makes a decision by a protocol decision. In addition, based on the Commission's protocol, an additional "Erasmus+" scholarship is awarded.

9. Applications for the formal assignment of a student to the groups identified in paragraph 8 of the Guidelines are submitted by email to [wellbeing@ktu.lt](mailto:wellbeing@ktu.lt). The application is examined and a decision is made within 7 working days after the receipt of the application.

10. Assignment of an employee to the groups identified in paragraph 8 of the Guidelines is initiated by the employee voluntarily submitting a written application to the Human Resources Management Office at the Department of Human Resources and applying one of the University's existing procedures (case study by the Board of Academic Ethics, case study by the Equal Opportunities Commission, case study of employee representatives, provision of material support, application of flexible forms of work organisation).

### CHAPTER III EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL WELFARE MEASURES

11. Emotional and social welfare is implemented at the University by applying the following measures:

11.1. The University allocates **financial support** to the members of the University community:

11.1.1. Their main financial support is allocated to students in the form of scholarships, e.g. one-off social scholarships, one-off incentive scholarships, targeted scholarships, and additional individual "Erasmus+" grants. A reduced price for accommodation in the University's dormitories may also be applied. In addition to financial support, students are also provided with other material assistance in case of unexpected circumstances (e.g. pandemic, war, natural disasters), such as technical equipment and facilities for distance learning. The procedure for administration of students' financial support is set out by the Guidelines for the Award of Scholarships of Kaunas University of Technology and the Guidelines for Special Prices and Priority Allocation in the Dormitories of Kaunas University of Technology.

11.1.2. Financial assistance to employees to ensure additional social benefits is provided in the event of family growth, long-term illness, nursing care of a relative, disaster or death in the family. Other material assistance, in the form of a basket of first-year pupil's supplies, is provided to employees who have children starting school in the current academic year (1st grade of secondary school). The procedure for granting and administering financial support to employees is set out by the order of the rector of the University.

11.2. The University provides free **psychological support** to members of the University community, prepares and publishes preventive information articles, organises training, practical stress management sessions, and group therapy.

11.3. To strengthen the **physical health** of the University community, the University implements the "ACTIVATed" programme which offers sports and wellness activities:

11.3.1. Unorganised sport and physical activity:

13.3.1.1. Access to bodybuilding and other sports facilities of the University free of charge;

13.3.1.2. Access to appropriate mobility equipment and sports equipment for physical activities;

13.3.1.3. Personal consultations by qualified trainers, either remotely or by contact, on sports and healthy lifestyle issues and the development of individual sports programmes;

13.3.1.4. Use of digital technologies to organise individual sports challenges and to develop healthy lifestyle habits in the community. Use of videos, social networks, and smartphone apps for counting steps, and kilometres and tracking personal healthy lifestyle habits.

13.3.2. Constantly organised sports and physical activities:

13.3.2.1. Recreational sports activities, including the practice of various sports throughout the academic year;

13.3.2.2. Group training sessions designed to develop a range of human physical qualities: speed, strength, endurance, flexibility, agility and emotional welfare. Different types of training are organised remotely and physically, according to the physical capacity and wishes and needs of the community members;

13.3.2.3. Various events: sports tournaments, running events, wellness seminars on the development of healthy eating, sports, healthy habits and effective work skills.

13.4. **Academic support** is provided to students and the academic community of the University:

13.4.1. The adaptation and accessibility of all study cycles are ensured to students with special educational needs due to visual, hearing, other physical and learning disabilities or health impairments.

13.4.2. The development of additional competencies is organised for employees on topics such as disability ethics, adaptation of studies, Universal Design for Learning, and teaching/learning methods.

13.4.3. The GUIDed Mentorship Programme is implemented, allowing students to choose an appropriate mentor (peer, academic, career mentor or tutor). A peer mentor provides academic support and consultations, and helps first-year students to get involved in their studies at the beginning of the first semester; an academic mentor provides comprehensive study-related support, encouragement and research with students throughout the semester; a career mentor is a person experienced in a professional field who mentors a student in career planning and personal development; a tutor is a student volunteer who helps to deepen knowledge in a particular study field.

13.4.4. Early warning system and dropout prevention are operating: the University monitors trends in student attendance in classes and academic performance, and individual academic and psychological support is offered and provided to students when risks are identified

13.5. The University creates and supports a **positive social environment**:

13.5.1. Equal employment opportunities are provided without excluding members of the University community based on religion, culture, disability, origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, financial or other social status. To ensure this, the "Report" system operates at the University whereby University employees or students who experience an incident of intolerance report it and the discriminatory incident is resolved. To maintain a positive social environment, Kaunas University of Technology implements the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

13.5.2. The aim is to maintain a balance in personal life by enabling members of the University community to work and participate in the study process through flexible forms of work/study organisation.

13.5.3. The welfare (emotional, psychological, physical) of the University community is constantly monitored through surveys, analyses, evaluations, recommendations and assessments of the implementation of changes by the Department of Student Affairs and Department of Human Resources.

13.5.4. The University community is provided with opportunities to be involved and participate in a variety of organisations or art societies.

13.5.5. Conditions are provided for proper student representation. The main representative of the University's students is the Students' Association of the University whose mission is to initiate changes based on student interests, provide feedback and develop self-represented students in cooperation with the academic community and external partners.

13.5.6. Conditions are provided for proper employee representation. The interests of the University's employees are represented by a work council. Employees who are members of a trade union are represented by the trade union.

13.5.7. Effective dissemination of information is carried out consistently and systematically by sharing information relevant to the University community, through accessible information channels.

13.6. The University aims to ensure the **accessibility of the physical environment** to members of the University community. When installing the measures ensuring the accessibility of the physical environment, priority is given to the access for members of the University community and guests of the University with mobility impairments and their movement within the University environment.

13.7. Measures are being installed to ensure the **accessibility of the electronic environment** by making all University web pages accessible to persons with visual impairments.

## **CHAPTER V RESPONSIBILITIES**

14. The heads of the first-level departments are responsible for:

14.1. The implementation of the University's policies and procedures that contribute to the social and emotional welfare of students and employees at the departments.

14.2. The allocation of sufficient resources to enable direct managers to carry out their responsibilities under these Guidelines.

14.3. Ensuring that any confidential health information disclosed by employees and/or students is kept confidential and shared only when necessary to support the individual or protect his/her or any other person's health, safety and welfare.

15. The direct managers are responsible for:

15.1. Monitoring and proper organisation of the employees' workload to ensure that assigned tasks are completed in the time allocated and comply with the employee's competence.

15.2. Planning the working time of subordinate employees by encouraging them to take annual vacations.

15.3. Consulting with the Department of Human Resources on the implementation of social and emotional welfare measures.

16. The employees are responsible for:

16.1. Disclosing any relevant information about his/her social and emotional welfare to his/her direct manager or the Department of Human Resources so that the University could identify and implement appropriate support measures to maintain attendance and welfare.

16.2. Using the University's emotional and social welfare measures where recommended.

17. The students are responsible for providing the Department of Student Affairs with information relating to their emotional and social welfare that may affect their ability to perform their studies, so that reasonable steps could be taken to identify and implement appropriate support measures.

18. The Department of Student Affairs, in cooperation with the Department of Human Resources, is responsible for the appropriate application of emotional and social welfare measures and consulting the University community in the implementation of the Guidelines.

## **CHAPTER V**

### **FINAL PROVISIONS**

19. The departments which prepare and approve the current versions of the legislation at the University are responsible for ensuring that the University's internal legislation complies with the provisions of the Guidelines.

20. The Department of Student Affairs and Department of Human Resources are responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Guidelines.

21. Employees and students are informed about the entry into force of the Guidelines by sending them an information notice by email.

22. The Guidelines are reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once a year.

23. The Guidelines can be amended or revoked by order of the rector of the University.

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