

APPROVED by  
Decree No. V3-S-63 of the Senate of  
Kaunas University of Technology of  
11 December 2024

## **CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS OF KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

### **CHAPTER I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Code of Academic Ethics of Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – Code) establishes the main ethical standards of Kaunas University of Technology (hereinafter – University) community culture, respect, tolerance and trust-based mutual relations, transparency of operations and academic integrity.

2. The Code is prepared according to the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Statute of Kaunas University of Technology, the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania and other legislation in force in the Republic of Lithuania and general principles of law.

3. The objective of the Code is to establish norms of ethical academic conduct and promote a shared understanding of the content of the principles of academic ethics among all members of the University community.

4. The tasks of the Code:

4.1. To protect the needs and interests of the members of the University community, to align the behaviour of individual community members and the University with the values of society and the principles of academic ethics;

4.2. To be the main instrument for ensuring academic ethics at the University;

4.3. To maintain high professional and ethical standards among members of the University community;

4.4. To encourage and assist members of the University community to become aware of their social responsibility towards the state, society, community and individuals;

4.5. To promote freedom of research, teaching and learning and promote a positive image of the University in society;

4.6. To build and strengthen the reputation of the University and strengthen the loyalty of the community to it;

4.7. To ensure transparency in the activities of the University community;

4.8. To establish disciplinary measures for violation of the norms of the Code;

5. Concepts related to academic ethics:

5.1. **The University community** is a community consisting of the academic community, the administration and other non-academic employees. The academic community consists of students, teachers, researchers, other researchers and emeritus professors.

5.2. **Academic ethics** means moral values recognised and adhered to by the University community.

5.3. **Violation of academic ethics** is an act or attempted act that violates academic integrity and may lead to an unfair academic advantage or harm to a member of the University community or society.

5.4. **Academic integrity** is adherence to ethical and professional principles, standards and practices and a consistent value system for making and acting on decisions in teaching, research and studies.

5.5. **Negligence** is a lack of compliance with a standard of civil liability that causes harm to an individual or organisation.

5.6. **Responsibility** is the duty to act honestly.

5.7. **Falsification of data** is an unjustified manipulation of research data to create a misleading impression.

5.8. **The University Board of Academic Ethics** is a body approved by the University Senate that promotes academic ethics literacy in the University community and considers the violations related to academic ethics.

5.9. **Intellectual property** is the legally recognised ownership of the results of mental work.

5.10. **Conflict of interest** is a situation in which financial or personal obligations or other circumstances create a presumption of unreasonable decision or compromise objectivity.

5.11. **Corruption** is an abuse of entrusted power for personal gain.

5.12. **Mobbing** is any and all forms of abusive, insulting or any repeated behaviour of an abusive nature directed against an individual employee(s) which undermines the employee's professional, material and social or psychological well-being, affects mental or physical health, reputation, or reduces the employee's productivity.

5.13. **Scientific fraud** is a deliberate deception in research by violating its ethics.

5.14. **Moral values** are the entirety of principles used by individuals or groups to distinguish between good and bad behaviour.

5.15. **Unethical authorship** is the inclusion of a person who has not contributed to the research as an author as a co-author; the exclusion of a person who has contributed to the research as a co-author; unjustified and inappropriate change in the order of authorship; the removal of contributors to the research and/or preparation of a manuscript from subsequent publications by using the power of a person who is undeservingly included as a co-author of those publications; and the inclusion of a person as a co-author without his/her consent.

5.16. **Nepotism** is a form favouritism, the relationship between acquaintances and family members, whereby a person in an official position uses his/her power and authority to obtain an exemption for a family member or friend, even though he/she lacks proper qualifications or is undeserving.

5.17. **Respect** is a consideration of the dignity and physical and psychological well-being of others.

5.18. **Impartiality in research** means independence and impartiality while conducting research and communicating with other stakeholders.

5.19. **Trust** is the principle whereby all participants of education and research can rely on each other's integrity, fairness and honesty.

5.20. **Plagiarism** is presenting work produced by other authors as one's own without proper acknowledgement of the used sources.

5.21. **Report** is submitting about negligence or malpractice by the organisation (or its partners) which threatens individuals, standards, quality, integrity or reputation and which is disclosed by an internal or external person who is defending the public interest.

5.22. **Principles** is the entirety of values and a shared understanding of the preferred behaviour.

5.23. **Protectionism** is a form of favouritism whereby a person is chosen for advantage or retains his/her position because of affiliation or association, regardless of his/her qualifications or the awarded titles, degrees, etc.

5.24. **Transparency** is the openness and commitment to full, clear, accurate, timely and honest disclosure of activities and related decisions affecting academic society and society.

5.25. **Fraud** is cheating aiming to gain an advantage by means that violate integrity values.

5.26. **Justice** is the assessment criterion based on the moral categories of goodness, equality, humanity, sensibility, fairness, etc.

5.27. Other terms used in the Code are understood as defined in the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, other legislation of the Republic of Lithuania and the University.

6. The University personnel involved in research, academic and administrative activities must comply with the Code.

7. The University recognises the declarations and provisions of the Great Charter of European Universities and the European Charter for Researchers, the European Education Area and the European Research Area, and promotes and respects competence, professionalism, initiative, diligence, and responsibility.

## **CHAPTER II PRINCIPLES OF ACADEMIC ETHICS**

8. Relationships between members of the University community are based on the principles of honesty, justice, mutual respect and trust, impartiality, equality and non-discrimination:

8.1. **The principle of honesty.** The principle of academic integrity is based on respect for intellectual property, the separation of public and private interests, fairness, objectivity and impartiality of evaluation.

The following is against academic integrity:

8.1.1. Plagiarism, falsification or deliberately biased interpretation of research data;

8.1.2. Imposing co-authorship through the use of one's position, or the denial or concealment of the contribution of people or organisations who have contributed to research activities;

8.1.3. Accepting or demanding direct or indirect gifts or favours in return for work which is required by the job position;

8.1.4. Dishonest competition;

8.1.5. Exercising the voting rights when the issue addressed by the University may cause a conflict of public and private interests;

8.1.6. Falsifying data and biased interpretation of data.

8.2. **The principle of respect.** Personal confidentiality is respected at the University and any private information related to an individual is not disclosed without his/her consent. Members of the University community must recognise and respect human rights, expressed ideas, suggestions, valid criticism, copyright, etc., by promoting respect in their relationships with each other, in their research, studies, activities related to studies and other activities (e.g., administrative activities). While exercising their rights and duties, members of the University community must foster a culture of mutual trust that encourages the free exchange of ideas and provides conditions for self-realisation.

The following is against academic ethics (the principle of respect):

8.2.1. Actions that have the characteristics of harassment, intimidation or other negative impact;

8.2.2. Disrespectful behaviour causing emotional distress, intimidation or humiliation;

8.2.3. Disclosing and using personal information about a community member in the process of studies or research without the consent of that person;

8.2.4. Disclosing information about students' academic evaluations or penalties to natural persons or legal entities without specific grounds (student's consent, legal basis, benefit to the student) or predictable harm to others;

8.2.5. Touching members of the University community without the necessary grounds, or touching them without their consent;

8.2.6. Intolerance of another's opinion or reasoned criticism.

8.3. **The principle of fairness.** Aiming to achieve justice and building relationships among members of the University community, members of the University community must develop objective and uniform institutional requirements, practices and procedures for all community members, and ensure their proper implementation.

The following is against academic ethics (the principle of fairness):

8.3.1. Using a position at work or using the University's material resources not for their intended use and for personal incentives;

8.3.2. Committing fraud or tolerating fraud.

8.4. **The principle of equality.** Members of the University community are equal before national legislation, the legislation approved by the Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania, as well as before the heads of the institution, i.e., it is prohibited to arbitrarily evaluate essentially the same facts differently. This does not imply a prohibition on the application of different conditions or the different regulation of identical relations; however, it is only possible for objective and justified reasons. Members of the University community do not discriminate against or insult one another in language, actions or academic judgement on the basis of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, appearance, race or ethnicity, nationality, religion or belief, marital status or nature of the work.

The following is against academic ethics (the principle of respect equality):

8.4.1. Humiliating community members, excessive bureaucratism, using one's own superiority (e.g., one's job position);

8.4.2. Belittling the abilities, views or personal qualities of community members;

8.4.3. Evaluation based on personal or ideological relationships rather than on the quality of the presented work;

8.4.4. Withholding or distorting information meant for everyone;

8.4.5. Pressurising another community member aiming to obtain an undeserved evaluation or promote academic dishonesty;

8.4.6. Disclosing or discussing confidential information about community members, except for the cases when such information is made public under the University's procedures and the discussion of such information is necessary while deciding on the issues of eligibility for the position;

8.4.7. Tolerating the behaviour that violates human rights or dignity;

8.4.8. Physical or psychological violence against persons with whom the employment relationship is established;

8.4.9. Failure to provide adequate conditions to students with special needs (e.g., visual, hearing, mobility or other disabilities) so that they could perform their assignments during the assessment;

8.4.10. Any form of discrimination against community members and tolerating such discrimination.

8.5. **The principle of loyalty.** The principle of loyalty is based on collegiality, academic solidarity and respect for the University and its community, one form of which is the priority of problem solving within the University. Community members are loyal to the mission and values of the University, respect the common interests of the University, contribute to the achievement of the University's objectives and are impartial in their decision-making.

Disclosing information about wrongdoing or negligence by members of the University community aiming to prevent such conduct is not considered the violation of the principle of loyalty. The following is against academic ethics (the principle of loyalty):

8.5.1. Professional competition between colleagues violating the requirements of honest behaviour, engaging in illegal, non-transparent transactions or escalating conflicts;

8.5.2. Bringing the name of the University into disrepute through inappropriate behaviour of a community member, violations of academic discipline within and outside the University, and other activities detrimental to the University that do not meet the expectations of community members;

8.5.3. Publishing false, deliberately misleading or confidential information about the University or its community members;

8.5.4. Discussing the University's problems in other institutions or in public without exhausting opportunities to resolve problems within the University.

**8.6. The principle of academic freedom.** Academic freedom is the freedom of speech and belief, freedom to hold and express critical views, and a culture of open dialogue by exchanging ideas. Members of the University community have the opportunity to freely and openly express their views and critical thoughts, exchange ideas freely, form research groups, choose the topics and methods of research and creation, as well as the objectives and methods of studies. The responsible exercise of freedom by each member of the University community is understood as the need to recognise the same freedom of other community members.

While initiating, conducting and contributing to the projects, research or experiments associated with the name of the University, each member of the University community ensures that they and their results are in the general interest of the University; do not use the name of the University for political, religious or private commercial activities; do not restrict the academic freedom of other community members by the use of his/her official position.

The following is against academic freedom (and responsibility):

8.6.1. Deliberate limiting or ignoring the right of any community member to express and defend his/her views in decision-making;

8.6.2. Ignoring or deliberate limiting the right to respond to criticism or accusations;

8.6.3. Deliberate dissemination of incorrect information (untruths), knowledge, data, etc., or bias;

8.6.4. Conscious participation in activities related to the damage to the University, man, nature, society or culture.

**8.7. The principle of responsibility.** Academic freedom comes with a responsibility to tolerate differences in opinion, respect other points of view and a culture of open dialogue. The principle of responsibility is realised when members of the University community, by encouraging each other to be responsible for their actions, comply with the requirements of ethical behaviour in research, studies, teaching and other academic activities (e.g., administrative activities) themselves, as well as demand both personal and shared responsibility from other members of the University community. Community members are encouraged to responsibly use and preserve the University's physical, material and financial resources and to use them only for the purposes of the obligations taken by the University as an institution.

The following is against the principle of responsibility:

8.7.1. The use of the University's material and other resources for political activities, private business or personal needs;

8.7.2. The misuse of the University's internal resources;

8.7.3. The deliberate damaging of the University's property.

### **CHAPTER III DISCIPLINARY MEASURES**

9. The imposition of disciplinary measures is regulated by the Guidelines for the Imposition, Amendment and Annulment of Academic Penalties at Kaunas University of Technology.

### **CHAPTER IV MONITORING COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE OF ACADEMIC ETHICS**

10. The compliance with the Code of Academic Ethics is monitored by the Board of Academic Ethics. The Board operates according to the recognised ethical principles and practices, following the Law on Higher Education of the Republic and other legislation of Lithuania, the Statute of Kaunas University of Technology, the Code and the Regulations of the Board of Ethics.

11. The formation, functions and organisation of work of the Board of Academic Ethics are defined in the Regulations of the Board of Academic Ethics of Kaunas University of Technology.

12. The Board of Academic Ethics examines complaints and petitions according to the Board's established competence and makes a decision in a closed session not later than within one month after the alleged violation of academic ethics has become known. Anonymous allegations are not examined. In the event of a case which does not fall within the competence of the respective unit, it passes the available information about the alleged violation on to the competent University employee, department or public authority.

13. The Board of Academic Ethics prepares an annual report of its activities and submits it to the rector within 3 months of the end of the calendar year and publishes it on the University's intranet by 1 April. A mandatory part of the report is recommendations to the community on how to strengthen the implementation of the provisions of the Code of Academic Ethics.

14. The provisions of artificial intelligence are defined in the Guidelines for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Process of Science and Studies, approved by the Order No. V-14 of the Ombudsman for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania of 29 April 2024.

## **CHAPTER V FINAL PROVISIONS**

15. The Code must be presented to every member of the University community who begins to work, study or takes a position at the University.

16. Each member of the University community undertakes to comply with the norms and principles of conduct set out in this Code and not to tolerate its violation within or outside the University.

17. The Code is reviewed and enforced by the Board of Academic Ethics approved by the Senate and operating according to the regulations approved by the Senate.

18. Community members must notify the Board of Academic Ethics in writing about any violation of the Code by sending an email to [etikos.kolegija@ktu.lt](mailto:etikos.kolegija@ktu.lt).

19. The Code is publicly available on the University's website.

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