

## THE CODE OF ETHICS OF VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY

### I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

The Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Code) of Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter referred to as VMU) shall outline the basic standards of professional ethics as well as norms of universal human behaviour that shall not be directly regulated by the Legal Acts of the Republic of Lithuania, job agreements and documents of internal VMU order.

The Code shall be based on the Declaration of Human Rights, the provisions of European University Charter, the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania, the Laws of the Republic of Lithuania, VMU Statute and the Codes of Ethics of foreign universities.

The Code shall aim to define the basic standards and principles of ethics held by VMU community members, and identify the measures ensuring that professional ethics and behaviour comply with the requirements of the Code.

The Code shall be binding upon all members of the University: teachers and students, research workers, administrative and office staff.

The Code shall determine typical cases of violation of ethical standards but the list shall not be exhaustive. Each case shall be conditioned by the circumstances of a particular occurrence, determining whether there is violation or not. The sequence of listing violations in the Code shall not imply their significance.

The Code of Ethics of VMU should be changed and improved under the initiative of VMU community members or the Commission of Ethics.

### II. PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS OF ETHICS

#### *The principle of academic freedom and responsibility*

**Standard:** freedom of beliefs and expression, tradition of critical thinking and atmosphere of open discussion of negotiable questions, based on goodwill and responsibility for one's actions.

**Violations:**

- intolerance towards another students or colleagues' opinion or reasoned criticism;
- disregard or deliberate limitation of the right of teachers and students to express their opinion and defend it when making decisions;

- disregard or deliberate limitation of the right to respond to criticism or accusation.

**Standard:** aspiration for high qualification and truth in one's field of the research, ethical research with regard to the object under investigation.

**Violations:**

- lack of teacher's qualification, unwillingness to improve, visibly derogating the prestige of the University and failing to meet students' expectations;
- conscious spread of false information, knowledge, data and etc., demagogy;
- biased, unilateral interpretation of research results;
- participation in the research or experiments related with the damage to a human, nature, society or culture.

**Standard:** loyalty towards the University, respect to its community manifested by the priority of problem solving within the University community.

**Violations:**

- humiliation of the student, teacher or employee's name due to inappropriate behaviour or violation of academic discipline;
- leakage of confidential information;
- waste and use of VMU property or other resources not in accordance with the intended use;
- harm to VMU image;
- public consideration of the University problems without solving these problems within the University.

*The principle of academic honesty*

**Standard:** respect towards the intellectual property

**Violations:**

- plagiarism, falsification of scientific data or its biased interpretation, unjustified intrusion of co-authorship to younger colleagues or subordinates;
- denial or reticence about the impact of people or organisations who assisted in performing scientific research;
- unlicensed use of information technologies and other cases of violations of copyright.

**Standard:** separation of private and public interests

**Violations:**

- a conflict of interests, evident by the patronage of a family member, relative or business partner, manifestation of favouritism;
- use of official position for a personal purpose;
- use of material and financial VMU resources for political activity, private business or personal needs, abuse of VMU resources when carrying out projects;
- involvement into private business or financial activity that can make a negative impact on the studies of the University members and scientific research.

**Standard:** justice, objective assessment, impartiality

**Violations:**

- assessment based on personal or ideological relation, disregarding the quality of work and professional qualities of the applicant;
- dishonest professional competition between colleagues, escalation of conflicts and intrigues;
- participation in illegal and undignified transactions;
- veiling of the information intended for all;
- fraudulent behaviour or tolerance of fraudulent behaviour, including but not limited to cheating, falsification of tests or other data or documents related to studies or research, use of another person's help during the examination or course credit, appropriation of another person's work, preparation of written assignments for other individuals, submission of the same written work in one course and in another course, and etc.;
- corruption or tolerance of corruption, including but not limited to the bribery, payoff or other reward for the false academic or research results;
- pressure brought to bear on the teacher or student in order to receive undeserved evaluation or to hide dishonest academic behaviour;
- demand for and receiving of direct or indirect presents, non-academic or academic services from students.

***The principle of ethical personal relationship***

**Standard:** fostering equal rights and opportunities

**Violations:**

- discrimination of students and colleagues, oral insult of their honour and dignity by speaking, actions or academic assessment because of their age, gender or sexual orientation, disability, appearance, race or ethnic dependence, religion or beliefs as well as tolerance of such discrimination or offences, attempts to create intimidating, hostile, humiliating or offensive atmosphere;
- discrimination of students or colleagues because of their (non)participation in religious, political, social, cultural or sport activity;
- attempts to distinguish themselves or unrighteous demand for exceptional rights.

**Standard:** collegiality and decency

**Violations:**

- humiliation of a student or colleague, especially using one's authority as a teacher, research worker or administrator;
- any sexual harassment.

**Standard:** confidentiality, respect for personal dignity and autonomy

**Violations:**

- leakage or public consideration of confidential personal information about teachers, students or staff, about their salary, academic evaluations or penalties, results of scientific work, career ambitions, personal affairs, and etc.;
- use of private information about an individual for teaching or investigation purposes without a person's consent.

### III. APPLICATION OF THE CODE

All members of VMU community shall be obliged to act in compliance with the Code and be intolerant to its violations, feel concern about the enactment of this code, and eliminate its violations by using moral sanctions: criticising, condemning, disassociating, and rupturing cooperation ties.

The cases of infringement of the Code by VMU community members shall be investigated by the Commission of Ethics, whose composition shall be approved by the Rector. The Commission of Ethics shall be constituted for a period of two years and its activity shall be regulated by this Code and the provisions of the Commission of Ethics.

VMU community members shall inform the Chairperson of the Commission of Ethics about any violation of the Code of Ethics of Vytautas Magnus University. Anonymous notifications shall not be taken into account. Notifications shall be considered as confidential information and the

Commission of Ethics shall ensure that any information about the person delivering the notification shall not be disclosed.

Having received the notification in written form and determined the violation of ethics, the Commission of Ethics shall make a decision and within five working days shall inform the Rector, the person who submitted the notification and the violator of the Code.

Having received the decision of the Commission of Ethics and taken into account its recommendations regarding the application of sanctions, after the period of time for an appeal against the decision of the Commission of Ethics to the Senate's Supervisory Committee expires, Rector can take any sanctions against the violator of the Code, within the limits of his/her authority, or address any other administrative institution of the University with regard to the application of sanctions within the limits of their competence. The sanctions shall be taken as follows (the list shall not be exhaustive):

- personal warning (without disclosing the information about the violation of ethics publicly);
- public reprimand (disclosing the information about the violation of ethics publicly);
- disciplinary punishment in accordance with Article 237 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania;
- termination of the job agreement without any preconceived notification, in accordance with Article 136, Part 3 of the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania;
- exclusion from the university with the right to return to studies;
- exclusion from the university without the right to return to studies;
- initiation of teacher's negative assessment;
- other sanctions determined in the Regulations of Studies.

The Commission of Ethics shall not take any sanctions on its own initiative. However, they shall be recommended, taking into account the level of difficulty of the violation and previous violations of the Code by the violator.

The ruling adopted by the Commission of Ethics shall be subject to appeal for the Senate's Supervisory Committee within ten working days from the day of its adoption, by submitting a copy of appeal to Rector. The Senate's Supervisory Committee shall adopt a decision with regard to the appeal within twenty working days as of the day of receipt of the appeal. The ruling of the Senate's Supervisory Committee shall be final and not subject to appeal.