

REGULATIONS OF ETHICS OF VIDZEME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter – ViA) is an organization where ethical values and the environment that promotes morally responsible behaviour play an important role. The goal of the Code of Ethics of ViA is to promote academic excellence and to further collective work of ViA staff for the sake of education and science in Latvia, to promote the development of fair and just environment in the institution of higher education, as well as to encourage ViA staff to act in good faith and responsibly.

The Code of Ethics of ViA includes basic ethical principles and norms that ViA staff (students, academic and general staff) should respect in their attitude towards ViA, in their work, relations with other ViA representatives and society.

The Code of Ethics of ViA is based on general human values, moral norms and principles, and is developed in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Latvia and other laws and regulations, as well as internal normative documents of ViA.

I General basic principles of ethics

1. ViA staff should comply with the following basic principles:

1.1. **Honour and loyalty of ViA**

ViA staff is loyal to the values and traditions of the institution of higher education, it maintains the reputation and prestige of ViA, promotes awareness of the institution of higher education both in Latvia and abroad, and refrains from the activities that could negatively affect and undermine the importance of ViA's operation.

1.2. **Mutual respect and collegiality**

ViA staff treats each other with respect and cooperates to implement ViA goals, avoids arrogance and an authoritative style of leadership towards other colleagues, and does not allow humiliation of colleagues and others.

1.3. **Respect for equal opportunities and diversity**

ViA staff promotes equal opportunities, opposes intolerance and violation of human dignity and honour, opposes discrimination based on a person's social background, socio-economic status, age, gender, ethnicity, race, religious or ideological beliefs and sexual orientation.

1.4. **Academic freedom**

In accordance with the ViA Constitution, the Law on Institutions of Higher Education of the Republic of Latvia and other normative documentation, the institution of higher education ensures in its activity the observance of the principle of academic freedom for students and academic staff, which means the possibility to creatively, independently and responsibly identify and implement the interests of science, education and self-education. Academic freedom respects the right of others to freely express their opinions and honesty in the presentation and implementation of their ideas. Academic freedom is based on advanced critical and creative thinking.

1.5. **Adherence to academic and research ethics**

ViA staff honestly treats the study and research process and the persons involved thereof. The staff respects the copyrights, intellectual property, work results of others, guarantees truthfulness of data used in research and the analysis carried out in academic and scientific research.

In order to promote adherence to academic and research ethics at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the following principles should be observed: honesty, openness, objectivity, unambiguity, respect for the rights of research participants, independence from sponsors, and acknowledgement of contribution of all persons involved in research.

1.6. **Professional competence**

ViA staff responsibly develops professional skills and abilities and updates its knowledge. ViA staff maintains high standards of work quality and is responsible for results.

1.7. **Openness and responsibility**

ViA respects the principle of freedom of information in its activities, as far as it does not apply to the information of restricted access and the information protected by law, and it explains decision-making process at ViA. The staff of ViA responsibly treats the resources of the institution of higher education, uses them economically and rationally.

1.8. Confidentiality

ViA staff respects the right to privacy and ensures the protection of personal data, it does not disclose the information received as a result of professional activity or the fulfilment of academic obligations to others (except in cases provided for in the laws and regulations), and it does not use it for personal interests.

1.9. Rule of law

All decisions and actions of ViA staff are based on the norms established in the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia, employment contract or study agreement, job description, and in the norms of this Code; conceal or support of unlawful action is not allowed; by observing equality of persons before the law, only objectively verified information is taken into account without showing special favour to someone.

1.10. Avoiding conflicts of interest

ViA staff should avoid conflicts of interest that may negatively affect ViA's activity and harm its reputation by notifying the management of the institution of risks.

ViA staff members perform their work duties in good faith, without taking advantage of their positions to gain personal benefit to themselves or another person, nor misleading others, giving them an impression that they can give them access to the information or influence the decision making, avoiding accepting gifts and gratitude that can reduce objectivity in decision-making.

1.11. Political and religious neutrality

ViA staff does not engage in political activities during the working hours, does not use the resources of the institution to support political forces, ViA does not engage in campaigns of political forces and pre-election campaigns, because the culture of discussion appropriate to the academic environment does not allow to single out one point of view, but requires a critical approach and comparison of different opinions. The exception is the use of premises for public discussions among representatives of several political forces or for organizing commercial activities regulated by ViA internal laws and regulations.

ViA staff members perform their activities and make their decisions independently of their affiliation to political parties and public movements or organizations, and respect the separation of the state and church.

1.12. Social responsibility

ViA staff is aware of its professional responsibility towards society, it works to ensure public benefit, serves for public interests and is co-responsible for the protection of the environment by avoiding the pursuit of self-interest or dependence on hidden sponsor interests.

II Violations of ethics

2. Types of violations of academic ethics include:

2.1. plagiarism, including:

2.1.1. the use of statements and ideas of another author, without specifying the exact references to the author and work concerned, including the use of materials available on the Internet without the appropriate references being added;

2.1.2. incorporating statements and/or ideas of another author into his or her work, leading the reader to believe that the information presented is his or her own;

2.1.3. presenting any work or part of a work that has been prepared by someone else as his or her own.

2.2. falsification, including:

2.2.1. unauthorized modification, deletion of marks or other information related to student results in official documents;

2.2.2. providing false information and submitting false documents regarding reasons for non-attendance of examinations, lectures, seminars, and other classes and/or reasons for the failure to comply with the deadlines of submitting the assignments;

- 2.2.3. marking a lecture and seminar attendance list instead of another student or requesting/allowing another student to register instead of the student himself/herself;
- 2.2.4. taking an examination or another test instead of another student or requesting/allowing another student to take an examination instead of the student himself/herself;
- 2.2.5. falsification of research data;
- 2.3. the use of unauthorized sources and ways of obtaining information during examinations (exams, tests), including:
 - 2.3.1. consultations with another student or copying from another student during the examination;
 - 2.3.2. purchase, theft or unauthorized acquisition of any information (denied to students) related to the examinations;
 - 2.3.3. consultations and cooperation among the students during the development of individual assignments, unless otherwise determined by the lecturer;
 - 2.3.4. deliberate use of false or falsified data in research.
- 2.4. re-submission of one's own work to another study course without a prior agreement with the lecturer;
- 2.5. any other deliberate engagement in the activities that hinder or interfere with the study process and academic work at the institution of higher education, including participation in or concealment of violations of academic ethics.
3. Violations of research ethics include:
 - 3.1. Violations of requirements of research ethics specified in the professional codes;
 - 3.2. Permitting conflict of interest;
 - 3.3. Data falsification;
 - 3.4. Tendentious data analysis and interpretation;
 - 3.5. Discrimination of research participants;
 - 3.6. Disregard of voluntary participation in research;
 - 3.7. Disregard of participant anonymity or confidentiality (as appropriate), except the cases when these issues are harmonized with research participants or data are collected in public environment (for example, observation in public environment);
 - 3.8. Violation of informed consent, unless it is a simple observation in a public place and the audio or video recording is not used in a way allowing identification of or harm to a person;
 - 3.9. Misleading or failure to inform the subjects of the research on the purposes or significant aspects of the research, unless it is not possible to use other effective alternative methods. In this case, the intended misleading should be explained as soon as possible, but not later than at the end of the research;
 - 3.10. Misleading society without providing complete information;
 - 3.11. Plagiarism and self-plagiarism, i.e., failure to refer to previously published data or discoveries;
 - 3.12. Use of data collected by other researchers without a reference to the contribution of other authors.
4. All types of violations of academic ethics referred to in Paragraph 2 of this Code may be attributed to academic and general staff and interpreted as far as it is related to its academic work.
5. A violation of general ethics is considered to be a case where a person (both a student and an employee of general or academic staff) violates the basic ethical principles referred to in this Code and has performed actions contrary to the norms of this Code and which are not related to his/her academic work.

III Sanctions for ethical violations

6. Sanctions for the violations of research ethics may be initiated by the Academic Ethics Commission.
7. Sanctions against the students for the violation of the norms of academic ethics may be imposed by a lecturer or the Rector in accordance with the decision of the Academic Ethics Commission. Sanctions against academic and general staff for the violations of the norms of academic ethics may be imposed by the Rector in accordance with the decision of the Academic Commission.
 - 7.1. The lecturer is entitled to impose the following sanctions:
 - 7.1.1. a reprimand;
 - 7.1.2. a task to redo the assignment;

- 7.1.3. unsatisfactory evaluation of the work submitted or examination;
- 7.1.4. lowering the final mark of the course;
- 7.1.5. unsatisfactory final evaluation.
- 7.2. A student may dispute the sanction imposed by the lecturer by addressing the Academic Ethics Commission.
- 7.3. The Rector is entitled to impose the following sanctions in accordance with the decision of the Academic Ethics Commission on the violations of academic ethics:
 - 7.3.1. written admonishment;
 - 7.3.2. exmatriculation;
 - 7.3.3. regarding general staff, provisions of Paragraph 8.2. of this Code are to be applied.
- 7.4. An admonishment and reprimand shall be drawn up in writing and communicated to the student in person and attached to his/her personal file.
- 7.5. If a student repeatedly violates academic ethics, the Rector makes a decision on student's exmatriculation.
- 8. Sanctions against general staff for the violations of general ethical principles (including academic staff if the violation is not related to academic work) may be imposed by the employee's direct manager or Rector.
 - 8.1. The direct manager of an employee has the right to give an oral reproof or admonishment for the violation of ethical norms, as well as to propose to ViA Rector to impose one of the disciplinary penalties provided for in the Labour Law.
 - 8.2. The Rector has the right to impose the following sanctions provided for in the Labour Law for the violations of ethical norms:
 - 8.2.1. a written reproof;
 - 8.2.2. a reprimand;
 - 8.2.3. a notice of termination of the employment contract.

IV Procedure for identifying violations and imposing sanctions

- 9. Violations of academic and research ethics:
 - 9.1. Upon identifying a violation of academic and research ethics, a report is to be prepared (see Annex No. 1 "Report on Violation of Academic Ethics").
 - 9.2. The report may be prepared by any person who has identified or is aware of a violation of academic ethics. The report shall be submitted as follows:
 - 9.2.1. against a student – to a lecturer or Director of the study field;
 - 9.2.2. against an employee of the academic staff (including a visiting lecturer) – to the Academic Ethics Committee;
 - 9.2.3. against an employee of the general staff – to the direct manager.
 - 9.3. If the violation of academic ethics is identified in the Unified Plagiarism Control System (hereinafter – the system), the Director of the study field, upon consulting with the responsible lecturer (supervisor and/or reviewer), investigates the possible violation of academic ethics on the merits by examining system's report and the student's paper.
 - 9.4. If evidence is provided that a violation of academic ethics has occurred, the lecturer within the framework of his/her competence makes a decision regarding imposing sanctions against the violator and informs the Director of the respective study field in writing. The Director of the study field informs the Dean of the faculty on the violation identified and the sanctions imposed.
 - 9.5. Documentation of ethical violations should be kept in the personal file.
 - 9.6. If a lecturer is of the opinion that sanctions that are beyond his/her competence should be imposed on the student, the Academic Ethics Commission examines the violation of academic ethics.
 - 9.7. A lecturer has the right, within the framework of his/her competence, to impose or propose the imposition of sanctions:
 - 9.7.1. within 21 calendar days of receiving the student's paper;
 - 9.7.2. within five working days after the defence of the term paper/Bachelor's thesis/Master's thesis;
 - 9.7.3. within five working days after identifying any other violation.

- 9.8. The Academic Ethics Commission examines the case of academic violation within five working days from the date of receipt of the report and decides whether to initiate or reject sanctions.
10. General ethical violations:
 - 10.1. In the event of finding any fact which indicates or could indicate that there is a violation of general ethics, a person submits a written application to the direct manager of an employee who, in response to the application, invites the employee to an interview.
 - 10.2. If the direct manager of the employee receives evidence that a violation of general ethics has occurred, he/she, within the scope of his/her competence, makes a decision to impose a sanction or to inform the Rector on the violation of general ethics.
 - 10.3. If a violation of general ethics has been committed by a student, the sanction for this violation is imposed in accordance with the procedure provided for in the internal laws and regulations of ViA, as well as observing the legislation of the Republic of Latvia.
11. Appeal.
 - 11.1. It is possible to appeal against the sanction for the non-compliance with the norms of academic ethics by submitting a notice of appeal.
 - 11.1.1. A notice of appeal against the lecturer's decision to impose a sanction should be submitted to the Academic Ethics Commission not later than within three working days of the day of imposing the sanction, and the commission makes a decision within five working days after the receipt of the notice of appeal.
 - 11.1.2. A notice of appeal against the decision of the Academic Ethics Commission to impose a sanction should be submitted to the Academic Court of Arbitration of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences not later than within three working days of the day of imposing the sanction; the Academic Court of Arbitration of ViA examines the case and makes the final decision within five working days after the receipt of the notice of appeal in accordance with the Regulations of the Academic Court of Arbitration of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences.
 - 11.1.3. A notice of appeal against the decision on the exmatriculation of a student shall be examined in accordance with the procedures specified in the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia and internal normative documents of ViA.
 - 11.2. An appeal against a sanction for the non-compliance with the norms of general ethics may be made in accordance with the procedures provided for in the Labour Law and the Administrative Procedure Law of the Republic of Latvia.

V Academic Ethics Commission

12. Establishment, competence and general terms of operation of the Academic Ethics Commission:
 - 12.1. The Academic Ethics Commission of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences is a collegial institution that 1) promotes awareness and gives advise to ViA students and lecturers on the issues of academic and research ethics, 2) examines violations of academic and research ethics committed by ViA students and academic staff, as well as gives recommendations to the management of the institution of higher education regarding implementation of a decision.
 - 12.2. The Academic Ethics Commission consists of two representatives of academic staff and one representative of students. Each Faculty Council in cooperation with the Rector nominates one representative of academic staff to the Academic Ethics Commission, and the students' self-government nominates one student representative. The Academic Ethics Commission is approved by the Senate for two years.
 - 12.3. The Academic Ethics Commission and two other lecturers whose competence corresponds to the field of the subject to be examined participate in the examination of the violation of academic or research ethics. Two more lecturers for the examination of a particular violation according to a proposal of the Academic Ethics Commission and the study direction in which the violation took place is approved by the Council of the relevant study field.
 - 12.4. Only full-time elected lecturers and full-time students may be nominated to the Academic Ethics Commission. A student who is nominated to work for the Academic Ethics Commission should be a successful student without disciplinary violations and academic ethics violations. The nominated representatives of the academic staff should be competent in the issues of academic and research ethics.

- 12.5. Upon adjudicating the cases on the merits, the Academic Ethics Commission is guided by the legislation effective in the Republic of Latvia, the Constitution of ViA, resolutions of the Constitutional Assembly and Senate, the Code of Ethics of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, ViA agreements and other laws and regulations. Procedures for examining violations are determined by these Regulations. The commission decides on the procedural issues that are not covered by the Regulations.
- 12.6. The commission should be independent and impartial while carrying out its duties. It is not allowed to interfere with the work of the commission, or to influence its members. The commission reports on its work to the Senate, which is the only one entitled to decide on the responsibility and pre-term revocation of the members of the commission.
- 12.7. A member of the commission may not participate in the examination of the case if he or she is directly or indirectly involved or interested in the outcome or if there are other circumstances which cast doubt on his or her impartiality. If a member of the commission has not dismissed himself or herself, persons involved may announce him or her a reasoned rejection.
- 12.8. The Academic Ethics Commission shall have a quorum if at least two members of the Standing Commission and both invited representatives of the academic staff participate in the examination of the violation.
- 12.9. The Chairman of the commission summons and chairs the meetings of the commission, decides on the issue regarding experts. In the absence of the Chairman, his duties shall be performed by the Vice-Chairman.
- 12.10. Violations are examined secretly in the Academic Ethics Commission, no later than within two weeks after the receipt of the application.
- 12.11. The Academic Ethics Commission makes decisions by a simple majority of votes (more than a half of the present votes). The Chairman has a casting vote in the case of a tie. A decision is deemed to have been taken if at least three members of the commission have voted.
- 12.12. The Academic Ethics Commission is responsible for promoting academic and research ethics at Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, including at the request of researchers (lecturers, students) provides consultations on research ethics, organizes educational seminars on the problem issues of academic and research ethics, encourages discussions of academic staff, and supports promotion of academic ethics in study courses.
13. Procedures for examining violations in the Academic Ethics Commission.
 - 13.1. The Academic Ethics Commission examines violations after receiving a written application in the following cases:
 - 13.1.1. A lecturer's application regarding student's violation of academic ethics in case the penalty proposed is a written reprimand to be appended to the student's personal file and made public and a trial period up to two years; exmatriculation with the right to matriculation; exmatriculation without the right to matriculation;
 - 13.1.2. An application of the Director of the study field regarding student's repeated violation of academic ethics;
 - 13.1.3. An application of the Director of the study field regarding student's violation of academic ethics, which has been established as a result of the examination of the system.
 - 13.1.4. Student's notice of appeal regarding the fact of the violation or the sanction imposed by the lecturer;
 - 13.1.5. An application regarding lecturer's violation of academic ethics, unless it is examined otherwise and does not restrict academic freedom:
 - 13.1.5.1. gross violations of the following basic principles: professional and pedagogical competence (including fair and appropriate assessment of students' work, avoidance of conflicts of interest and dual relationships); integrity; professional and scientific responsibility; respect for human rights, dignity and diversity; social responsibility;
 - 13.1.5.2. plagiarism;
 - 13.1.5.3. violation of ethical principles of research;
 - 13.1.5.4. defamation of colleagues and/or institution.
 - 13.2. The following should be included in the application regarding examination of a violation of academic ethics:

- 13.2.1. Persons involved in the violation of academic ethics, nature and circumstances of the violation,
- 13.2.2. Evidence supporting the violation and the circumstances indicated,
- 13.2.3. A list of documents appended to the application.
- 13.3. Participants of the case have the following rights: to familiarize themselves with the materials of the case, to participate in the meetings of the commission, to provide evidence, to give verbal and written explanations.
- 13.4. The Academic Ethics Commission should find out the true circumstances of the violation fully, objectively and in details. To the effect, the commission may request from all officials of the institution of higher education the necessary documents, to invite any member of ViA staff to provide explanations necessary for the examination of the case. If special knowledge is required to clarify important circumstances of the case, the commission may invite additional experts from ViA or other institutions and organizations.
- 13.5. The time and place of the meeting of the Academic Ethics Commission should be communicated in writing to the submitter of the report and persons involved in the violation not later than five days before the meeting. If the persons involved in the violation refuse to receive and sign a notice of a commission meeting or do not attend a meeting without a valid reason, the commission may examine the case on the merits without the participation of the person.
- 13.6. The commission determines the procedure for examining the violation at the meeting of the Academic Ethics Commission. It should guarantee that the persons involved in the particular case have the rights conferred by the Regulations and the meeting should be directed in such a way to find out the truth, excluding everything that does not relate to the violation in question. The meetings of the commission are recorded in the minutes. If any of the parties involved has objections to the actions of the commission, they shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
14. Decision of the commission and its execution.
 - 14.1. The Academic Ethics Commission makes a decision by majority vote, upon examining the case on the merits. The decision is signed by all members of the commission. Those members of the commission who do not agree with the decision record their objections in writing and attach them to the decision. A member of the commission whose objections are recorded is not responsible for the decision made.
 - 14.2. The decision shall specify the following: time and place of the decision, a composition of the commission, persons involved in the violation of academic ethics, nature of the violation, evidence, reasons and conclusions of the decision, the decision of the Commission and its appeal procedure. Copies of the decision shall be submitted to the parties of the case, the Vice-Rector for academic work and the Rector of ViA within three days. If the decision provides for student's exmatriculation or a written reprimand attached to the student's personal file and made public, and a probation period up to two years, the responsible officials of ViA take the necessary steps to comply with the commission's decision.
 - 14.3. The decision of the Academic Ethics Commission may be appealed to the Academic Court of Arbitration by the parties involved in the case within five working days of the moment of announcing the decision. If the Academic Court of Arbitration finds that the Academic Ethics Commission, upon examining the violation, has violated the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, the ViA Constitution or the Regulations, it may annul the decision of the commission and refer the case for repeated examination.
 - 14.4. The Rector is responsible for the implementation of the decision of the Academic Ethics Commission that has entered into force. If the deadline for the execution is not specified, the decision has to be executed immediately.
 - 14.5. Once the decision is executed, cases of violation are handed over to the ViA archive.

VI Final provisions

15. The document "Code of Ethics of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences" (25.04.2012, decision No.4/5.1.) ceases to have effect as of the date of approval of these Regulations.

Annex No. 1, Form No.1
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences
Faculty of _____

(position, name, surname)

Report on violation of academic and research ethics by a student *

Student's name, surname _____

Violation

Use of unauthorized materials for the examination, test, etc.

- Falsification
- Plagiarism
- Interfering with and hindering of academic work of the academic staff and/or student
- Violation of research ethics
- Other deliberate actions that hinder or interfere with the study process and academic work at VIA.

Comments (more detailed information about the violation)

Date of detection of the violation (if it can be specified) _____.

Proposed sanctions (by the lecturer)

- an admonishment
- a task to redo the assignment
- unsatisfactory assessment of the work submitted or examination
- lowering the final mark of the course
- unsatisfactory final mark of the course

Submitted by: _____
(position, name, surname) (signature) (date)

I have read the report: _____
(student's signature) (date)

I have read the report

_____ Dean of the Faculty

_____ (name, surname) (signature) (date)

* In accordance with the Code of Ethics of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the report is kept in the student's personal file.

Annex No.1, Form No.2
Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences

(Head of the structural unit)

Report of violation of ethics *

Name, surname of the person who has violated ethical standards _____

Violation

- Violation of academic ethics
- Violation of research ethics
- Violation of general ethics

Comments (more detailed information about the violation)

Date of detection of the violation (if it can be specified) _____.

Submitted by: _____ (position, name, surname) _____ (signature) _____ (date)

I have read the report: _____ (signature of the person who violated ethical norms) _____ (date)

I have read the report

Head of _____

_____ (name, surname) _____ (signature) _____ (date)

* In accordance with the Code of Ethics of Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences, the report is kept in the personal file.