

APPROVED BY  
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of the Senate of Vilnius University  
(version of Resolution No. SPN-55 as of 21 October 2020  
of the Senate of Vilnius University)

**VILNIUS UNIVERSITY  
REGULATIONS OF THE CENTRAL ACADEMIC ETHICS COMMISSION OF  
VILNIUS UNIVERSITY**

**CHAPTER I  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. Regulations (hereinafter referred to as the Regulations) of the Central Academic Ethics Commission (hereinafter referred to as the Commission) of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the University) shall regulate the formation, competence and organisation of work of the Commission.

2. In its activities, the Commission shall adhere to the Statute of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Statute), other laws of the Republic of Lithuania, the Code of Academic Ethics of Vilnius University (hereinafter referred to as the Code of Academic Ethics), and these Regulations.

**CHAPTER II  
FORMATION AND COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION**

3. The Commission shall consist of eight members: 5 University lecturers and science (art) employees, as well as 3 student representatives.

4. The Senate of the University (hereinafter referred to as the Senate) shall form the Commission and appoint the Commission chairman and his deputy from its members, i.e. lecturers and science (art) employees of the University, with consideration to proposals of the chairman of the Senate. The members of the Commission are appointed from different core academic units. Vilnius University Students' Representation shall appoint and remove student representatives to (from) the Commission according to its established procedures.

5. Members of the governing bodies of the University, members of the standing commissions formed by the Senate and members of the academic ethics commissions of the core academic units of the University (hereinafter referred to as the Units) may not be appointed members of the Commission.

6. Members of the Commission shall have equal rights, except in case where, pursuant to these Regulations, the Commission chairman's vote is the decisive vote.

7. Members of the Commission, excluding students' representatives, shall be appointed for a three-year term of office. Members of the Commission, excluding students' representatives, may be appointed to the same position for no more than 2 consecutive terms.

8. Only persons of impeccable repute may be appointed to be members of the Commission.

9. Persons who were appointed to be members of the Commission must sign a pledge of confidentiality and a declaration of impartiality, the forms of which are established by the Rector of the University (hereinafter referred to as the Rector) or his authorized person.

10. A member of the Commission may be removed from this position prior to expiry of his/her term of office, if he/she commits a violation of academic ethics or another violation of legal or moral norms, which is incompatible with the position of a member of the Commission. The decision concerning removal of a member of the Commission, excluding students' representatives, shall be passed by the Senate. Additional grounds and procedures for the removal of students from the Commission may be established by the Students' Representation of the University.

11. Should a member of the Commission resign from his/her job or complete his/her studies at the University or present to the Unit or Institution that appointed him/her an application to resign from the Commission, or is removed according to Paragraph 10 of the Regulations, according to the procedures established by these Regulations, a new member of the Commission shall be appointed for the remaining part of the term of office.

12. The Rector shall ensure the material and organisational conditions necessary for the activities of the Commission. The Rector shall also appoint a secretary of the Commission under a separate order. The secretary of the Commission shall not be a member of the Commission. The secretary of the Commission must participate in the meetings of the Commission. If the Secretary of the Commission is not able to participate in a meeting, another person who is able to assume the functions of the secretary shall participate in the meeting. The secretary of the Commission shall be subject to the requirements set out in Paragraphs 8 and 9 of the Regulations.

### **CHAPTER III AREAS OF ACTIVITY OF THE COMMISSION**

13. The Commission shall investigate the following complaints and appeals regarding possible breaches of academic ethics:

13.1. Complaints concerning the legality and / or validity of the decisions of the academic ethics commissions of Units, or concerning the lack of actions of the academic ethics commissions of Units;

13.2. Appeals concerning actions of members of the academic community working or studying in different Units of the University, who violate the academic ethics;

13.3. Appeals concerning gross violations of the Code of Academic Ethics which would justify the revocation of a person's qualification degree (by also taking away his/her diploma) or certification of completion of non-degree studies and (or) certification of the acquired qualification (together with the relevant certificate), or a person's academic title;

13.4. Appeals regarding actions of members of the governing bodies of the University that violate academic ethics;

13.5. Appeals submitted in accordance with Article 5 (5) of the Statute;

13.6. Appeals regarding possible violations of the research ethics, except for those the examination of which is assigned to the competence of the academic ethics commissions of the Units;

13.7. Other motivated appeals submitted directly to the Commission regarding possible violations of academic ethics that took place in the Unit. The Commission shall have the right to start an investigation or reasonably refuse to examine the appeals specified in this subparagraph, and forward them to be examined by the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit.

14. The Commission may consider information about actions of members of the University community that violate the academic ethics, as well as information contained in appeals or complaints that do not meet the requirements of Paragraphs 23 and 24 of the Regulations, which the Commission considers to be the basis for investigating possible violations of the academic ethics. In such cases, the Commission may, on its own initiative, initiate an investigation into a possible violation of the academic ethics or transmit information within the competence of the Unit to the Academic Ethics Commission or another unit or employee of the University.

15. The Commission shall consider proposals concerning improvement of the Code of Academic Ethics or initiate supplementation or amendments to the Code of Academic Ethics and present them to the Chairman of the Senate.

16. The Commission shall provide its annual activity report to the Senate and publish it according to the procedures established by the Senate once a year but not later than until the 31st of January of each year.

17. The Commission shall provide recommendations and suggestions to the governing bodies of the University regarding upholding of academic ethics.

## CHAPTER IV ORGANISATION OF THE WORK OF THE COMMISSION

18. The form of the Commission's activity shall be meetings.

19. Meetings of the Commission shall be convened and chaired by the chairman of the Commission. If the chairman of the Commission withdraws due to the circumstances provided in Paragraph 20 or is not able to participate in the meeting, the meeting shall be convened and chaired by a deputy chairman of the Commission or another member appointed by the chairman of the Commission if the Commission does not have a deputy chairman.

20. A member of the Commission shall have the right to withdraw from the discussion of issues during the meeting under at least one of the following circumstances:

20.1. The discussed issue is directly related to the member of the Commission himself;

20.2. The discussed issue is related to persons who are close family members of the member of the Commission;

20.3. The discussed issue is related to persons who are spouses, partners or carers of the member of the Commission;

20.4. A member of the Commission, his/her spouse (cohabitant) or his/her close relatives are directly or indirectly interested in the outcome of the decision regarding the discussed issue;

20.5. There are also other circumstances which raise doubts about the impartiality of the member of the Commission.

21. Appeals may be lodged to the Commission no later than within one month from the date when the possible violation of academic ethics was committed or established. This deadline may, by the decision of the Commission, be extended in the presence of valid reasons due to which the deadline was not met and in the presence of a motivated request of the applicant, provided that no more than six months have passed since the date on which the violation was committed or established. Complaints may be submitted to the Commission not later than within 14 calendar days from the date the decision of the academic ethics commission of the Unit is delivered. This deadline may, by the decision of the Commission, be extended in the presence of valid reasons due to which the deadline was not met and in the presence of a motivated appeal of the applicant, provided that no more than 30 calendar days have passed since the date of delivery of the decision.

22. Appeals and complaints shall be submitted to the Commission in the following ways:

22.1. Printed and signed appeals and complaints are submitted to the secretary of the Commission;

22.2. Appeals and complaints signed with an electronic signature in the University document management system or created in the University study information system;

22.3. Appeals and complaints signed and scanned or signed with a qualified electronic signature and sent via e-mail [etika@cr.vu.lt](mailto:etika@cr.vu.lt);

22.4. Appeals signed and scanned or signed with a qualified electronic signature via the system "E.pristatymas".

23. An appeal must include:

23.1. the name, surname of the applicant, position held or the department where the applicant is studying, the e-mail address provided by the University (if it is not provided – other e-mail used by the applicant) and the telephone number;

23.2. A description of the possible violation of academic ethics and specification and attachment of the available information or circumstances confirming that the violation was actually committed;

23.3. A specific request of the applicant;

23.4. The applicant's signature, excluding cases when the complaint or appeal is submitted in the University's information system.

24. A complaint must include:

24.1. The complainant's name, surname, position or unit where the person studies, e-mail address provided by the University and a telephone number;

24.2. A copy of the decision of the academic ethics commission of the Unit to which the complaint was addressed, and specification of the grounds for disagreement with such a decision;

24.3. A specific request;

24.4. The complainant's signature, excluding cases when the complaint is submitted in the University's information system.

25. Anonymous appeals and complaints or appeals and complaints that do not comply with other requirements specified in Paragraph 23 and 24 of the Regulations shall not be examined. The Commission shall have the right to return the appeal or complaint to the applicant to remedy the deficiencies within a reasonable period of time (minimum 5 working days), specified by the Commission.

26. The Commission must examine the received appeal or complaint and make a decision no later than within 40 calendar days after its registration according to the procedures established at the University. The deadline specified in this paragraph does not include the holiday period provided for students in the legal acts of the University.

27. Meetings of the Commission shall be closed. The parties to the dispute shall be entitled to attend the meeting of the Commission at the invitation of the Commission. The Commission shall have the right to invite other persons to attend the meeting at the request of the parties to the dispute or on its own initiative.

28. Members of the University community who have received an appeal or complaint shall be informed of its contents. These persons shall not be invited to a meeting of the Commission in cases where the Commission examines complaints about the legality and validity of the decisions or inaction of the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit and where all interested persons have already had the opportunity to participate in the meeting of the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit, in which the matter is considered. In exceptional cases, at the applicant's justified request, the Commission may pass a decision by informing about the contents of the appeal without disclosing the applicant's identity to the other party to the dispute.

29. When investigating complaints about possible violation of research ethics or in other cases when the opinion of specialists in the respective field is required, the Commission shall contact the Rector (if the Rector is a party to the dispute – the University Vice-Rector (hereinafter referred to as the Vice-Rector)) regarding the formation of an impartial expert group (hereinafter referred to as the Expert Group). The Expert Group shall be formed by the Rector (the Vice-Rector) from at least 3 persons not directly related to the analysed appeal. Before taking up their duties, the members of the Expert Group must sign and submit to the Commission a pledge of confidentiality and a declaration of impartiality in the form established by the Rector.

30. The Commission shall submit the task to the Expert Group with or without acquaintance with the content of the request addressed to the Commission. The justified and reasoned opinion of the Expert Group shall be submitted to the Commission within a time limit set by the Commission.

31. Upon receipt of the conclusion of the Expert Group, the Commission shall decide on the fact of the violation of academic ethics or its absence or, if it identifies significant shortcomings in the formation of the Expert Group, re-apply the Rector or Vice-Rector for a new Expert Group.

32. The decision signed by the Chairman of the Commission and registered in accordance with the procedure established by the legal acts of the University shall be sent to the parties to the dispute by e-mail provided by the University no later than 5 working days after its adoption. The decision may also be signed electronically. After examining the complaint, the Commission shall also send its decision to the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit the decision of which has been appealed and to the head of that Unit. When the Commission makes recommendations or suggestions in its decision, the Commission shall communicate the decision to the addressees of the recommendations or suggestions.

33. The Commission shall examine appeals and complaints in accordance with the principles set out in Article 25(5) of the Statute. The Commission must provide the parties to the dispute with an opportunity to be heard. This right may be exercised in writing or orally by decision of the Commission.

34. Minutes of meetings of the Commission shall be drafted. The minutes prepared by the secretary of the Commission within 3 working days from the meeting of the Commission shall be signed by the Chairman of the Commission (in his absence – the Chairman of the meeting) and the secretary of the Commission. An audio recording of the meeting shall be made during the meeting of the Commission. The minutes and audio recordings of the Commission meetings shall be stored in accordance with the procedure established by the legal acts of the University.

## **CHAPTER V DECISIONS OF THE COMMISSION**

35. After examining the appeal or complaint, the Commission shall:

35.1. Having established that such a proposal is in the best interests of the parties and the University, suggest that the parties reconcile or withdraw the complaint or appeal and resolve the conflict by other means;

35.2. establish the fact of presence or absence of a violation of the academic ethics or a gross violation of academic ethics;

35.3. satisfy the complaint and make a new decision, satisfy the complaint in part and change the decision made by the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit or not satisfy the complaint;

35.4. return the appeal or complaint for reconsideration to the Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit;

35.5. forward the appeals and complaints that do not fall within the scope of the Commission's investigation or their part to the appeal Academic Ethics Commission of the Unit, the Dispute Resolution Commissions or another entity operating at the University, and inform the applicant thereof;

35.6. recommend the Rector to remove a student or unclassified student from the University (in case of a gross violation of the academic ethics) or to impose other penalties provided for in the legal acts of the University on students and unclassified students;

35.7. recommend the University's Rector to expel a student or unclassified student from the University or apply other penalties to students and unclassified students provided in the legal acts of the University;

35.8. after establishing that a gross violation of the academic ethics was committed, recommend the Rector of the University to initiate procedures for the termination of powers of the member of the governing body of the University according to the procedures established in the Statute;

35.9. appeal to the Rector of the University regarding the initiation of procedures for the annulment of the granted qualification or pedagogical degree and related diplomas;

35.10. initiate procedures for the revocation of authorship of scientific work;

35.11. recommend that a member of the academic community refuse to participate in an ongoing research and experimental (social, cultural) development project;

35.12. submit proposals for the improvement of the Code of Academic Ethics or the process of its application;

35.13. inform the public about the decision of the Commission, if a decision is passed regarding violation of academic ethics that gained resonance among the public.

36. Decisions of the Commission shall be deemed lawful, if they were passed during a meeting attended by at least two thirds of the members of the Commission.

37. Decisions of the Commission shall be passed by a simple majority of votes of members of the Commission attending the meeting. In the case of an equal distribution of votes, the vote of the Chairman of the Commission shall be decisive.

38. Until the Commission takes a decision, no decisions of the head of the Unit, the Rector or their authorized persons shall be made with respect to the applicant, and the execution of the decisions made until then shall be suspended.

39. The depersonalized decisions of the Commission and / or their summaries and generalisations are announced on the University website.

40. The decision of the Commission at the University shall be final.

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