

APPROVED
at the Senate meeting of
Rīga Stradiņš University
on 17 October 2006,
Minutes No 1-2/17.10.06

(As amended by the Senate meeting of
Rīga Stradiņš University
on 22 November 2011,
Minutes No 1-2/22.11.11;
at the meeting of 16 June 2020,
Minutes No 2-1/6/2020, and
at the meeting of 16 April 2024,
Minutes No 2-S-1/5/2024)

Rīga Stradiņš University Code of Ethics

Preamble

Rīga Stradiņš University (hereinafter - RSU or the University) is a derived public person, educational and research institution that implements a wide range of academic and professional education and research work.

People, team, results and belonging to RSU are values that are important for the students, academic and general (administrative) staff of the University.

RSU Code of Ethics (hereinafter - the Code of Ethics) includes ethical standards, principles, rights and obligations corresponding to these values, which contribute to the awareness of common goals, strengthen the spirit of unity and ensure respectful relationship in the work environment.

The basic principles of RSU ethics – human dignity, fairness, integrity, collegiality and responsible conduct, as well as other provisions of the Code of Ethics, shall apply to every member of RSU academic staff, general staff and students.

RSU establishes procedures and issues internal rules and regulations for the implementation of the principles set out in the Code of Ethics at the University.

1. Basic Principles of Ethics

1.1. Principle of human dignity

- 1.1.1. RSU activities shall be based on human dignity. RSU shall respect human dignity as an inviolable value, both in relations between RSU and its staff and between RSU staff members.
- 1.1.2. Human dignity is a universal human value. The dignity of one RSU staff member shall be of no less value than the dignity of another. Respect for the dignity of one person does not take away or diminish the right to dignity of another person.
- 1.1.3. Each RSU representative shall recognise, value and respect the identity and autonomy of each individual.
- 1.1.4. Everyone shall have the right to dignity and mutual respect. Attentiveness, tolerance and respect for others shall be both the right and the duty.

- 1.1.5. RSU staff shall not tolerate emotional or physical abuse, including but not limited to sexual harassment, mobbing, bossing, bullying, as well as instructions to discriminate and victimisation.
- 1.1.6. The principle of human dignity in action shall be demonstrated, among other things, by the student-centred learning and teaching process implemented at RSU. It fosters an inclusive and supportive environment that respects the diversity of student needs and builds mutually respectful student-academic staff relationships.
- 1.2. **Principle of fairness**
 - 1.2.1. All RSU staff members shall be equal. RSU shall not allow discrimination on the basis of nationality, race, sex, age, sexual orientation, political, philosophical or religious beliefs, social origin, property, marital status or health, or any other reasons.
 - 1.2.2. RSU staff shall be aware of and understand the differences between people of different cultures. RSU shall promote diversity by creating an inclusive and safe work and learning environment.
 - 1.2.3. RSU staff shall not make use of the hierarchical relationships that exist between students, academic and general staff for selfish purposes.
 - 1.2.4. RSU shall ensure impartiality in its processes and procedures by giving RSU staff members the opportunity to express an opinion and provide information to support their opinion. If there are reasonable doubts about the impartiality of an RSU staff member, the respective member may not participate in the decision-making process.
 - 1.2.5. In making decisions, RSU shall aim to achieve a fair result, respecting the rights and interests of the persons involved. When interests conflict, RSU staff shall strive to achieve as fair balance as possible between the different interests. Balance shall be found by providing opportunities for participation in the consideration of issues, seeking an impartial solution.
- 1.3. **Principle of integrity**
 - 1.3.1. Adherence to the principle requires each person to act honestly, openly and conduct themselves in accordance with their status in the study and research process or their organisation, and to fulfil their duties and obligations in accordance with their professional competence.
 - 1.3.2. Everyone shall base their ethical conduct on the commitment to keep their promises, to strive for honesty and tact in mutual relations.
 - 1.3.3. Maintenance of the integrity shall promote academic freedom, trust and equality.
 - 1.3.4. To maintain the diversity of RSU education and research, the importance of individual study courses or study direction shall not be underestimated.
 - 1.3.5. Self-critical assessment of own competence and the rapid development of modern science require continuous expansion of knowledge and skills, regardless of the professional status of the person concerned.
 - 1.3.6. Research work must comply with the requirements of the Law on Scientific Activity and must be in line with the ethical principles of research work - the individual contribution, novelty and topicality should be impartially assessed and the consequences of research activity must be anticipated.
 - 1.3.7. Engagement in research shall be determined by the potential benefit to the relevant field of science or to society, not by the researcher's self-interest or dependence on the source of funding.

- 1.3.8. Each RSU staff member shall refrain from combining positions and having supplementary employment that may cause suspicion of an apparent or real conflict of interest.
- 1.3.9. Each RSU staff member shall be obliged to avoid entering into a conflict of interest situation and to inform in a timely manner about personal interests or other circumstances that may arouse personal interest and interfere with the fair performance of duties.
- 1.3.10. Each RSU staff member shall, in accordance with the established procedure, inform (raise the alarm) about the possible irregularities observed in the performance of official duties. Any whistle-blower shall be treated with respect.
- 1.3.11. Each RSU staff member shall respect and adhere to the principles of academic and research integrity.

1.4. Principle of collegiality

- 1.4.1. Adherence to the principle shall be based on mutual respect and tolerance, fairness and benevolent attitude.
- 1.4.2. Collegial relations between the academic staff, general staff and students strengthen the sense of belonging and pride of RSU staff members in RSU as their place of study or work.
- 1.4.3. Diversity of opinions and conceptual approaches, open exchange of ideas and fair competition that do not allow the use of disagreement in the interests of own status or career, shall be considered as a standard in mutual relations in the academic environment.
- 1.4.4. The culture of debate inherent in an academic environment requires both the correct justification of own opinions and the acceptance of valid criticism.
- 1.4.5. The implementation of the principle of collegiality creates the need to rely on constructive cooperation in conflict situations, the type of speech and behaviour that do not threaten the dignity of others.
- 1.4.6. Students, academic and general staff shall support such offers of cooperation and partnership that contribute to the development of the University and do not contradict the principles of the Code of Ethics, make a positive contribution to the development of the country, education, science and culture.

1.5. Principle of responsible conduct

- 1.5.1. Everyone shall be responsible for their actions and behaviour in relation to others, as well as in representing the University, and shall, as far as possible, avoid situations which do not comply with generally accepted moral norms and could damage the reputation of the University or the professional prestige of the person concerned.
- 1.5.2. Each RSU staff member shall, with their moral conduct, shall demonstrate their belonging to the University and their loyalty to its traditions and values.
- 1.5.3. Each RSU staff member shall be responsible for treating the material and mental values of the University with care and shall contribute to their preservation and growth to the best of their ability.
- 1.5.4. The confidential nature of professional information and mutual relations requires a responsible attitude towards information. The information provider shall be responsible for its accuracy in accordance with their level of competence.

- 1.5.5. Everyone shall be responsible for their personal contribution to the development and quality of education and research work.
- 1.5.6. The involvement of RSU staff in promoting the corporate image of RSU and international recognition shall be supported and encouraged.

2. Rights and obligations

- 2.1. Each RSU staff member shall fulfil their duties to the University and the society honestly and fairly in accordance with this Code of Ethics and the procedures existing in the University, internal and external laws and regulations, respecting their own rights and the rights of others.
- 2.2. Academic freedom shall establish the right of everyone to communicate openly and properly in the study and work process, to express their opinion in a respectful manner and to respect the right of others to express themselves freely. Everyone shall have a duty to listen to, to delve into the content of what is said and written.
- 2.3. Everyone shall have the right to information according to the aims of their studies or research. The principle of equality shall prevail in obtaining and using the information in accordance with laws and regulations.
- 2.4. Academic staff shall have a duty to encourage students' independence in the process of acquiring knowledge, at the same time arousing students' interest in research work, new areas of knowledge, methods and technologies.
- 2.5. Each RSU staff member shall have the right to put forward their proposals, claims and complaints on all matters of RSU activity, to do so in a constructive way in order to facilitate the search for collegial solutions.
- 2.6. RSU staff members shall have the right to a creative approach and initiative, public assessment and recognition. RSU decision-making bodies and heads of departments shall be obliged to give recognition for particularly successful performance of duties, as well as to promote the professional development and initiative of RSU staff.
- 2.7. In case of mistakes and disagreement, everyone shall have the right to have them dealt with in a professional environment. Everyone shall have the right to be heard out and to receive professional advice and criticism in a collegial atmosphere.
- 2.8. In case of mistakes and disagreement, it shall be the responsibility of the head of the relevant department to discuss individually what has happened and to assess the situation on professional and collegial basis. If necessary, it may be made known to others to avoid recurrence of similar cases.
- 2.9. Everyone shall be entitled to an individual or public apology in the event of unethical behaviour towards them. A person who has acted unethically shall be obliged to apologise and rectify the situation to the best of their ability, according to the context of the situation.
- 2.10. Action in a situation of conflict of interest, attitude towards gifts and hospitality shall be the following:
 - 2.10.1. A RSU staff member, who has to take a decision or undertake other activities related to the performance of their official duties that affect or may affect the persons concerned and their relatives within the meaning of the rules and regulations regarding the prevention of conflict of interest (father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, child, grandchild, adopted child, adoptive parent, brother, sister, half-

- sister, half-brother, spouse), and the personal or financial interests of their civil partners, members of the spouse's/partner's family, close friends or business partners, shall ask the superior person to withdraw them from their participation in the decision-taking or from specific activities in the performance of their official duties;
- 2.10.2. A RSU staff member shall refuse to accept benefits which are not considered to be gifts within the meaning of the laws and regulations regarding the prevention of conflict of interest (flowers, souvenirs, gifts, promotional items), if their acceptance may give the impression that in such a way the performance of official duties is affected or doubts may arise regarding the impartiality and neutrality of the person;
 - 2.10.3. upon receipt of hospitality offers, an invitation to participate in a free informative presentation or similar event during or outside the working hours, the person shall assess whether their participation is necessary for the performance of their official duties and whether the offer is not related to an interest in obtaining favourable attitude and advantages in decision-taking for the offeror;
 - 2.10.4. A RSU staff member shall ask the superior person to withdraw them from participation in decision-taking, if the person concerned, their relative within the meaning of the laws and regulations regarding the prevention of conflict of interest (father, mother, grandmother, grandfather, child, grandchild, adopted child, adoptive parent, brother, sister, half-sister, half-brother, spouse), civil partner or a member of the spouse's/partner's family has received a valuable gift from the person whose interests are affected by the decision to be taken in the last two years.
- 2.11. In contact with individuals who, guided by their own or other interests, communicate knowingly and systematically with a RSU staff member in order to influence any decision, that is, lobbying, the RSU staff member shall be obliged to:
- 2.11.1. inform the superior person about the intended and actual negotiations and consultations with the lobbyist, if any, in relation to the matter on which the RSU staff member is responsible for taking a decision;
 - 2.11.2. ensure that all stakeholders, whether or not they are lobbyists, are given equal opportunities to meet decision-makers and receive the necessary information;
 - 2.11.3. not to take advantage of their position and personal contacts in order to provide any of the lobbyists with access to the superior managers who are responsible for taking decisions that lobbyists might be interested in;
 - 2.11.4. take into consideration the public and national interests, not only those defended by the lobbyist, when taking a decision.

3. Activities of the Ethics Committee

- 3.1. Everyone can get acquainted with the Code of Ethics on RSU website. The Code shall be reviewed and updated by RSU Ethics Committee, submitting proposals regarding the changes to RSU Senate for approval. Any RSU representative shall have the right to submit proposals for improvement of the Code to the Ethics Committee.
- 3.2. In cases of non-compliance with the Code of Ethics, each RSU staff member shall have the right to turn to RSU Ethics Committee (hereinafter - the Committee), 4 members of which shall be representatives of academic or general staff approved by RSU Senate for

a period of 5 years. One member of the Committee shall be a representative of RSU students delegated by RSU Student Union.

- 3.3. The Committee shall consider the received applications at the meetings, which are convened and chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee, who is elected by the Committee from among the members of the Committee.
- 3.4. The Committee shall have a quorum if more than half of the members of the Committee participate in its meetings. The Committee, as far as possible, shall take its decisions according to the principle of consensus, but in case of differences of opinions among the members of the Committee - by a majority of votes of the Committee members.
- 3.5. Before taking a decision, the Committee shall request explanations (orally, in writing or by means of electronic communications) from the persons concerned by the matter under consideration. The Committee shall be entitled to request and receive information necessary for consideration of matters, also from other RSU staff members and departments, as well as to invite experts and RSU staff representatives, who may provide useful information to the Committee, to the meetings of the Committee.
- 3.6. A member of the Committee shall not participate in the consideration of a matter and in decision-taking, if it concerns the member of the Committee or the department they work for, or if the member of the Committee is otherwise interested in taking the decision.
- 3.7. The Committee's decision shall be of an advisory nature and final within the scope of its competence and shall be forwarded to the applicant and to the interested parties to whom the Committee's decision applies.
- 3.8. The Ethics Committee shall report to the Senate at least once a year on its activities and the decisions it has taken.
- 3.9. Other matters related to the procedure for the consideration of applications and not specified in the Code of Ethics shall be decided by the Committee.
- 3.10. The decision regarding the action in case of violation of the norms specified in the Code of Ethics shall be taken by RSU Rector or by his authorised person.
- 3.11. If it is established that the conduct of a RSU staff member is in conflict with the norms specified in the Code of Ethics, the evaluation of the person's disciplinary liability may be initiated in accordance with laws and regulations.

4. Improvement of staff competence

- 4.1. Every RSU staff member shall have the duty to independently improve their knowledge of ethics. RSU shall organise educational events for staff about ethics and its role in the University.
- 4.2. When starting their studies at RSU, students shall be provided with opportunities to obtain information on the ethical norms established by RSU, possibilities to report ethical violations and the procedure for dealing with such violations. The Director of the Study Programme shall determine the ways in which students are informed (in the study course "Introduction to Studies", in ethics-related study courses, at individual events, by video lectures, etc.).

President of the Senate

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AGREED
at Rīga Stradiņš University
meeting of the Council of Deans
on 2 April 2024,
Minutes No 4-SD.1-2/9/2024

AGREED:
at Rīga Stradiņš University
meeting of the Ethics
Committee on 3 April 2024,
Minutes No 2-ĒK-1/5/2024

AGREED
At Rīga Stradiņš University
Rectorate meeting
on 8 April 2024,
Minutes No 1-PB-1/13/2024

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