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

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at the Senate meetings of Rīga Stradiņš  
University:  
of 22 November 2011,  
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Minutes No 2-S-1/5/2024)

## **Rīga Stradiņš University Code of Ethics**

### *Preamble*

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

The individual, team, results, membership of RSU – these are the values that are important for RSU students, academic and general (administrative) staff.

RSU Code of Ethics includes ethical norms,, 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 fundamental principles of RSU ethics – principle of human dignity, justice, integrity, collegiality, responsible behaviour, as well as other provisions of the Code, apply to any representative of RSU staff - academic staff, general staff and students.

The RSU shall establish procedures and issue internal laws and regulations for the implementation of the principles laid down in the Code

### **1. Basic principles of ethics**

#### **1.1. Principle of human dignity**

1.1.1. RSU's activities are based on human dignity. The RSU respects human dignity as an inviolable asset, both in relations between the RSU and it's staff and among RSU staff representatives.

1.1.2. Human dignity is a universal human value. The dignity of one RSU staff representative shall not be less valuable than that of another representative. Respect for one person's dignity does not deprive or diminish another person's right to dignity.

1.1.3. Every RSU representative recognises, appreciates and respects the identity and autonomy of each individual.

1.1.4. Everyone has the right to dignity and mutual respect. Attention, tolerance and respect for the other person are both rights and obligations at the same time.

1.1.5. RSU staff do not allow emotional or physical abuse, including but not limited to sexual harassment, mobbing, bossing, bullying, and instructions to discriminate and victimize.

1.1.6. The principle of human dignity is demonstrated, inter alia, by the RSU's process of student-centered learning and teaching. It strengthens an inclusive and supportive environment that respects the diversity of students' needs and builds a mutually respectful student-teaching staff relationship.

## **1.2. Principle of justice**

1.2.1. All RSU staff representatives are equal. The RSU does not tolerate discrimination on the grounds of nationality, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, political, philosophical or religious beliefs, social origin, property, family or health status or any other grounds.

1.2.2. RSU staff are aware and understand the differences between representatives of different cultures. RSU promotes diversity by creating an inclusive and safe work and study environment.

1.2.3. RSU staff do not use the hierarchical relationships that exist between students, academic and general staff for selfish purposes.

1.2.4. The RSU shall ensure impartiality in processes and procedures by giving representatives of RSU staff the opportunity to express their views and provide information substantiating their views. If there are reasonable doubts regarding the impartiality of the RSU staff representative, the representative may not participate in the decision-making.

1.2.5. When making decisions, the RSU aims to arrive at a fair outcome, respecting the rights and interests of those involved. As interests clash, RSU staff strive to strike as fair a balance as possible between different interests. A balance is struck by providing opportunities for participation in the examination of issues, seeking an objective solution.

## **1.3. Principle of integrity**

1.3.1. Adherence to the principle requires the fair conduct, openness and behaviour of any person in accordance with their status in the study and research process or their organisation, the fulfilment of duties and obligations under their professional competence.

1.3.2. Everyone shall base their ethical behaviour on the commitment to keep their promises, to aim for honesty and tact in mutual relations.

1.3.3. Maintenance of the integrity promotes academic freedom, trust and equality.

1.3.4. To maintain the diversity of RSU education and research, the importance of individual study courses or branches of studies is not undermined.

1.3.5. Critical self-assessment of own competence and the rapid development of modern science require a 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 effect of research activity must be predicted.

1.3.7. The main condition for undertaking research is the potential benefit to the relevant science sector or the benefit to the public, not the self-interest of the researcher or the dependence on the source of funding.

1.3.8. Any RSU staff representative shall refrain from holding of more than one position and having additional work that may cause suspicion of an apparent or real conflict of interest.

1.3.9. Any representative of RSU staff shall be obliged to avoid being exposed to a conflict of interest and to inform in a timely manner about personal interests or other circumstances which may act as a personal incentive and interfere with the proper performance of duties.

1.3.10. Any representative of RSU staff shall, in accordance with the established procedure, inform (raise the alarm) of the alleged irregularities observed in the performance of official duties. Any whistle-blower shall be treated with respect.

1.3.11. Any representative of RSU staff shall respect and adhere to the principles of academic and research integrity.

#### **1.4. Principle or collegiality**

1.4.1. Adherence to the principle shall be based on mutual respect and tolerance, justice and favourable treatment.

1.4.2. Collegial relations between the academic staff, general staff and students strengthen the sense of belonging and pride of the representatives of RSU staff in RSU as their study or workplace.

1.4.3. Diversity of opinions and conceptual positions, open exchange of ideas, fair competition which does 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. Discussion standards inherent in the academic environment requires both the correct justification of own opinions and the recognition of reasonable 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 injure the self-esteem of others.

1.4.6. Students, academic and general staff shall support such offers of cooperation and partnership that promote the development of the university and do not contradict the principles of RSU Code of Ethics, make a positive contribution to the development of the country, education, science and culture.

## **1.5. Principle of responsible behaviour**

1.5.1. Everyone shall be responsible for their actions and behaviour in relation to others, as well as for representing the university, and shall, as far as possible, avoid situations which do not comply with generally accepted norms of morality and could harm the reputation of the university or the professional prestige of the person concerned.

1.5.2. Each representative of RSU staff shall, with their moral standing, demonstrate their affiliation to the university and their loyalty to its traditions and values.

1.5.3. Each representative of RSU staff shall be responsible for treating the material and mental values of the university with care and shall contribute to their preservation and increase as much as possible.

1.5.4. The confidential nature of professional information and interpersonal relationships requires that the information is treated responsibly. The information provider shall be responsible for its veracity within the scope of their competence.

1.5.5. Everyone is 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 is to be supported and encouraged.

## **2. Rights and obligations**

2.1. Each representative of RSU staff shall fulfil their duties towards 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 establishes the right of everyone to communicate openly and properly in the study and work process, to express their opinion respectfully and to respect

the right of others to express themselves freely. Everyone has a duty to listen to, to delve into the content of what was said and written.

2.3. Everyone has the right to information according to the purposes of their studies or research. The principle of equality shall prevail in the field of obtaining and using the information in accordance with laws and regulations.

2.4. The duty of the academic staff is to promote the independence of students 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 representative of RSU staff has the right to make 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. Representatives of RSU staff shall have the right to a creative approach and initiative, public assessment and recognition. RSU decision-making bodies and heads of departments shall have an obligation to give recognition for particularly successful performance of the duties, as well as to promote the professional development and initiative of RSU staff.

2.7. Everyone shall have the right to consideration of errors and disagreements, if any, 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 cases of failure and disagreement, it is 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 behaved unethically shall be obliged to apologise and, as far as possible, change the situation for the better in accordance with the context of the situation.

2.10. Action in case of conflict of interest, attitude towards gifts and hospitality offers:

2.10.1. A representative of RSU staff, 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 (a father, a mother, a grandmother, a grandfather, a child, a grandchild, an adopted child, an adoptive parent, a brother, a sister, a half-sister, a half-brother, a 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 manager 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 representative of RSU staff 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 for the offeror in decision-taking;

2.10.4. A representative of RSU staff shall ask the superior manager 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 (a father, a mother, a grandmother, a grandfather, a child, a grandchild, an adopted child, an adoptive parent, a brother, a sister, a half-sister, a half-brother, a spouse), a civil partner or a member of the spouse's/partner's family has received a valuable gift in the last two years from a person whose interests are affected by the decision to be taken.

2.11. In contact with individuals who, guided by their own or other interests, communicate deliberately and systematically with a representative of RSU staff in order to influence any decision-taking, that is, lobbying, the representative of RSU staff shall be obliged to:

2.11.1. inform the superior manager about the intended and actual negotiations and consultations with the lobbyist, if any, in relation to an issue on which the representative of RSU staff is responsible for taking a decision;

2.11.2. ensure that all stakeholders, whether or not they are lobbyists, have 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. Activity of the Ethics Commission**

- 3.1. Everyone can get acquainted with RSU Code of Ethics on RSU website. The Code shall be reviewed and updated by RSU Ethics Commission, submitting proposals regarding the changes to RSU Senate for approval. Every RSU representative has the right to submit proposals to the Ethics Commission for the improvement of the Code.
- 3.2. In cases of non-compliance with the Code, any representative of RSU staff shall have the right to turn to RSU Ethics Commission (hereinafter - the Commission). 4 members of the Commission shall be representatives of academic or general staff approved by RSU Senate for a period of 5 years. 1 representative of the Commission shall be a representative of RSU students delegated by RSU Student Union.
- 3.3. The Commission shall consider the received submissions at the meetings, which are convened and chaired by the Chairperson of the Commission, who is elected by the Commission from among the members of the Commission.
- 3.4. The Commission shall have a quorum if more than half of the members of the Commission participate in its meetings. The Commission, 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 Commission - by a majority of votes of the Commission members.
- 3.5. Before taking a decision, the Commission shall request explanations (verbally, in writing or by means of electronic communications) from the persons concerned by the matter under consideration. The Commission shall be entitled to request and receive the information necessary for the examination of matters, also from other representatives of RSU staff and RSU departments, as well as to invite experts and representatives of RSU staff, who may provide useful information to the Commission, to the meetings of the Commission.
- 3.6. A member of the Commission shall not participate in the consideration of the matter and in decision-taking, if it concerns the member of the Commission or the department they work for, or if the member of the Commission is otherwise interested in taking the decision.
- 3.7. The Commission's decision shall be of the nature of the recommendation and final within the scope of its competence and shall be forwarded to the applicant and to the interested parties to whom the Commission's decision applies.
- 3.8. The Ethics Commission shall report to the Senate at least once a year on its activities and decisions taken.
- 3.9. Other matters related to the consideration procedure of applications and are not specified in this Code shall be decided by the Commission.
- 3.10. The decision regarding the action in case of violation of the norms specified in RSU 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 representative of RSU staff is in conflict with the norms specified in RSU Code of Ethics, the evaluation of the disciplinary liability of the person may be initiated in accordance with laws and regulations.

#### **4. Improvement of staff competence**

4.1. Every RSU staff representative has a duty to independently improve his knowledge of ethics. RSU holds educational events for staff about ethics and its role at the university.

4.2. Upon commencing studies at RSU, students are provided with opportunities to obtain information regarding the ethical norms laid down by RSU, the possibility to report on ethical violations and the procedures for examining such violations. Director of study programme determines the way students are informed (study courses “Introduction to Studies”, ethics related study courses, individual events, video lectures, etc.).

Chairperson of the Senate

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

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

AGREED  
at the Rectorate meeting  
of Rīga Stradiņš  
University, 8 April 2024,  
Minutes No. 1-PB-  
1/13/2024