

Pursuant to Article 14 of the Law on Academic Integrity (Official Gazette of Montenegro, 17/19), the Ethics Committee adopted the

ETHICAL CHARTER

The purpose of the Ethical Charter

Article 1

The purpose of this Charter is to preserve, improve, protect, and promote academic integrity and prevent all forms of violations of academic integrity, in accordance with the Law on Academic Integrity (Official Gazette of Montenegro 17/19).

The Ethical Charter includes a set of rules, principles, and guidelines that promote human, intellectual and academic freedoms, as well as the responsible exercise of rights in scientific, teaching, artistic, and professional work. The Charter covers the ethical framework containing the key values that must guide the activities of higher education institutions, as well as the principles and guidelines for respecting and achieving academic integrity.

This Charter shall be binding on all members of the academic community made up of: academic staff designated by a separate law, and students.

Ethical framework

Article 2

The main activities of higher education institutions (hereinafter referred to as the "institutions"), education and research, shall be carried out with respect for ethical values. The following ethical principles provide a framework within which institutions shall conduct these activities:

1) The quest for truth in pursuit of knowledge, in which institutions play a key role. This requires both critical thinking and high standards of integrity.

2) Freedom of teaching and research shall be an integral part of academic freedom. This is a necessary precondition for the quest for truth in education and science. Independence in relations with professional contacts and partners is also needed. It shall be the obligation of the institution and of every member of the academic community to respect this freedom.

3) Commitment and responsibility towards the academic community, society, and the environment, deriving from the public mandate entrusted to the institutions. Academic freedom goes hand in hand with accountability to the community in which the institutions are interested parties. A member of the academic community cannot use the institution's resources for personal gain: priority is always given to the key goals, mission, and public purpose of the institution's establishment and existence.

4) Respect for the individual requires institutions to be responsible for protecting anyone who is invited to contribute in any way to their educational and research missions, in any capacity. This entails fair treatment of all members of the academic community, including people who are vulnerable on any way.

Principles and guidelines for professional conduct

Article 3

The ethical framework set out in the previous Article derives from the nature and purpose of activities performed by institutions, as well as from the duties and rights that apply to all members of the academic community. Certain principles and guidelines for the behaviour of members of that community derive from it and are based on it (Art. 4 to 11 of this Charter).

The principle of objectivity

Article 4

The quest for truth in accordance with the principle of objectivity is not possible without critical thinking. Institutions shall encourage discussion and debate about the knowledge they create and transfer.

Knowledge creation and transfer requires competence, critical observation of facts, experimentation, comparison, and opposition of views and relevant sources, as well as openness to innovation and creativity. This largely depends on methods and procedures that guarantee objectivity, impartiality, and authenticity. Expressing and defending different opinions represents a significant contribution to the quest for truth, without excluding the expression of critical views and simultaneously respecting the opinions of the individual.

Members of the academic community shall not allow prejudice and bias of any kind to affect their objectivity in academic, research, administrative, business, and management activities.

The principle of academic honesty

Article 5

Academic honesty is defined as independence and personal integrity in scientific, educational and professional work, as well as on respect for other people's work and achievement.

Engaging in educational work and scientific research requires integrity, which is reflected in manner in which member of the academic community, pursues knowledge, applies and interprets results, and structures their research. This requirement prohibits any form of data falsification and plagiarism. Work (scientific, professional or artistic) that the competent authority determines to be plagiarism, shall be considered nullified, as well as grades, awards, qualifications and titles that any person has acquired on the basis of such work. Other forms of violation of academic integrity, as determined by law and the general act of the institution, shall also be contrary to the principle of honesty. It shall be the task of members of the academic community to strengthen moral condemnation and accountability (in addition to the existing legal accountability) when it comes to plagiarism and other forms of violation of academic integrity.

The contribution of anyone who has participated in the conception, planning, or execution of a research project, or contributed to the content of a teaching programme, shall be recognized in the spirit of fairness. Likewise, students must clearly indicate the contribution of others to their work. During each academic programme, and especially at the beginning of the first year of all levels of study that it organizes, the institution shall introduce students to the rules of academic integrity, the rules for using the works of other authors, and the rules for citing and mentioning those works.

The principle of freedom in teaching and research

Article 6

Institutions shall guarantee academic freedom of teaching and research within the field of teaching, or sector of activity, defined by the institution. This freedom is essential for the development, exchange, and transfer of knowledge, as well as for innovation and creativity.

Academic freedom also gives rise to certain obligations. It is exercised in accordance with the law, regulations on studying, duties involved, and competencies of each field. In the areas of practical training, specific limitations related to the professional field of expertise shall also be taken into account. The exercise of academic freedom shall be subject to the values of this Charter and the standards resulting therefrom.

Academic freedom shall be closely linked to individual independence and integrity. Acceptance of gifts, favours or other benefits shall be incompatible with that independence and integrity. If permitted by law and applicable regulations, the obligation of transparency must be respected.

Members of the academic community shall inform the institution about the facts or situations that could demonstrate a connection of interests or create a conflict of interest, whether material or immaterial in nature.

Every individual who is a member of the academic community shall be subject to a duty of loyalty to their respective institution in his or her work.

The principle of responsibility

Article 7

Institutions shall be responsible for their contribution to the cultural, social, economic, technological, and environmental development of society. They shall guarantee the transfer of knowledge in accordance with the reality and professional needs of the world of tomorrow and use appropriate teaching methods. Institutions shall comply with standards and procedures applicable to their activity in the field of higher education, science, and research.

Members of the academic community shall promote public exchange of knowledge with the widest audience. Insofar as this does not directly prejudice their research activities, they shall seek to ensure that the content is as accessible as possible to the academic and artistic community.

Institutions shall assess the consequences of their actions and be able to report on them. The principle of responsibility also includes the precautionary principle, which requires that they review the purpose of their activity and potential consequences of that activity for society, and especially for the environment.

Special attention shall be paid to individuals who are subjects of research in social, biological, and medical sciences in order to preserve their independence and personal integrity and ensure that they are protected from disclosure of data that could harm them. Research based on experiments involving living beings shall be conducted strictly in accordance with the ethical principles and legislation that apply when such research is undertaken.

Members of the academic community shall conscientiously and carefully use the resources available to them, whether public or not, and justify their rational and transparent use. In doing so, they shall refrain from fraudulent or dishonest acts.

The principle of openness

Article 8

Results of research conducted by members of the academic community should be available to the public and to scientific and academic networks. Members of the academic community shall promote public exchange of knowledge with the widest audience. Unless this directly prejudices their scientific research activities, they should strive to ensure that the content is as accessible as possible to both the academic and artistic community.

The collection, processing, use, and transmission of data shall be subject to transparent procedures that ensure respect for the individual, the interest of institutions and the community in general.

Respect for the individual

Article 9

Institutions shall promote the principle of equal opportunities. Any discrimination based on, inter alia, sex, ethnic or social origin, genetic characteristics, religious beliefs, political opinion, membership of a particular nation or national minority, disability, age, sexual orientation, or gender identity shall be prohibited, both in teaching and research as well as in relations within the academic community. Special attention and protection shall be paid to individuals in a position of vulnerability.

Any sexist behaviour or psychological or sexual harassment shall be prohibited.

Along with all members of the academic community, institutions shall be committed to fostering a work environment in which people are treated equally and with respect, regardless of their post, duty, or hierarchical position. Institutions shall promote a stimulating work environment and a climate of trust, along with the professional development and personal achievement of individuals. The expectations of the members of the academic community must be clearly communicated and every effort must be made to resolve possible conflicts quickly. It shall be the responsibility shared by all to ensure that true collegiality is established and maintained, allowing for the expression of diverse points of view and criticism in mutual respect and recognition of the right of others to express their opinions.

The same spirit of fairness and respect shall apply to the procedures of appointing, evaluating, and recruiting members of the academic community. These procedures shall be based on criteria pertaining to the qualifications and competences of each individual. Where there are equivalent qualifications, preference shall be given to the individual belonging to the under-represented sex. This spirit of fairness shall also apply to disciplinary actions and decisions.

Respect for the individual guarantees all members of the academic community the right to fair remuneration for their work, a description of their responsibilities, and periodic assessment interviews based on principles of transparency and in accordance with appropriate procedures, including the protection of personal data.

Respect for the student

Article 10

The institution shall provide, in principle, all students with the same opportunities for attaining and improving knowledge. To achieve this purpose, specialized knowledge of the highest quality shall be transferred to students. This knowledge shall be based on the principles and the ethical framework set by this Charter, as well as on the respect for each student's personality, which includes valuing creativity and originality achieved during studies, and respect for the academic freedom and independence of students.

The organization and administration of exams shall guarantee that students are treated fairly and results shall be based on objective and impartial criteria.

Compliance with legal norms and ethical values
Article 11

Members of the academic community shall comply with the laws and regulations that apply to them. They shall also be bound by the values, principles and rules prescribed by this Charter. Institutions shall show their respect for these values, principles, and rules and in their contractual relations with third parties.

Entry into force and alignment of acts of institutions
Article 12

Institutions shall be obliged to align their acts to this Charter within six months from the day of its entry into force.

This Charter shall enter into force on 1 March 2020.