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DRIVE DEVELOPING RESEARCH AND INNOVATION CAPACITIES IN ALBANIA AND KOSOVO

Code of Research Conduct and Research Ethics European University of Tirana (EUT)

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Introduction

European University of Tirana (EUT) with more than 15 years of experience in higher education and with certified parameters, offers all the capacities and guarantees to be an island of excellence and to give to students, professors, researchers, parents, and other social actors a collaborative space for their projects, ideas, and dreams.

EUT aims to transform itself into a hub of expertise in the field of social sciences, humanities, legal studies, economics, and information technology. EUT's further aim is to become a centre of excellence for publishing high-quality research with a potentially important contribution in the national and regional policy debate.

EUT aims to consolidate its identity as the main center of knowledge production in Albania and to further its transformation from an institution of higher education focused almost exclusively on teaching to an elite research entity whose academic output is respected and contributes to the improvement of teaching and student experience.

In 2015, EUT signed "The European Charter for Researchers" and "The Code of Conduct", aiming to promote scientific research, focusing on its quality.

European University of Tirana, welcomes and fully supports the initiative of the European Commission and the recommendations given in The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers. The European Charter for Researchers and The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers are a benchmark and orientation guide which will second our endeavors to maintain and foster high-quality research and education and to provide a fair and inspiring research environment for our researchers. European University of Tirana exchange practices and experiences among other members of the initiative, especially among those who are involved in the recruitment of researchers.

Strategic objectives

Through scientific research EUT aims to:

- Achieve and consolidate recognition, regarding its teaching practices and research output, as one of the best universities in Albania and the Western Balkan region;
- Aid in the advancement of knowledge and in the perfection of professional practice with the goal of impacting social and economic development through knowledge transfer beyond the academic community towards public and private institutions as well as interest groups;
- Create a stimulating research environment for both students and academics alike through:

- The standardization and internationalization of academic research.
- Continuous trainings and periodic certifications for the academic staff regarding their ability to publish original scientific knowledge.
- Project and expand its reputation as a national center of academic excellence.

European University of Tirana undertakes the necessary steps to ensure a supportive research environment and working culture, where individuals and research groups are valued, encouraged and supported, and provided with the necessary material and intangible support to enable them to fulfil their objectives and tasks.



A.II. The Code of Ethics

A.II.1. EUT supports the highest standards of integrity, moral honesty and responsibility, which are the basis of this institution. This is a responsibility of the entire EUT university community.

A.II.2. EUT is committed to a policy of equal opportunities in employment, career development and in access to education. It accepts its responsibility to create a healthy environment of equal opportunities, without discrimination and based on each's merits. No member of the university community can hinder or prevent the observance of this principle. Harassment, discrimination, intimidation or obstruction with the intent to deny these opportunities, is not tolerated and is punishable.

A.II.3. Values and principles

A.II.3.1. EUT educates and transmits values of honesty, tolerance, justice, accountability, and responsibility in academic, social and moral matters.

A.II.3.2. These values are based on principles such as:

- a. Responsibility for achieving quality results in work, academic and research activities;
- b. Dedication and passion, honesty and effectiveness, integrity and reliability;
- c. Joint work based on sincerity and mutual trust;
- d. Enablement of development opportunities to others and respect for diversity;
- e. Taking on responsibilities and facing challenges;
- f. Creating an attractive and appropriate environment for the entire university community.

A.II.4. Responsibilities to members of the university community:

A.II.4.1. To students: To provide equal educational opportunities, access and facilities; a safe educational environment, free from discrimination, harassment and threats and to create an intellectual environment with values of justice and knowledge.

A.II.4.2. To academic staff: To provide equal opportunities to all academic staff engaged in teaching and research; to create the conditions for guaranteeing academic freedom, which serves as a fundamental condition for knowledge, study, teaching and research.

A.II.4.3. To administrative staff: To provide all staff with a working environment that respects individual dignity, without discrimination and inequality, as well as the necessary conditions for work performance.

A.II.4.4. To the state: To provide transparency, accountability and respect for the legal framework.

A.II.4.5. To the community: To respect the community and avoid discontent, misunderstandings, or conflicts with it. To Exercise social responsibility.

A.II.5. Purpose of the Code of Ethics: To establish rules of conduct and ethics for the university community according to ethical standards and to guide the community in meeting these standards; to promote professionalism and quality; serve as a guide in relation to the day-to-day decision-making and study activity in accordance with the legislation in force.

A.II.6. Scope: The Code is mandatory on the entire university community. In addition to this Code, every member of the university community must know the legal and administrative framework related to their functional duties and their position at EUT.

A.II.7. EUT encourages the pursuit of good practices in the following areas:

A.II.7.1. Research standards: Each member of the academic staff is encouraged to carry out his research activity by guaranteeing:

- a. Maintaining scientific objectivity and rigor in drawing research conclusions and avoiding any one-sided research stance, without being influenced by the interests of the project sponsor/funder.
- a. Avoidance of any practice or method which may harm the interests of the groups / subjects involved in the object of a study (for example, negative references to a subject / person, etc.)
- b. Protecting the interests of vulnerable groups and groups in need whenever a research project has a connection to such social groups.
- c. Maintaining confidentiality, whenever the provision of safety of personalized information requires such protection. In particular, this is a very strict requirement when it comes to a research project that uses confidential data of an entity.
- d. As part of publication to the public, the applied methodologies, data (non-confidential, or translated into a non-individualized form) and processing techniques should in any case be made public (in an accessible form).
- e. Considering the errors that may be noted after the conclusion of a publication, especially when the error may have led to drawing erroneous conclusions.
- f. The application in each case, of a research method and analysis as professional and impartial as possible in relation to the drawing of research conclusions.

A.II.7.2. Avoiding Plagiarism: All members of the university community should provide accurate information about authors, ideas, and theories that are not theirs. Plagiarism or other forms of

intellectual property theft are punishable. EUT, discourages any experience and practice referred to below:

- a. Publication in reputable journals, or worse with dubious reputations, that claim to offer impact factor, not real.
- b. Publication of articles with fabricated, fictitious, or distorted data.
- c. Publication of articles copied by other authors, or where citations are incomplete and inaccurate.
- d. Publication of articles by adding without merit other authors, or close family members (spouse, children, etc.), who have no real contribution.
- e. Publication of the same article in more than one magazine.
- f. Publication of the same article, with minor modifications or no modification, but with a changed title.
- g. Participation in the same conference with several papers.
- h. Submission of papers at conferences, where after their acceptance is ensured, no presentation is made because of absence of the author on the day of the conference.
- i. Use of student work, course assignments or diploma theses or any of their individual or group projects. In case of their limited use, he / she should be cited as a reference source and contributor to the publication.
- j. Data/database fabrication or falsification.

A.II.7.3. Use of the EUT name: Members of the university community may participate in public debate, on behalf of the EUT and on related issues only with the authorization of the institution. In case they contribute to the public debate in their status as experts or professionals, they should identify themselves with the name of EUT and their status in it, and at the same time clarify that the opinions expressed are personal and do not represent the views of EUT.

A.II.7.4. Transparency towards EUT: Staff members have an obligation to inform the institution about their involvement in research projects or other activities outside the institution that affect the effectiveness of fulfilling contractual obligations to EUT.

A.II.7.5. Avoiding Conflict of Interest: Members of the university community should avoid situations that may create conflicts of interest and not allow their private interests to conflict with their duty. The identification and resolution of conflicts of interest is done by the Council of Ethics, based on the principles and practices of the legislation in force.

A.II.7.6. Preservation and use of EUT property: University resources are used by members of the university community only for appropriate and defined purposes. They must be used

economically, protected from damage, misuse or potential theft and not used for personal gain. The member is obliged to compensate as appropriate any damage caused.

A.II.7.7. Storage and use of data / information: Members of the university community store and use data / information in accordance with applicable legislation and EUT rules. They must maintain the confidentiality of information held in their possession, learned or made available, unless otherwise provided by law.

A.II.7.8. Dress, appearance and demeanour: The dress and appearance of members of the university community should be orderly, appropriate and serious for a dignified representation in an academic setting. The communication and attitude of members of the university community should express mutual respect and academic ethics. Every member of the university community is required to treat others and members of the public with courtesy, respect and professionalism.

A.II.7.9. Gifts and benefits from third parties: Members of the university community should not seek, receive and / or accept payments, bribes, gifts, services, or any other moral or material benefit to themselves, family, relatives, and individuals or organizations with which they are related, in exchange for favours of every kind. Exceptions to this rule are gifts of symbolic value, as a sign of honour in cases of ceremonies or academic activities.

A.II.7.10. Accounts and financial records: The University's financial records and accounts are maintained in accordance with applicable legal practices, providing accurate and verifiable records of all financial transactions. Members of the university community may not use EUT accounts and financial records in an unauthorized manner.

A.II.7.11. Correctness in work relations: EUT creates equal employment opportunities, respecting the principle of meritocracy. No member of staff, part of the governing authorities of the University and / or holding a managerial or decision-making position may use his or her position to exert undue pressure on another staff member.

A.II.7.12. Duties for cooperation: Every member of the university community has a duty to cooperate for the protection of the interests of EUT, as well as to guarantee the implementation of this Code.

A.II.7.13. Obligations of governing authorities: Governing authorities in any case must act honestly, impartially, with respect and integrity in accordance with the standards set by the university community.

A.II.8. Violations and disciplinary measures: Failure to comply with this code, EUT and disciplinary regulations, by EUT staff or students, constitute grounds for disciplinary action. Violations are considered all actions committed by a staff member or student, which violate social ethical and moral norms, when they do not contain elements of a criminal offense, intentionally or through negligence.

A.II.9. Disciplinary violations of staff members (academic, academic and administrative assistants) will be considered:

- a. Failure to implement correctly, responsibly and timely the obligations deriving from the Labour Code and the employment contract;
- b. Non-compliance with work schedule and discipline;
- c. Appearance at work with frivolous / undignified clothing;
- d. Consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, drugs in EUT facilities;
- e. Arriving under the influence of alcohol, drugs in EUT facilities;
- f. Disruption of order and tranquillity where the normal work of other EUT staff members and students is disrupted;
- g. Squabbles and quarrels in EUT premises (in cases when they are not considered a criminal offense by law);
- h. Use of inappropriate / offensive vocabulary against a student, or against any EUT staff member;
- i. Performing inappropriate / insulting actions or behaviours towards the student, or against any member of the EUT staff;
- j. Differential treatment of students, or any member of the EUT staff, based on race, religion, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, privacy, disability, religion, marital status, or any other matter protected from the legislation in force;
- k. Extraction of information related to the duties at EUT, without the authorization of the relevant management authority;
- l. Extraction of exam thesis data;
- m. Non-observance of rules during exam monitoring (for academic staff);
- n. Grading of an unsecured exam (for academic staff);
- o. Requesting, accepting or giving gifts / payments or other services, in person or through other persons, for the purpose of obtaining undeserved results related to the academic and administrative process, or other favours;
- p. Damage / violation or misappropriation of EUT property assets without right or authorization;
- q. Carrying out activities that damage or violate the image and authority of EUT, teaching staff, associates, employees and students of EUT;

- r. Non-compliance with the duties arising from the regulatory acts of EUT and legislation in force;
- s. Failure to comply with other duties pursuant to applicable laws and regulations or orders of
- t. the head of the relevant managing authority;
- u. Any other action that violates the social ethical and moral norms, which will be judged on a case by case basis, based on the nature of the violation.

A.II.9.1. Disciplinary measures given to a staff member:

- a. Verbal reprimand;
- b. Written reprimand;
- c. Suspension from work for 1 (one) month (during this time staff member is not treated financially);
- d. Compensation for material damage;
- e. Warning with notice for termination from work;
- f. Termination from work;

A.II.9.2. Issuance of disciplinary measures against the staff member: The disciplinary measure is given after the necessary verifications for the violation are made and the employee's allegations are heard in advance, keeping a written record of it.

The review of disciplinary violations can be carried out through the Council of Ethics, upon proposal and / or judgement on a case-by-case basis. The type of measure is determined according to the degree of violation, if it is recurring and the attitude held towards the action performed. As a rule, disciplinary measures are taken in the ascribed order, except when academic staff has committed serious violations of legal and sub-legal norms. Disciplinary measures are reflected in the personal file at the Office of Human Resources, as well as in separate files by the Council of Ethics for cases reviewed by the latter.

- a. The Head of the Department has the right to give the disciplinary measure “verbal reprimand” to the academic and academic assistants and to propose the disciplinary measure “Verbal reprimand” for the administrative support staff (coordinator);
- b. The Dean has the right to issue the disciplinary measure "Verbal reprimand", "Written reprimand", for the academic staff and academic assistants on the proposal of the Head of Department;
- c. The Rector has the right to impose all the above disciplinary measures, up to termination for the academic staff;

- d. The Director of the Office of Human Resources, as well as the General Secretary and the heads of other administrative units have the right to propose the issuance of all types of disciplinary measures to the subordinate administrative staff, argued with a relevant report to the Administrator;
- e. The Administrator of the company has the right to give a decision on all disciplinary measures, up to termination, based on the proposal made by the Director of the Office of Human Resources and / or the Heads of the respective administrative unit.

A.II.9.3. Exhaustion of disciplinary measures for EUT staff

- a. The disciplinary measure "verbal warning"; is settled within 1 (one) month if the employee against whom it was taken, does not commit another violation.
- b. Disciplinary measures "written reprimand", "warning for termination from work", are settled within 6 (six months), if the employee against whom it was taken, does not commit another violation.
- c. After the completion of measure, the employee is considered without disciplinary measure.

A.II.10. The following actions will be considered a disciplinary violation from the student:

- a. Consumption of alcoholic beverages / tobacco in EUT facilities;
- b. Use or being under influence of alcohol and drugs in EUT facilities;
- c. Use of mobile phones during the exam and the teaching process;
- d. Use of insulting / harassing words against the professor, any EUT employee or any student, thus violating their dignity;
- e. Committing inappropriate or insulting actions or behaviours towards the professor, any EUT employee or any student, thus violating their dignity;
- f. Differentiated treatment of professors, EUT employee or student based on racial, faith, colour, nationality, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, privacy, disability, religion, marital status difference.
- g. Disruption of order and tranquillity during the teaching process and any other case where the normal work of teachers, students and EUT staff is hindered;
- h. Squabble and quarrels in EUT premises (in cases when they are not considered a criminal offense by law);

- i. Appearance with non-serious/ dignified clothing in EUT facilities (inappropriate clothing, extravagant, etc.);
- j. Use in EUT environments of inappropriate vocabulary according to the norms of ethics, morality and etiquette;
- k. Cheating in exams or various forms of plagiarism;
- l. Fake presentation for the purpose of passing the exam or performing other obligations in the name and on behalf of another student;
- m. Carrying out activities that damage the image and authority of EUT, teaching staff, associates, employees and students of EUT;
- n. Offering and / or giving gifts / payments or other services in person or through other persons in order to obtain undeserved results related to the academic and administrative process, or other favours;
- o. Damage / violation or misappropriation of EUT property assets without the rights to or authorization;
- p. Any other case of non-compliance with the obligations arising from the regulatory acts of EUT;
- q. Any other action that violates the social ethical and moral norms, which will be judged on a case by case basis, based on the nature of the violation.

A.II.10.1. The disciplinary measure given to the student, who performs the actions according to point A.II.10 above:

- a. "verbal reprimand"; (as a rule it is given for the violations foreseen in points c, d, e and g);
- b. Written reprimand ; (as a rule it is given for the violations foreseen in points a, b, e, f, h, i, and j).
- c. expulsion from class, with absence, this action reflected in the student register;
- d. (as a rule it is given for the violations foreseen in points k and l);
- e. expulsion from the exam or re-examination (as a rule is given for the violation provided in point k)
- f. warning notice for expulsion from EUT; (as a rule it is given for the violations foreseen in points h, l, m.)
- g. expulsion for 1 (one) month from EUT; (this time to be included in the maximum deadline for completion of studies, as a rule is given for repeated violations provided in points d and e).

- h. expulsion for 6 (six) months from EUT; (this time should be included in the maximum deadline for completion of studies and is given as a rule in case of repeated violations and case by case basis);
- i. expulsion for 1 (one) year from EUT; (this time should be included in the maximum deadline for completion of studies and is given as a rule in case of repeated violations and case by case basis);
- j. permanent expulsion from EUT; (as a rule it is given for the violation provided in point o, as well as for other repeated violations).
- k. compensation for material damage; (as a rule it is given for the violations foreseen in points o and p).

A.II.10.2. Issuance of disciplinary measures against the student: The disciplinary measure is given after the necessary verifications are made for the violation, the student himself or other persons involved are heard, reflected in a record.

The type of measure is determined according to the degree of violation, if it is repeated and the attitude held towards the action performed. As a rule, disciplinary measures are taken in the above order unless otherwise assessed. Disciplinary measures are reflected in the student file, as well as in the file of the Council of Ethics, for the cases reviewed by it.

- a. The course lecturer and / or the supervisor has the right to impose disciplinary measures "expulsion from the lesson" and "expulsion from the exam";
- b. The Head of the Department has the right to issue the disciplinary measure "verbal reprimand";
- c. The Dean has the right to issue the disciplinary measure "written reprimand", based on the proposal made by the Head of Department;
- d. The administrator has the right to issue the measure "Compensation for material damage".
- e. The Rector has the right to impose all the above disciplinary measures on the student, which after being examined by the Council of Ethics, makes relevant proposals to the Rector on these issues. The final decision is taken by the Rector;
- f. The Administrator of the Company has the right to give the decision for permanent expulsion from EUT, based on the proposal of the Rector.

A.II.10.3. Exhaustion of the disciplinary measure for the student

- a. The disciplinary measure "verbal reprimand" is considered settled within 1 (one) month, if during this time the student has not committed another violation;

- b. The disciplinary measure “written reprimand” and “reprimand with notice for expulsion from EUT”, are considered settled within 6 (six) months, if during this time the student has not committed another violation.

