

Approved by Meeting Minutes N11 of the Representative Board on September 29, 2011.
Reviewed by Meeting Minutes N54 of the Academic Board on September 5, 2011.
Amendments have been made as per Meeting Minutes N3 of the Representative Board on September 19, 2023 (reviewed
by the Academic Board at the Meeting N7 on June 30, 2023).

Code of Ethics for Academic Staff and Other Individuals Involved in the Educational Process

Article 1. The Concept and Purpose of the Code of Ethics

1. The Code of Ethics for academic staff and others involved in the educational process (hereinafter referred to as the "Code of Ethics") sets the rules of professional conduct for academic staff, invited specialists, researchers, emeriti, and visiting professors at Ilia State University.
2. The main goal of the Code of Ethics is to set standards for professional conduct, ethical values, and obligations. These standards apply to interactions with students, their legal representatives, colleagues, and society. The Code aims to create a cohesive environment for academic and professional education and research.
3. The cohesive environment is based on three core principles:
 - a) Academic freedom; b) Freedom of conscience; c) Freedom of choice;
4. The university, by its nature, plays a crucial role in fostering a democratic and open society, which requires adherence to ethical standards.

Article 2. Legal Basis

The legal basis for the Code is the Constitution of Georgia, the Law of Georgia on Higher Education, and the statute of LEPL Ilia State University.

Article 3. Fundamental Principles of the Code of Ethics

All individuals involved in the educational process

- a) equally enjoy the rights granted to them by the legislation of Georgia and the University statute.

- b) share the values outlined in the Code of Ethics and adhere to the order established by this Code.
- c) acknowledge the University's authority to take disciplinary action in the event of any violations of the Code of Ethics and commit to abide by any decisions made by the University regarding such matters.
- d) must act independently, conscientiously, and impartially in the performance of their professional duties and comply with the legislation of Georgia and the standards of the Code of Ethics.

Article 4. General Rules of Ethics for All Individuals Involved in the Educational Process

1. The following behaviors are deemed inappropriate and unethical for all individuals participating in the educational process:

- a) disrupting the educational process (by using a cell phone during a lecture or seminar or engaging in other inappropriate actions);
- b) smoking outside designated areas;
- c) bringing, distributing, and/or consuming alcoholic beverages;
- d) engaging in gambling;
- e) causing pollution within University premises;
- f) disobeying the directives of the authorized personnel responsible for disciplinary matters.
- g) possessing, distributing, and/or using narcotics and/or psychotropic substances;
- h) carrying and/or distributing firearms and cold weapons;
- i) having and/or sharing hazardous and flammable items that could cause fire or explosion.

2. Individuals involved in the educational process

- a) are responsible for attending and being punctual for all lectures, educational events, university presentations, and ceremonies. They should not miss any of these events without a valid reason. If there are valid reasons for being late or absent, they must adhere to the internal regulations of the university and inform the relevant faculty dean in advance;

- b) must maintain the confidentiality of all individuals involved, including colleagues, students, and others, unless legally obligated to disclose information;
- c) are always punctual and well-organized throughout their educational activities;
- d) use the time allocated for teaching efficiently to achieve educational goals;
- e) handle university property with care and use its resources purposefully;
- f) do not verbally, physically, or otherwise insult students or colleagues;
- g) show equal attention and care to all students, regardless of their social, ethnic, linguistic, gender, religious, or political affiliation;
- h) are obliged to refrain from reprimanding colleagues in front of students;
- i) are objective and impartial when evaluating students and do not offer private lessons for payment;
- j) do not accept any gifts or other benefits from students in exchange for a high evaluation or any form of preferential treatment;
- k) strive to prevent discrimination against vulnerable groups, such as those with disabilities and minorities, and avoid being influenced by societal stereotypes in decision-making. (Updated on 19.09.2023)
- m) treat everyone with respect, regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation, and refrain from any form of sexual harassment. (Update on 19.09.2023)

Article 5. Rules Pertaining to the Academic Process

1. Individuals involved in the learning process must:

- a) safeguard the University's reputation and prestige.
- b) demonstrate proficiency in the University's accepted academic writing style (bibliographic formatting, citation style, etc.);

2. Academic staff is prohibited from:

- a) misappropriating and disseminating someone else's intellectual work, text, idea, concept, visual or audio material, or any kind of data without attribution (plagiarism);
- b) reusing their own work without citing the original source (self-plagiarism);
- c) fabricating data, information, or references in academic work (falsification).

Article 6. Consequences of Violating Ethical Standards:

1. The University is responsible for monitoring research and teaching ethics and promptly addressing any violations of academic conduct.
2. When a violation of the Code of Ethics is discovered, the person who identifies it must report it to the Rector. The Rector will initiate administrative proceedings based on the report and issue a corresponding order. After the administrative proceedings conclude, an order will be issued to determine the use or non-use of disciplinary measures outlined in the university's internal regulations.
2¹. In accordance with the second paragraph of this Article, the Rector or the Academic Board may, at the onset of administrative proceedings, establish a commission to investigate any misconduct. If necessary, the commission will carry out written or oral proceedings involving all interested parties and provide a recommendation regarding the appropriate penalty. The composition of the commission and other related conditions are formalized by the relevant Act. (Updated on 19.09.2023)
3. If plagiarism is detected:
 - a) the applicant notifies the head of the University's Quality Assurance Office. The head, along with the quality assurance head of the relevant faculty and the dean, will privately discuss the observed violation. If the suspicion is confirmed, the Rector will establish a commission consisting of experienced specialists in the relevant field. The commission will include both University personnel (if there is no conflict of interest) and external experts.

Article 7. Final Provisions

- a) Changes and amendments to the Code of Ethics are reviewed by the Academic Board and approved by the Representative Board;
- b) If the issue is not covered by this Code, it is subject to other rules of the University and the legislation of Georgia. (Updated on 19.09.2023)

- b) The commission will establish the procedure and timeline for the case, clarify details, and issue a relevant conclusion. The commission's work should remain confidential until plagiarism is confirmed to protect the reputation of the involved scientist.
- c) The commission is accountable to the Rector (or the Academic Board).
- d) The person in question (hereinafter referred to as the “individual in question”), as well as involved parties, including the sponsor of the research project and other team members, will be informed of the commission’s conclusion.
- e) The individual in question is given the opportunity to challenge the conclusion before the commission. If the violation is not confirmed, the Rector and the relevant faculty will take steps to restore the scientific and professional reputation of the individual.
- f) If the violation is confirmed, considering the severity of the violation, the following sanctions may be imposed on the individual in question:
 - f. a) issue a warning;
 - f. b) recall and check all articles of the author for plagiarism or falsification;
 - f. c) implement special supervision of the individual in question’s future activities;
 - f. d) terminate the employment contract;
 - f. e) dismiss the individual from the academic position.
- g) If plagiarism is detected in a different structural unit, the head of the Quality Assurance Office of the University must discuss the validity of the violation with the head of that unit.
- h) If the suspicion is confirmed, a commission will be established, comprising competent specialists from the pertinent field, including both the University staff (if there is no conflict of interest) and external experts.