

**CODE OF ETHICS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SZEGED**

**Szeged, 6 May 2013**



## **Preamble**

The University of Szeged, in order to fulfill its role in society, deems it indispensable – beyond the legal requirements – to determine the higher-level rules of behavior in society, moral norms and ethics for all members of the university community to promote high quality and harmonic work. The University by determining the ethical requirements contributes to strengthen and increase the quality of personal relations among members of the university community, to establish the harmonic coexistence and well-being helping the professional work, to achieve the common goals, to preserve and foster the traditions, good reputation, the professional and institutional integrity of the University. Taking this into consideration, the Senate of the University of Szeged within its power under Article 12 (3) of Act CCIV of 2011 on National Higher Education adopts the following Code of Ethics.

### **Part 1**

#### **General Provisions**

##### **1.§ Scope of the Code of Ethics**

- 1.The personal scope of the Code of Ethics applies to persons with employment or other employment-related relationship (hereinafter university members).
- 2.The University undertakes to provide ethical protection to its university members in all cases when exercising the rights and obligations under the Code of Ethics.
- 3.The scope of the Code does not cover the obligations set out in laws, university policies and other - non-academic - professional code of ethics. Therefore, procedures initiated under the Code of Ethics of the University are not subject to any violation of the above-mentioned norms.

##### **2.§ General ethical requirements concerning university members**

1. The University assures and expects from its members to respect human dignity, to comply with the principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination. The University is committed to freedom of expression, learning, education, and scientific research.
2. The University expects loyalty and solidarity from its members, whereby the members help each other by any way allowed to complete their university duties and endeavor to cooperate. Furthermore, the University expects from its members to protect the prestige, goodwill and good reputation of the University, to respect fundamental values expressed in the University's Mission Statement and Code of Ethics during their non-academic public activity.
3. University members shall not engage in party political activity, political agitation and spread political propaganda within the university.
4. The University is not committed to any religion, church or belief; the university is neutral and tolerant on matters of religion and belief.
5. The University expects its members to deliver a responsible statement on specific university-related cases. It is an ethical obligation to act against manifestations that paint a rather negative image of the University. Only the person authorized by the University can make statement or provide information for the press as a representative of the University.
6. The University expects from all of its members to refuse to take unfair or unlawful advantages.
7. Officers of representative bodies may not suffer any disadvantage due to pursuing their activities.

### **3. § Ethical expectations from participants in decision-making bodies**

1. The University expects from the participants in the decision-making bodies to attend the meetings, in case of absence find a replacement. Members are required to do their best to adopt well-established decisions.
2. Participants in decision-making bodies shall prepare for the meetings and do everything in their power to adopt well-established decisions determining the life and circumstances of university members.

### **4. § Special ethical expectations from chief officers**

1. The University strictly prohibits if any of its members abuses its position as a chief officer or membership in a leadership body in order to gain a personal or organizational advantage.
2. The University expects from its chief officer to lead the organizational unit (beyond the legal, economic responsibility), by taking into account the ethical requirements laid down in the Code of Ethics. Therefore:
  - a) prepare decisions well, and - possibly – seek and take into account the opinion of co-workers,
  - b) provide necessary freedom and independent decision-making competence to the subordinates (within the limits of the legal framework),
  - c) gain and provide all the necessary information to carry out tasks.
3. The chief officer has an ethical requirement to promote internal solutions for professional problems arisen within the organizational unit and encourage co-workers to do so.
4. The chief officer shall take into account the interests of the University and the organizational unit when a decision is being made.
5. The chief officer has a high moral obligation to report realistic facts and data when providing personal, institutional and organizational data (e.g. projects, scientific activities, scientific degrees, publications).

### **5. § General ethical guidelines concerning faculty, researchers, and teachers**

Faculty, researcher or teacher of the University:

- a) can expect the University's support in cases of moral debate, conflict, as far as their attitude is in accordance with the ethical principles of the University,
- b) obliged to respect the human dignity of all members of the university during their activities,
- c) obliged to ensure fair exams,
- d) can give orders to students only in study or educational matters. Such orders shall be objective, professionally-established,
- e) may undertake such external work, assignment, carry out such non-academic activity, which does not violate the interest and reputation of the University,
- f) shall avoid situations of conflict of interest,
- g) shall insist on facts, scientific truth and scientific data; represent the conclusions drawn from them with professional integrity,
- h) as an ethical requirement, they shall be an exemplary role model for students to safeguard their moral and human development,
- i) the University strictly prohibits using the ideas, scientific results or texts of others without acknowledging the source or to use these as one's own,
- j) the University expects the clear display of individual performances regarding joint scientific work and research, and such principle applies to joint research with contributions of university and doctoral students,

- k) the University member shall indicate the name of the University when publishing results of research that was achieved at the university, with the instruments or resources of the University,
- l) the University member as a reviewer shall comply with the requirements of conflict of interest and confidentiality while reviewing publications and tenders.

### **6. § Education ethics responsibility**

1. Faculty has an ethical responsibility to undertake such a position or task that they are qualified to fulfill and carry out in professional manner as a faculty. They must follow and contribute to the development of their discipline and possess the methods of transferring these.
2. Faculty must complete their tasks in the best way they can and do everything in their power to ensure that the students acquire the necessary and up-to-date knowledge in the best possible way.
3. Faculty is required to teach their classes published by them aside from exceptional cases (e.g. illness, an official business trip abroad), deliver the materials published in advance, and inform the students and the direct superior about any changes in an appropriate way and due time.
4. Faculty has the duty to inform their students of all the professional, educational and subject-related requirements in due time and in an unambiguous way. They must do everything in their power to prepare them for the exam and for this purpose set the type of achievement required to pass the exam at the beginning of the semester.

### **7. § Ethical expectations from non-academic employees**

1. It is the duty of employees involved in student administration to have an effective, constructive and helpful attitude.
2. Service providers have the ethical requirement to work efficiently and constructively in the interests of the university to support its basic activities.

## **Part 2**

### **Ethical procedure, sanctions, legal remedy**

### **8. § Ethical offense**

A university member who - intentionally or negligently - violates or disregards the requirements laid down in the Code of Ethics, commits an ethical offense.

### **9. § Ethical sanctions**

1. A university member, who intentionally or negligently violates any provision of Article 2-7 of the Code of Ethics, shall be subjected to sanctions proportionate to the severity of the ethical offense committed.
2. Ethical sanctions that can be imposed:
  - a) written warning,
  - b) revoking chief/leader mandate,
  - c) recommendation to the electoral community for revoking the university member from the elected office.

3. In the course of the application of the Code of Ethics may be considered as an aggravating circumstance when a university member involved in the ethical procedure violates (and it is proven) the provisions of the Code of Ethics 2 (two) times in one calendar year.

### **10. § The purpose of ethical sanction**

1. The purpose of an ethical sanction is to raise awareness and prevention. In determining the means of ethical sanction, all circumstances of the action – in particular, the persons who suffered loss or damage, repetition of the ethically questionable conduct – shall be considered.
2. In the course of imposing a sanction, it shall be considered as aggravating circumstance if the person subject to the procedure did not cooperate with the committee, refused to submit data, documents requested by the committee, refused to provide information and did not submit the evidence in its possession to the committee.

### **11. § Ethical procedure**

1. No ethical procedure shall be initiated if one month since being aware of or six months since the ethical offense was committed, have elapsed. For the purposes of this provision, being aware of shall mean the time when the competent person authorized to initiate a procedure is informed about the action underlying such a procedure.
2. If the conduct violating the ethical norms also realizes an unlawful action, a proper legal procedure (infringement, criminal, civil, etc.) can be initiated. The ethical procedure shall be suspended until the final decision of such procedure.
3. The ethical procedure shall be initiated upon report or *ex officio*. The ethical procedure shall be ordered by the Rector of the University.
4. The university member subject to the procedure shall be informed about the initiation of the ethical procedure, including the reasons for the procedure. The order initiating the ethical procedure shall include the name, address of the person subject to the procedure, and a short description of the act establishing the ethical procedure.
5. An inspection shall be carried out during the ethical procedure. Therefore the initiator of the procedure appoints an investigating officer among the employer's public servants, in writing, within 15 (fifteen) days from the initiation of the procedure.
6. The investigating officer has to be in a higher executive or chief position, otherwise, a public servant with a higher or with the same level of position as the person subject to the procedure.
7. In case of an ethical procedure against an executive or chief officer, the investigating officer may be a public servant with a higher or (in lack of that) with the same level of position as the person subject to the procedure.

### **12. § Investigating officer**

1. Person subject to a conflict of interest as defined in Article 14 (1) shall not perform as an investigating officer.
2. The investigating officer is obliged to conduct the investigation within 30 days after their appointment and hear the person subject to procedure for being suspected of committing ethical offense. The period of investigation may be extended once, if necessary, by a maximum of thirty days.
3. The person subject to the ethical procedure shall be informed during the investigation about the statements and evidence related to the ethical offense. The person subject to the ethical procedure shall be afforded to present comments, recommend further taking of evidence, and have access to the documents of the case. A record shall be kept about the taking of evidence conducted and the defense of the person subject to ethical procedure.
4. The person subject to the ethical procedure may also act in the ethical procedure by his/her legal representative who has all the rights as the person subject to the procedure described in Section 3.

The person subject to the ethical procedure may also ask for assistance from the Council of Public Servants or trade union in case of membership.

5. Conclusions and evidence related to the ethical offense must be delivered in writing with a deadline of eight days to present a defense if the person subject to ethical procedure is permanently prevented from attending the hearing during the investigation period.
6. The ethical procedure shall be suspended upon the recommendation of the investigating officer by the initiator of the ethical procedure
  - a) no later than the obstacle elapsed, if the person subject to ethical procedure cannot present the defense as specified in Section 5, or
  - b) if a criminal or infringement procedure has been initiated for the ethical offense, up to the final decision.
7. Within eight days after the end of the investigation, the investigating officer is obliged to send all the case documents along with his comments to the Rector of the University.

### **13. § Establishment of Ad Hoc Ethics Committee**

1. As to the merits, the case is decided by the three-member ad hoc ethics committee, called upon by the Rector. In its recommendation for a decision, it declares whether there has been an ethical offense, and recommends to the Rector to impose an ethical sanction.
2. Members of the ad hoc Ethics Committee are
  - (a) in case of executive or chief officers, a higher or same level leaders,
  - (b) in case of university members not covered by a), an executive or chief officer.
3. The Council of Public Servants, or in case of membership the competent trade union may delegate a person to participate in the meeting of the Ethics Committee as a non-voting member if the person subject to the procedure claims it in advance by a written form.

### **14. § Provisions on Conflict of Interest**

1. As a member or recorder of minutes may not participate in the procedure of the Ethics Committee:
  - (a) the investigating officer of the case,
  - (b) a close relative of the person subject to the procedure [Article 294. Section 1. b) of the Labor Code],
  - (c) witness or expert witness be heard during the investigation,
  - (d) from whom the impartial and objective judgment of the case cannot be expected.

### **15. § Procedure of the Ethics Committee**

1. The Ethics Committee shall hold a hearing within fifteen days of the proposal of the investigating officer. The parties shall receive a notice of the scheduled hearing at least three business days before the hearing of the Ethics Committee.
2. The University is represented at the hearing by the investigating officer. The hearing is open to the public. However, the Ethics Committee is required to order a closed hearing at the request of the person subject to the procedure.
3. If any party or their representative does not attend the hearing, the hearing may be held and the case may be decided in the merits, only if the party and their representative were duly notified. The case may be decided if the investigating officer or the representative announced not to attend the hearing.
4. In order to clarify the facts, the Ethics Committee may carry out an evidentiary procedure, in particular, to hear witnesses, obtain documents, have recourse to an expert witness, and conduct an inspection.

5. If the ethical offense was not clarified at the hearing, a further hearing shall be held within eight days.
6. The Ethics Committee shall decide in a closed session with a majority of votes within thirty days from the first hearing and shall include its decision in a written recommendation with reasoning. A recommendation for acquittal shall be adopted if the person subject to ethical procedure did not commit an ethical offense. A recommendation for a decision of terminating the procedure shall be adopted in case of Article 15 (8), and if it cannot be proved that the person subject to the ethical procedure committed the ethical offense.
7. The person subject to the ethical procedure may seek legal remedy at the Administrative and Labor Court of Szeged within the period specified in the decision.
8. The ethical procedure shall be terminated, if
  - a) the legal relationship referred to in Article 1 (1) of this Policy cease to exist during the procedure,
  - b) it was initiated after the deadline specified in Article 11 (1).The Rector shall decide on the termination of the procedure based on the recommendation of the Ethics Committee and the investigating officer.
9. The ethical decision may not be enforced until the final decision on the legal action against it is adopted.

#### **16. § Mandatory content of the recommendation for a decision of the Ethics Committee**

1. The operative part of the recommendation for a decision shall include:
  - a) name and other personal data of the person subject to the ethical procedure,
  - b) name of the ethical offense committed,
  - c) the recommended ethical sanction.
2. The reasoning for the recommendation for a decision shall briefly include:
  - a) the facts established,
  - b) the reference and evaluation of the evidence,
  - c) the reasoning of the submitted motion for taking of evidence by the person subject to the procedure, but rejected by the Ethics Committee,
  - d) explaining what ethical offense is established by the conduct or action, and that the person concerned is culpable to establish such conduct or action,
  - e) the mitigating and aggravating circumstances taken into account,
  - f) reference to the provisions applied in the ethical procedure.

#### **17. § Decision of the Ethics Committee**

The Ethics Committee shall send the prepared recommendation for a decision to the Rector of the University as soon as possible. The Rector shall decide on the application of the ethical sanction.

1. The operative part of the ethical decision shall include:
  - a) name and other personal data of the person subject to the ethical procedure,
  - b) name of the ethical offense committed,
  - c) the applied ethical sanction,
  - d) reference to the possibility and deadline of seeking legal remedy.
2. The reasoning of the ethical decision shall include:
  - a) the facts established,
  - b) the reference and evaluation of the evidence,
  - c) the reasoning of the submitted motion for taking of evidence by the person subject to the procedure, but rejected by the Ethics Committee,
  - d) explaining what ethical offense is established by the conduct or action, and that the person concerned is culpable to establish such conduct or action,



- e) the mitigating and aggravating circumstances taken into account when imposing the ethical sanction,
  - f) reference to the provisions applied in the ethical procedure.
3. The Rector shall send the ethical decision to the person subject to the procedure within 30 days after receiving the recommendation for a decision.

### **Part III.**

## **Final and transitional provisions**

1. The Code of Ethics is part of the Organizational and Operational Regulations.
2. The present Code of Ethics was adopted by the Senate of the University of Szeged at its meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May 2013 with Senate decision Nr. 95/2013.
3. The Code of Ethics enters into force on the day of publication. Disclosure on the official website of the University (<http://www.u-szeged.hu/>) shall be deemed as publication.
4. The Code of Ethics is available here: <http://www.u-szeged.hu/egyetem/szabalyzatok>.

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rector