

University of Thessaly Ethics Code

Introduction

The academic community of the University of Thessaly, including faculty members, contract teaching staff, researchers, students, and administrative staff, is devoted to the promotion and dissemination of knowledge at the highest level of excellence. This demands academic ethos and leads to obligations beyond the self-evident obligation of compliance with the laws.

Veracity, a sense of justice, impartiality, honesty, integrity, self-respect and the respect for the rights and the personality of the others, a sense of duty and offer, modesty, pride in the prestige of the academic status and vigilance in the event of its violation, are some of the virtues that the members of the academic community ought to demonstrate in their academic and public life.

All the members of the academic community (faculty, researchers, students, and administrative staff) should be aware that the University of Thessaly promotes the principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment with regard to sex, race, nationality, religion, belief, disability, age, sexual preference. No kind of direct or indirect discrimination, harassment, sexual or otherwise, is tolerated by the University.

The University of Thessaly Ethics Code sets some rules to the members of the academic community. Their violation may be a more or less serious disciplinary offence and may cause sanctions, as is by law enacted. The present Ethics Code expresses fundamental ethics principles regarding the relations between the members of the academic community, research, copyright, teaching, students' evaluation and it does not annul or substitute, in any way, the obligations arising from the law, which the members of the academic community ought to comply with.

The members of the University of Thessaly Ethics Committee are:

- the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs and Personnel (President of the Committee)
- the Dean of the School of Engineering
- the Dean of the School of Health Sciences
- the Dean of the School of Agricultural Sciences
- the Head of the Department of Economics
- the Head of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science

The University of Thessaly by offering seminars, courses or publications concerning ethical issues trains and updates its faculty, researchers, students and the administrative staff. The University's central Ethics Committee (UEC) cooperates closely with the Departmental Ethics Committees (DECs), coordinating their work and resolving any issues that, because of their gravity, cannot be solved at the Departmental level (see chapter VI).

I. Rules for the academic and teaching staff and the researchers

1. Conduct between the faculty and other teaching staff

All teaching staff categories (Faculty members, Special Scientific and Teaching Personnel, Special Technical and Laboratory Personnel, Adjunct or Contract teaching staff, etc.) ought to respect their colleagues. Having the right to express their objective scientific opinion, they ought to avoid disparaging and offensive judgments of their colleagues' scientific and teaching work.

Harassment at the workplace, and or the unethical use of one's academic status, post or institutional role, in order to compel other members of the academic community to perform a certain act or omission, express a judgment or vote, is a serious disciplinary offence.

2. Conduct when participating in the University collective bodies

All faculty and other teaching staff ought to participate in the University collective bodies, whenever and in any way the Greek law demands. They also should not decline their participation in the University Committees without justification.

During their participation in the proceedings of the University collective bodies, all staff members ought to comply with the recommendations of the person presiding. They ought to speak only when they are called to do so, not interrupting the others, not leaving the meeting without reason, not interrupting or impeding progress in the proceedings and they should express their points of view with modesty, impartiality and brevity without offensive or disparaging remarks regarding the other participants' opinions.

3. Conduct with the students

All teaching staff categories ought to respect students regardless of sex, nationality, religion or other beliefs.

In particular, they ought to devote sufficient time in order to instruct, even at individual level, the students using as criterion their students' benefit and scientific academic development.

Exploitation of students in tasks irrelevant to their university and academic duties, aiming in deriving personal profit, is a serious disciplinary offence.

4. Relations with the administrative staff

All teaching staff members ought to treat the administrative staff with the proper respect.

They have no right to offend their dignity, to ask them to perform tasks beyond their competence, or to demand the satisfaction of their personal requests in order of precedence over all others, injuring the normal function of the University.

5. Presence in the Society at large

All faculty or other teaching staff, in their out public life, ought to not use their academic status in a way that will expose the University in a bad light or in order to gain profit not relevant to their scientific competencies.

Whenever they express their points of view in the mass media they ought to make clear whether they speak using their scientific/institutional status or not. They should also avoid the participation in public discussions, such that, because of their kind, style or content, may injure the status of the academic community.

II. Research

1. General Information

The Schools or/and the Departments of the University of Thessaly may adjust the rules that concern research to their specific scientific/research fields. The planning and the implementation of research projects must follow the rules of research ethics and scientific documentation. The making up or distortion of scientific results is a serious offence and may cause disciplinary sanctions.

2. Prerequisites for research implementation

When the members of the academic staff undertake, carry out and make public the results of a research project, they ought to secure that:

- a. they have acquired by the competent authorities any necessary license to carry out the proposed research
- b. there is no conflict of interest that would prohibit or jeopardise the research implementation in an objective and scientifically impeccable way
- c. they observe any special provisions concerning the specific kind of research. This may apply:
 - in social sciences, for the research on special social groups,
 - in biological sciences, for example, clinical research, experiments on animals, research on wild species
 - in the management of dangerous substances and waste
- d. they do not violate provisions of law concerning the protection of personal data
- e. they do not violate the law about copyright.

The members of the academic staff ought to contact the competent authorities and get legal advice before starting any research activity, keeping records of their correspondence for a sufficient period of time after the completion of the research.

In any case, the members of the academic staff ought to apply to the University's Central Ethics Committee or to the Departmental Ethics Committee or the Vice-Rector in charge or directly to the Legal Service of the University to resolve any doubts concerning their study design and possible ramifications.

3. Responsibility of the researcher

The research activity must be carried out with absolute respect to the values of human dignity and natural environment. The researchers are bound by the widely recognized principles for the protection of human rights, equality, protection of public health,

protection of children and vulnerable social groups and the protection of biodiversity. The researchers ought to inform the public in a responsible way.

4. Responsibility of the University of Thessaly

The University of Thessaly takes on considerable responsibility to protect society. It has the duty to protect the researchers' independence and care for the observance of good research practice guidelines, as these are presented in the University of Thessaly Ethics Code.

The University of Thessaly sets its own list of specialists who could contribute to the work of the University Ethics Committee.

5. Independence of the researcher

The researchers enjoy the, consolidated by the Constitution, right of freedom of research and they ought to take all the necessary measures in order to protect their independence from any external political, ideological or other pressures and/or interventions.

6. Research Funding

The researchers ought to know and report the sources that fund their research. When making a funding agreement they are not allowed to accept terms that compromise their freedom to design, carry out or make public their research.

7. Integrity of the researcher. Research results

The planning and implementation of a research project must follow the rules of scientific documentation.

The researchers, the research group, the research institution ought to submit to the Research Committee a report of their research results. The selective publication of only results that confirm the initial research hypothesis, may lead to misleading conclusions and it may have serious consequences for science and society. So, it should not be encouraged.

The fabrication or falsification of scientific results is a serious offence and cause disciplinary penalties.

The appropriation of the results of other researcher(s) or research team(s) efforts is punishable according to the principles of the copyrights protection (see chapter III).

8. Observance of the safety rules

The researchers ought to care for the scrupulous observance of the safety rules, especially when implementing laboratory research. In the case that the observance of the safety rules depends on infrastructure/equipment matters, they should inform the competent authorities, in order them to take the necessary measures.

9. Records keeping

The researchers ought to keep full records of their project(s) progress and results, in order to ensure the possibility of verifying them, securing at the same time their copyright and personal data protection.

10. Conduct between the researchers. Respect & Equality

The researchers have the obligation of mutual respect and discretion, as well as the right for equal treatment. They ought to respect a younger researcher's personality and to evaluate a younger researcher's competencies in a fair way. They also ought to respect and acknowledge the experience of elder researchers.

The experienced researchers ought to initiate the younger ones into the research methodology and ethos, aiming at the advancement of the research activity.

11. Individual contribution acknowledgement

The researcher's individual contribution to collective research efforts should be acknowledged. The researcher has the right to be explicitly accredited in scientific papers or in any public presentation of the research project that he/she took part in. All members of the scientific team are responsible to ensure fair acknowledgement of each other's contribution and special responsibility lies with the senior researcher.

12. Bioethics principles observance. General rule

The researchers who carry out research in the biological sciences should be aware of the ethical principles and ethical issues relevant to their research area. The research institution must instruct researchers in any available way. All research activities on this field must be approved by the institutional Ethics Committee.

13. Clinical research

Researchers conducting clinical trials ought to observe the ethical principles of clinical research, including research on human behavior, as is enacted by law and international guidelines).

Widely implemented principles that demand special attention are the principles of informed consent, protection of children and vulnerable groups, protection of collected and processed sensitive personal data.

14. Research on human biological samples

The researchers who carry out research on human biological samples are bound by the principles of donor's informed consent and protection of sensitive collected and processed personal data.

The donor should also be informed about the policies regarding property rights and should be asked to specifically consent for this.

15. Research on the embryo

Research activities on the embryo should be confined within the law. The researchers are bound by the principles of donors' informed consent and protection of sensitive collected and processed personal data.

16. Research on animals

Research on laboratory animals is allowed only if there is no alternative way of research, on the absolutely minimum necessary number of animals and with special care, on behalf of the researchers, to avoid needless suffering and pain. Animal sacrifice, if necessary, must be painless. The living conditions should be adapted, to the degree possible, to the animals' natural environment.

17. Research carried out on social sciences

The research carried out in social sciences (sociology, psychology, etc.) must observe the rules of discretion, securing anonymity, protection of personal data, respect of individual and constitutional rights. The researchers ought to ask for the consent of the persons participating in the research and inform them about the purpose of the research and the ways of the results exploitation. The research in social sciences respects the cultural and individual differences, including the differences of age, sex, race, minority, nationality, religion, sexual preference, disability, language, social and financing position.

18. Research team leaders, administration duties

Research teams' leaders, besides their other duties, ought to educate the members of their team about their rights and duties, as well as about the research institution operational rules (the ethics codes included). They also ought to supervise the adherence to all of the above.

19. Working environment

Research teams' leaders ought to maintain a constructive working environment and to solve any problem that may arise between the members of their research team.

20. More instructions

For more information you may visit the website of the National Bioethics Committee where you may find the relevant laws (Template of the Ethics Code concerning research on biological sciences and Guide for the Biological Research Ethics Committees, <http://www.bioethics.gr>).

III. Copyrights. Publications

1. General information

The reproduction, translation, adaptation, interpolation, copying of a whole book, paper, essay, etc. or part of it, without the author's explicit permission, is prohibited by law, regardless of the form it may assume (printed, electronic, photographic, etc) and constitutes a civil and criminal offence as well as a serious disciplinary violation. The creator or co-creator of a work has the right to be mentioned and acknowledged appropriately, enjoying eventual property rights. Either, the omission of acknowledgement of other persons' intellectual contribution (for example, omission from authorship) or the acknowledgement of a person as

creator or co-creator in a work in which s/he had made no contribution, are serious disciplinary offences and may result in additional legal consequences.

In the case of a piece of work that is the result of the true creative contribution of more than one persons, these persons should be cited as co-creators/co-authors and in order reflective of the magnitude of their contribution.

In the case that a publication or other report is the outcome of a project assigned and paid by a public or private entity, all the contractual obligations there must be adhered to, which could impose restrictions on property and intellectual rights.

The exploitation by the creator or the inventor of property rights, arising from rights of industrial or intellectual property, may be subject to restrictions, especially if project results or products were supported by the means or funding of the University of Thessaly or of another entity.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the embodiment of one's ideas, abstracts and phrases in a writings without citing the related source. While plagiarism, under certain circumstances, may not be considered a law violation regarding copyrights, it is still a serious disciplinary offence, especially when committed by members of the academic community.

The members of the University of Thessaly should refrain from any repeated publication of the piece of work, with or without modifications, in order to present it fictitiously as their own independent and novel work.

Plagiarism takes place when other persons' intellectual work, is published, in printed or electronic form, even in university notes.

3. Postgraduate/doctoral thesis copyrights

The postgraduate/doctoral thesis copyrights belong to the postgraduate/doctoral student, as the prerequisite for the granting of a master's or PhD award is that the thesis is the intellectual work of the candidate. Publications or other reports resulting from a thesis provided that the supervisor or other persons made a major contribution, should reflect everyone's actual contribution in the authorship.

The name of the University of Thessaly and the related Department must be cited in any printed or electronic publication of the postgraduate/doctoral thesis, as well as in any related publications.

The provisions of the following article (III, 4) must be observed as well, in the case of a postgraduate/doctoral thesis which is part of a greater research project.

4. Research projects copyrights

Clear contracts or protocols between the University of Thessaly or the financier of the project, or the principal investigator (PI) of the project and all the members of his/her research team should be signed for the regulation of copyrights of research projects carried out in the University of Thessaly.

Likewise, it is advisable to obtain written agreement for arranging authorship for any research carried out by the University laboratories or clinics.

In any printed or electronic edition, publication, or announcement of related results, everyone ought to cite the name of the University of Thessaly.

The Research Committee of the University of Thessaly or the laboratories ought to draw up collaboration agreement protocols, including any issue about copyrights in

the contracts signed between the University of Thessaly, or the project financier or the PI and the members of the research team.

When submitting proposals or applications for research implementation, researchers declare to the Research Committee in writing that they have full knowledge of the present Ethics Code.

IV. Teaching

1. General information

All faculty members and other teaching staff ought to observe their teaching duties as well as other duties closely related to teaching and to fulfill them in person. The assignment of teaching to other persons must be done only exceptionally and always by decision of the Department competent bodies.

2. Use of other persons' intellectual property for teaching purposes

According to the law “it is allowed, without the creator’s permission and with no payment, to reproduce articles legally published in a newspaper/journal or short abstracts of a work or parts of a short work or a legally published work of plastic arts, provided it is exclusively for teaching or exams in a educational institution, justified by the purpose pursued, in accordance with the moral standards and without restraining the lawful exploitation. The reproduction must cite the source and the names of the creator and the editor, provided these names appear in the source”. The reproduction of a whole work or essential parts of a work is not allowed.

3. Use of the internet

All faculty members and other teaching staff wishing to upload on the internet other persons' texts, exercises, examples, etc, in order to help students and support teaching activities, ought to secure that only students will have access to this information.

4. Exams-Grading

All faculty members and other teaching staff ought to offer students the possibility to be examined for the competencies and knowledge they have acquired in an objective way. Students' grading should be done in an impartial and transparent way. In order to secure maximum credibility and validity in students' grading, the teaching staff ought to:

- use a variety of evaluation techniques
- prepare tests or exams that cover everything they have taught
- secure that the grades are a composition of more than one assessment factors, such as essays, progress tests, multiple choice tests
- relate the grades to the accomplishment of learning objectives
- cite the examination method in the course outline and in the study guidebook
- submit the grades to the Department Secretariat within 20 days from the day of the exams.

5. Transparency

The Departments of the University of Thessaly, in order to secure the objectivity of courses evaluation, ought to develop internal mechanisms of control and transparency.

6. Information

All faculty members and other teaching staff ought to submit in time any information related to the content of the courses they teach, the lectures and laboratories titles, the evaluation methods and the relevant references. All this information must be presented in each Department Studies Regulation and, at the same time, should be available online through the departmental website.

7. Instructions

For more information the members of academic staff may visit two relevant essays uploaded on the webpage of the University of Thessaly Ethics Code (<http://www.uth.gr/ethics>).

V. Ethics issues concerning students

1. Conduct towards members of the academic community

Students' behaviour towards their fellow-students and the other members of the academic community must be in accordance with the principles set in the introduction of the present regulations.

2. Assignments and homework

Plagiarism or any other direct violation of duties arising from the provisions about intellectual property, as set in the present regulations, are serious students' disciplinary offences.

The following actions are also prohibited:

- the exploitation and appropriation by students of other persons' intellectual work, in order to fulfill tasks they have undertaken within the framework of the teaching or research process
- the submission, as of their own, of essays carried out in collaboration with other students, unless with explicit permission by their tutor
- the re-submission of a whole essay or part of it (which has been realised in response to a past assignment), for the fulfillment of tasks undertaken within the framework of a new teaching or research process.

3. Conduct during Exams

During the examination process the following constitute serious disciplinary offences and cause penalties:

- the impersonation of an examinee using a false ID,
- the copying from another student's manuscript,
- the collaboration with others unless explicitly allowed,
- the use of reference books or notes without the examiner's permission

In order to participate in the exams, students must carry with them their student identity card or any other relevant document, and should be ready to show it when requested by the examiners.

VI. Departments Internal Ethics Committee

1. General Information

Each Department has its own Internal Ethics Committee. This Committee supports research and teaching activities and contributes to the smooth running of the University Ethics Committee. The Internal Ethics Committee is composed of three to five members of academic staff with a recognised research background. The members of the Committee are appointed by the Department General Assembly for a three-year period.

The main role of the Committee is to advise researchers and teaching staff in order to improve their research protocols and satisfy the experimentation demands of international funding organizations. The Committee also issues any certification researchers need for research proposals submission or research paper publication. The process follows the international practices as well as the demands of the scientific journals. Research papers resulting from international and national research projects must secure the approval of the Ethics Committee before commencement.

The submission of research proposals to the Internal Ethics Committee for approval is optional. However, the a posteriori submission on grounds of expediency is not allowed. Each Department decides whether the process of the research protocols ethical approval for work related to the acquisition of an MSc or a PhD degree will be compulsory or not.

2. Procedures for research issues

The Internal Ethics Committee holds regular meetings, examines the research proposals and keeps records of its decisions. The research proposals must be submitted to the Committee in a reasonable period of time before its meetings.

The Committee uploads on the Department website the procedure, the documents needed and the dates of its meetings during the academic year. For communication purposes it maintains an e-mail, for example: ethics@nameof theDepartment.gr.

The Internal Ethics Committee deliberations are based on the respect and protection of human rights, the moral use of animal models, as it is enacted by National and European Provisions, the public interest, and the validity and reliability of the research procedure.

It is advised that the Internal Ethics Committee, when examining submitted proposals, should focus on issues of research process and not on research ‘quality’ issues.

The Committee may solicit the opinion of members of other Internal Ethics Committees, if necessary.

After concluding its deliberations the Committee ought to provide the researcher with a printed and signed approval within a 5 day-period.

In case of a proposal rejection, the Committee ought to inform, in writing, the principal investigator about the reasons of the rejection or the improvements necessary to secure approval. The researcher may raise a documented objection against the decision of the Committee. The Internal Ethics Committee ought to reexamine the proposal in the basis of the objection. If the proposal is once again rejected, the researcher has the right to apply to the University Ethics Committee to examine his/her proposal.

3. Procedures for copyrights

The Internal Ethics Committee assists the Head of the Department to scrutinize, in full privacy, any cases of plagiarism or academic collusion. In the case of plagiarism in a student's thesis, the Committee calls for questioning the directly involved persons, and invites a representative of the Student Affairs Committee.

In the case of faculty or other member of staff's involvement in plagiarism or collusion, because this may result in disciplinary and /or penal actions, the Internal Ethics Committee refers the case to the University Ethics Committee.

Whenever the Internal Ethics Committee faces difficulties in decision making or when it needs legal advice, it communicates with the University Ethics Committee.

VII. General matters - Administrative staff

The protection of the University assets and the respect of the University facilities are primary duties of the faculty and of other teaching staff, the researchers, the students and the administrative staff. Everyone ought to protect the University assets and report to the University authorities any instance of unusual wear and tear or destruction.

The administrative staff ought to observe the rules set out in the introduction of the present Ethics Code and perform its duties diligently, in furtherance of the academic process, research, knowledge acquisition and teaching.

The University of Thessaly administrative staff ought to report, without delay, to the University authorities any existing or eventual violation of law, rules and obligations arising from the present Ethics Code, no matter who they come from.

The University of Thessaly Ethics Code was adopted by the University of Thessaly Senate on the 3rd of July 2009. The members of the Introductory Committee were: Professor Ioannis Theodorakis, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and Personnel, Xenophon Paparrigopoulos, Associate Professor of the Department of Economics, Georgia Giannakourou, Associate Professor of the Department of Planning and Regional Development, Christina Karatzaferi, Lecturer of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, Katerina Manolakou, Lecturer of the Faculty of Veterinary Science.

Texts and articles concerning copyrights, inventions, evaluation, National Bioethics Committee can be found on the University of Thessaly website (<http://www.uth.gr/ethics>).