

**Code of Ethics
of the University of Applied Sciences
Velika Gorica**

Velika Gorica, September 2025

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Pursuant to Article 31 of the Statute of the University of applied sciences Velika Gorica of 17 March 2023, CLASS: 602-03/23-14/005, REG. NO.: 238/31-132-056-23-01, the Council of the University of applied sciences Velika Gorica, at its 14th session held on 18th September 2025, adopted the following

CODE OF ETHICS

The University of applied sciences Velika Gorica (hereinafter: the University), conscientiously and consistently fulfilling its social mission, promoting and enhancing academic integrity and academic freedom, and with the aim of fostering ethical and professional excellence in all areas of collective and individual activity, hereby adopts this Code of Ethics.

The University shall direct all its efforts, resources, and capacities toward building and ensuring conditions for the intellectual, personal, social, and ethical development of its employees and students.

The values that the University shall promote through its activities are: truthfulness, impartiality, equality of opportunity, free and reasoned discussion, openness to constructive change, personal dignity, respect for the rights of all individuals, and continuous pursuit of excellence.

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Code of Ethics of the University (hereinafter: the Code) is a set of behavioural norms comprising moral principles and principles of professional ethics that shall guide the professional and public conduct of students, teachers, external associates (hereinafter collectively referred to as students and teachers), and other employees of the University.

The purpose of the Code is to promote values specific to the field of higher education in the broadest sense. Promoting ethical conduct and the values contained in this Code is the duty of all employees, students, external associates, and the institution as a whole.

Terms used in this Code that have gendered meanings, regardless of whether they are used in the masculine or feminine form, refer equally to both genders.

Article 2.

The rights and obligations prescribed by this Code apply to the actions and behaviour of students and employees within premises owned, used, or controlled by the University, as well as to actions outside the University that are in any way connected with it.

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

Human rights, Respect for Intergity and Human Dignity

Article 3

The University shall ensure that every member of its community enjoys respect for all human rights realised within the higher education community, as well as other rights guaranteed by the Constitution and positive legislation of the Republic of Croatia.

All members of the University community shall be respected as individuals, in accordance with the guaranteed rights arising from respect for their life, integrity, and dignity. Every member shall be recognised the right and provided the conditions for unhindered professional development and advancement, in accordance with their personal abilities and beliefs, to the extent that such exercise does not infringe upon the same rights of others.

All members of the University community have duties and responsibilities toward others - to act honestly, fairly, and impartially, and to strive for higher standards of excellence in all domains, in pursuit of the common good of both the University community and the wider higher education system.

Equality and Fairness

Article 4

Every member of the University community shall act in accordance with the principles of equality and fairness, ensuring that all forms of discrimination, harassment, abuse, or exploitation are excluded.

Members of the community shall not misuse their authority nor allow personal interests or relationships to interfere with objective judgment and ethical and professional performance of duties.

All members shall be guaranteed the conditions necessary for fulfilling their professional responsibilities, expressing intellectual capacities, and advancing in their careers.

Academic Freedom

Article 5

Academic freedom belongs to all members of the University community.

Teachers base their scientific and pedagogical work on the constitutional principles of freedom of scientific and professional research and creativity. Within their scientific and professional activities, they are obliged to study and objectively evaluate phenomena in their field, guided solely by the pursuit of truth. In their teaching work, they are required to faithfully convey to students the results achieved in their scientific and professional fields, to foster in them a dedication to their future vocation, and to the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia.

The University promotes freedom of thought and expression as a fundamental value in all aspects of academic life and work.

Professional Conduct

Article 6

Members of the University community are expected to fulfil their obligations toward students, colleagues, and other staff members responsibly, professionally, and in an ethically appropriate manner, and to adhere in their conduct to the principles of objectivity, impartiality, prudence, and tolerance.

Members of the University community are obliged to respect the criteria of professionalism and excellence and, accordingly, to engage in continuous professional development within their area of expertise, grounding all professional and ethical judgments in verifiable facts and excluding all forms of prejudice.

All members of the University community are expected to act in the spirit of common goals.

Students shall refrain from plagiarism or any form of unauthorized assistance, regardless of the method of assessment. Plagiarism includes any form of unauthorized receiving or providing of assistance intended to unfairly influence the accuracy of assessment in examinations or other forms of academic evaluation.

Members of the University community must not encourage, enable, or tolerate plagiarism or cheating in any form.

Respect for Laws and Regulations

Članak 7.

All members of the University community are equal before the law.

All members are required to comply with the laws, the Statute of the University, and all subordinate acts relevant to their duties and responsibilities as members of the University community.

The University is obliged to inform all members of its community of the Statute, other general acts, and work instructions relevant to their obligations. All members must be ensured equal opportunity to file complaints and equal treatment in proceedings concerning violations of the provisions of this Code of Ethics.

UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

Acceptance of Gifts and Other Benefits

Article 8

Members of the University community must not request, encourage, or accept gifts or any other benefits, whether for themselves or for another person, that could reasonably be presumed to directly

or indirectly influence their objectivity or the fulfilment and observance of their professional duties and responsibilities.

Members of the University community are obliged to reject and report any attempt at corruption.

Conflict of Interest

Article 9

All members of the University community shall avoid conflicts of interest and maintain independence in all activities outside the University — including financial or other interests — that could conflict with their professional duties at the University or compromise their integrity and objectivity.

Discrimination

Article 10

Any form of discrimination, whether direct or indirect, is unethical at the University, including discrimination based on religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle, financial status, origin, family or marital status, disability, physical appearance, political affiliation, or health condition.

Members of the University community must not be influenced by prejudice that could lead to bias or discriminatory behaviour.

Harassment

Article 11

All forms of harassment — direct or indirect — based on religion, ethnicity, nationality, language, race, gender, sexual orientation, lifestyle, financial status, origin, family or marital status, family obligations, age, disability, physical appearance, political affiliation, or health condition are considered unethical at the University.

The term harassment refers to any inappropriate behaviour that violates personal dignity, interferes with the performance of professional duties, or diminishes the quality of life of the person toward whom it is directed. It also includes inappropriate conduct that contributes to the creation of unpleasant or hostile working and learning environments, intimidation, insult, or humiliation.

At the University, any form of spreading falsehoods—whether verbal or written—for the purpose of harassment or for gaining unlawful benefit in any form is considered unethical.

Sexual Harassment

Article 12

Sexual harassment is a form of harassment that is specific in nature. It constitutes unacceptable behaviour characterised by the absence of consent or by the refusal of the other party and includes:

- repeated and unwanted verbal or physical advances of a sexual nature toward another person,
- physical assault,
- repeated and unwanted sexual jokes or remarks, including references to gender and sexual orientation,
- sexually motivated mockery or ridicule,
- displaying sexually offensive or disturbing material.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable as it implies direct or indirect coercion or pressure on another person through abuse of a position of authority and because it creates an unacceptable working and educational environment.

Applying pressure on a person who has refused or reported such behaviour is considered unacceptable. Neglecting reports of sexual harassment, including delaying or failing to investigate such reports, also constitutes unacceptable behaviour.

Consensual sexual relations between members of the University community fall within the sphere of privacy outside the legitimate interests of the University.

Such relations are not considered cases of sexual harassment; however, they may be subject to assessment under other provisions of this Code of Ethics, particularly those concerning ethical norms of objectivity, impartiality, or conflict of interest.

Objectivity and Impartiality

Article 13

All members of the University community shall act objectively and must not allow any form of prejudice to influence their objectivity in academic, research, administrative, business, or managerial activities.

The evaluation of professional activities and competence of any member of the University community must not be based on criteria that are not directly relevant to the work performed or to professional duties.

Article 14

All members of the University community are called upon to safeguard the interests of the University and, in the spirit of academic freedom and ethical principles, to cultivate responsibility toward the University community as a whole and each of its members.

Unethical behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- misuse of position or reputation within the University for personal gain or to the detriment of objective professional criteria,
- knowingly obstructing the work of the University for personal benefit or to the detriment of objective professional standards,
- encouraging other members of the University community to disregard institutional rules and customs,
- spreading falsehoods about members of the University community or about the University itself,
- using the University's property and/or intellectual rights for personal, commercial, or political gain,
- encouraging activities contrary to law or the general acts of the University.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES

Article 15

In addition to adhering to the fundamental principles and rules of this Code of Ethics, teachers must also act in accordance with the principles related to their professional teaching duties.

Teachers base their scientific and professional work on the constitutional principles of freedom of scientific and professional research and creativity. Within their scientific and research activities, they are obliged to study and objectively evaluate phenomena in their fields, guided solely by the pursuit of truth. Within their teaching activities, they must faithfully convey to students the results achieved in their scientific and professional fields, fostering in them dedication to their future vocation and to the highest values of the constitutional order of the Republic of Croatia.

Teachers are obliged to preserve their independence as a fundamental prerequisite for scientific and professional work and research and to oppose any attempt by external influences to impose values or standards incompatible with the true vocation of teaching or the principles of their profession.

They are particularly obliged to firmly uphold the dignity of their vocation and to reject any attempt at bribery, including concealed forms such as the acceptance of material or other benefits.

It is the duty of teachers, through their scientific, professional, and teaching activities as well as their public engagement, to contribute to the preservation and promotion of the reputation of the University.

By signing an employment contract or a service contract, teachers and employees accept this Code of Ethics and are obliged to act in accordance with it.

Attitude Toward One's Own Work

Article 16

Teachers, in addition to their teaching duties, are required to participate in other activities of the University and to give precedence to those activities over obligations outside the institution.

Regardless of their academic rank, teachers are obliged to engage in continuous professional development within the framework of lifelong learning and to keep up with the latest achievements in their scientific fields and professions.

In their scientific and other works, teachers shall consistently avoid any conduct that could be considered plagiarism in any form. In particular, the use of texts or ideas of other authors without proper citation of sources is strictly prohibited.

Teachers must perform their duties diligently, conscientiously, and with quality. In the event of inability to fulfil their obligations, they are required to secure an appropriate replacement or give timely notice of their absence.

Teachers must not engage in activities incompatible with their vocation, regardless of whether they are undertaken for financial or other reasons.

Teachers must maintain an appropriate and professional appearance during working hours, consistent with the dignity of their profession.

Relations with Colleagues, Associates and Employees of the University

Article 17

Employees are required to respect the personal and professional dignity of other employees at the University.

They must contribute to creating a democratic, tolerant, and culturally enriched environment, without which the University cannot progress or remain attractive to future students.

In scientific and professional work, at conferences, and in all forms of professional interaction, teachers are obliged to cultivate tolerance and a culture of dialogue.

Relations with Students

Article 18

In the teaching process, teachers should establish dialogue with students, guide them through their studies, encourage active participation, and connect theory with practice. To this end, they should pay particular attention to the structure of the teaching process (lectures, seminars, exercises) to ensure it is student-oriented and aligned with the Bologna Process.

Teachers must not condition the fulfilment of students' academic obligations or the taking of examinations on the purchase of specific literature or teaching materials.

Teachers must not design examination content in a way that forces students to rely exclusively on specific literature, particularly material not prescribed by the study programme.

Teachers shall assess students fairly, based solely on demonstrated knowledge. Examinations should be public, as this best eliminates claims of bias.

It is the teacher's duty to consistently oppose any interference in examination procedures, regardless of its source or justification.

Teachers must respect the dignity of students, regardless of their ethnic origin, race, gender, age, marital status, or political, religious, or other beliefs.

Teachers should be accessible to students, especially by designating fixed consultation hours.

In their communication with students, teachers must be professional and must not demean or belittle them in any way.

Teachers should consider students' feedback and evaluations of their teaching as a means of improving the quality of the educational process.

Attitude Toward Property

Article 19

Employees are required to treat the property of the University with due care and to use it responsibly.

Employees must not use such property for purposes unrelated to their work at the University without specific authorization from their superiors.

Employees are obliged to recognize the importance of and treat with special care the University's library resources and to point out the necessity for the library to maintain adequate literature to meet the teaching needs of the institution.

Relations with the Public

Article 20

Employees are required to safeguard the reputation of the University even outside of working hours.

Employees must resolve mutual disputes within the University, and the University's management is obliged to ensure that such disputes are resolved through an appropriate procedure and within a reasonable time frame.

When publicly criticizing a colleague or their work, employees should exercise restraint, bearing in mind that the University Council, professional and scientific associations, and academic and professional publications are the appropriate venues for professional discussions and well-founded criticism.

When appearing in the media, delivering public lectures, or commenting on public matters, teachers should ensure that their public engagement reflects an appropriate academic and professional standard and that their overall conduct aligns with the principles of this Code of Ethics.

Employees must strictly separate their political activities from administrative, scientific, professional, and teaching duties.

It is strictly prohibited to use the premises or resources of the University for political activities or self-promotion, as well as to use lectures or other interactions with students for the promotion of political parties or ideologies.

In their political activities outside the University, employees must safeguard the reputation of the institution and avoid affiliations incompatible with the fundamental constitutional values of the Republic of Croatia and contemporary democratic principles.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Fundamental Principles

Article 21

The University upholds and protects all student rights arising from the law, institutional regulations, and ethical norms of conduct and action, particularly the right to active participation in the educational process; the right to protection from violence, discrimination, and harassment; the right to equality and fairness; and the right to the protection of personal data.

Students Rights

Article 22

The University respects and guarantees the following student rights:

- the right to participate in the teaching process,
- the right to freely express and exchange opinions and beliefs,
- the right to conduct scientific and professional research, publish, and exchange research results,
- the right to an objective and fair evaluation process that applies equally to all,

- the right to protection from violence, coercion, and threats,
- the right to protection from circumstances that endanger students' lives, physical or mental health,
- the right to protection from discrimination and harassment based on religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, gender, sexual orientation, financial status, family or marital status, family obligations, age, disability, physical appearance, political beliefs, or health condition,
- the right to equal and fair treatment in proceedings before University bodies,
- the right to participate in peaceful, non-violent, and properly reported protests, provided that such actions do not infringe upon the rights of other members of the academic community,
- the right to protection from unauthorized or unethical testing or research,
- the right to the protection of personal data,
- the right to freely form and organize student associations,
- the right to compensation for damages resulting from negligent or irresponsible conduct by members of the University community,
- the right to receive timely information about University rules and regulations.

Academic Misconduct

Article 23

Academic dishonesty undermines the quality of teaching and scientific-professional activities of the University and devalues its genuine achievements.

Any form of fraud during the process of registration, examination, or any other type of knowledge assessment is considered a violation of this Code and includes the following:

- obtaining, transmitting, receiving, or using examination materials or answers without authorization; using notes, data, computers, or other electronic devices or software during an exam unless explicitly permitted,
- impersonating another person during an exam or presenting another person's work as one's own,
- resubmitting previously graded work for reassessment in the same or a different course without the instructor's approval,
- altering grades or evaluation results from examinations or other forms of assessment,
- intentionally destroying another student's academic work.

Other Violations of the Code of Ethics

Article 24

The following acts are also contrary to the provisions of this Code of Ethics:

- acts constituting criminal offences prosecuted ex officio and punishable by imprisonment under the law,

- acts constituting criminal or misdemeanor offences committed against teachers, associates, other employees of the University, or other students,
- intentional damage to or theft of the University's property,
- theft of property belonging to students, teachers, employees, or external associates of the University,
- misuse and/or forgery of student documents and records,
- disruption of order and rules prescribed for particular forms of instruction or examinations,
- obtaining, transmitting, or using examination materials without authorization,
- use or attempted use of notes, data, computers, or other electronic devices or software during classes or exams unless explicitly permitted,
- cheating on tests and exams,
- plagiarism or falsification of works or parts of works by others,
- misuse of premises, materials, IT equipment, or other devices belonging to the University,
- violation of posted prohibitions or engaging in hazardous activities on University premises,
- insulting, harassing, abusing, using force, or discriminating on any grounds,
- breaches of standards of cultural conduct and decency toward teachers, associates, other employees, students, or members of the public, whether on University premises or in public spaces,
- attending classes or examinations under the influence of alcohol and/or narcotics,
- smoking in University buildings or premises,
- breach of contractual obligations with the University,
- any other behaviour inconsistent with ethical values and socially accepted norms of conduct.

Any violation of the rights and obligations of students prescribed by this Code of Ethics is subject to disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the University's Regulations on Student Disciplinary Responsibility.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

Body for Interpretation and Implementation of the Code of Ethics

Article 25

The Ethics Committee is established as an independent advisory body of the University of applied sciences Velika Gorica (hereinafter: the Committee) for the purpose of:

- monitoring the implementation of the Code of Ethics,
- promoting the ethical principles and values established by the University's Code of Ethics,
- providing opinions on the application of the Code of Ethics in cases under consideration.

The Ethics Committee operates independently and autonomously in carrying out the tasks within its scope and in procedures determining violations of the Code of Ethics.

Members of the Ethics Committee cannot be:

- the Dean, Vice Deans, or Assistant Deans,
- any teacher or person found to have violated the Code of Ethics,
- any teacher or person against whom proceedings for violation of the Code of Ethics have been initiated (regardless of the outcome of such proceedings).

Article 26

The election of members of the Ethics Committee shall be conducted at a session of the University Council.

The Chairperson and members of the Ethics Committee shall be appointed by the University Council upon the proposal of the Dean, while the student member shall be appointed by the Council upon the proposal of the Student Council of the University.

The term of office of the members of the Ethics Committee shall be two years.

The Student Ombudsperson shall participate in the work of the Committee without voting rights, for the purpose of protecting student rights.

Membership in the Ethics Committee shall cease upon expiration of the term of office, completion of studies (for the student member), resignation, or initiation of proceedings to determine a violation of the Code of Ethics.

The decision on dismissal shall be adopted by the University Council upon the proposal of the Dean.

The term of office of a newly appointed member of the Committee shall last until the expiration of the term of the member who has been relieved of duty.

Initiation of Proceedings Before the Committee

Article 27

Proceedings may be initiated by the Committee on its own initiative or at the proposal of the Dean, teachers, employees, students, or other persons who believe that a violation of this Code has occurred in a specific case.

Proceedings before the Ethics Committee are initiated by submitting a written request for an opinion on the existence of a violation of the Code of Ethics (hereinafter: the Request).

The Request must be submitted in writing, either by post marked "For the Ethics Committee of the University," through the University's registry office or student affairs office, or electronically to the address: referada@vvg.hr.

The Request must contain:

- the name and surname of the applicant (with the option to request anonymity — in such cases, the applicant's identity will be known only to members of the Ethics Committee),
- the question on which the Ethics Committee's opinion is sought,
- the specific provision(s) of the Code of Ethics to which the request pertains,
- a description of the relevant circumstances,
- supporting evidence attached.

The Ethics Committee may request the applicant to provide additional documentation, written explanations, or clarifications.

If the request concerns a specific case, the Committee shall seek written statements or explanations from the parties involved.

The deadline for submitting a written statement or clarification is 15 days, or longer if justified by valid reasons.

Article 28

In the event that proceedings are initiated, the Chairperson shall convene a meeting of the Committee no later than 30 days from the date of initiation or receipt of the proposal.

The Committee may request additional clarifications from the proposer as well as statements from the parties involved in the case, who are obliged to respond to such requests within 7 working days.

Members of the University community involved in the proceedings shall be given the opportunity to respond to relevant allegations.

Opinion

Article 29

Upon completion of the procedure, the Committee shall issue its opinion and deliver it to all parties involved in the proceedings.

The Committee issues its opinion solely on the basis of the information and evidence contained in the proposal, as well as additional clarifications and statements provided by the parties involved.

Article 30

The opinion of the Ethics Committee shall include:

- a brief description of the request,
- the provisions of the Code of Ethics taken into account by the Committee,
- a statement of reasons for the opinion.

The opinion may also include recommendations and proposals.

Article 31

The opinion shall be adopted by a majority vote of all members of the Ethics Committee.

Voting shall be conducted by name, with each member voting “for” or “against” the proposed opinion. Abstentions are not permitted.

If the Committee has an even number of members and the votes are equally divided, the Chairperson’s vote shall be decisive.

The results of the vote shall be entered into the official minutes.

The Student Ombudsperson shall participate in the proceedings without voting rights.

Article 32

The opinion of the Ethics Committee shall be submitted to the Dean as a notification or for further action.

If, according to the Committee's opinion, there are elements of disciplinary responsibility, the Dean may decide to initiate disciplinary proceedings in accordance with the University's internal regulations governing the disciplinary responsibility of employees and students.

FINAL PROVISIONS

Article 33

This Code of Ethics shall enter into force on the date of its adoption and shall apply from the 2025/2026 academic year.

The following acts shall cease to be in force upon the entry into effect of this Code:

- Code of Ethics for Teachers and Associates of the University of applied Velika Gorica (Class: 602-04/12-14/01, Ref. No.: 238/31-132-050-12-351, dated 18 June 2012),
- Code of Ethics for Students of the University of applied sciences Velika Gorica (Class: 602-03/23-14/048, Ref. No.: 238/31-132-052-23-01, dated 21 December 2023),
- Rules of Procedure of the Ethics Committee of the University of the applied sciences Velika Gorica (Class: 602-03/24-14/063, Ref. No.: 238/31-132-056-24-01).

This Code of Ethics shall also be published on the University's official website.

CLASS: 602-03/25-15/048

REF. NO.: 238/31-132-056-25-01

Velika Gorica, 18th September 2025

Dean

PhD Tamara Čendo Metzinger,
Professor of Professional Studies