



UNIVERSITÀ
di **VERONA**

CODE OF ETHICS

Principles and values of the University of Verona

The Code of Ethics of the University of Verona was issued by Rectoral Decree no. 145 of 10 January 2018.
Please note: this is a translation of the original Italian text. In case of discrepancy between the Italian and English versions, the Italian version shall always prevail.



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Art. 1 – About this Code

1. The Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as “the Code”) of the University of Verona (hereinafter referred to as “the University”) applies to the university community as a whole, in order to guide the conduct of its members, whether they work or study.
2. The Code contains the general principles and values which are considered fundamental by the University.
3. The present Code is intended to complement and implement, for matters within its remit, the University regulations and, in particular, the Statute of the University of Verona, using their principles, especially those set out in Chapter I of the same statute, as a reference point.

Art. 2 – Scope

1. The Code applies to all members of the university community, i.e. professors, researchers, students, university staff members, and the members of the governing bodies. Specifically:
 - a) ‘*professors and researchers*’: all individuals who have a relationship with the University, as tenured or under any status, which includes carrying out teaching activities, or taking part in teaching and research activities as collaborators, from the start of the contract until its termination. Within the Code, scholarship or grant holders are also considered as ‘*researchers*’;
 - b) ‘*students*’: all individuals who have a relationship with the University as students or participants in courses of any kind, from the start until the end of their training experience and also after its completion, as long as they benefit from the services of the University. Within the Code, students from other universities taking part in international mobility programmes are also considered as ‘*students*’;
 - c) ‘*staff members*’: all individuals who have a relationship with the University of Verona in order to carry out management, supervisory, office, administrative, accounting, technical, and operational activities (also as external employees), from the start of their employment relationship until its end.
2. The Code is divided into three Chapters:
 - a) Chapter I sets out the general principles and values that inform the conduct of university members, and outlines the ethical issues relating to higher education in general;
 - b) Chapter II defines the rules of conduct based on the general principles and values set out in Chapter I;
 - c) Chapter III governs the implementation of the Code by setting up a specific Committee, whose functions are set out in the same Chapter.

CHAPTER I – GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Art. 3 – General principles

1. The University is committed to the principles set out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the Constitution of the Italian Republic and, in particular, the following principles: equality and solidarity; promotion of culture and scientific and technical research; freedom of art and science, and freedom of teaching; recognition of individual achievement; development of professional and academic skills.



Art. 4 – Ethical values

1. The University recognises and safeguards the following values:
 - a) **Respect for the individual, equality and solidarity**

The University strives to protect the dignity and respect of the individuals with whom it deals in the exercise of its duties; the University also promotes the principle of equality, condemning any form of bullying and abuse of power, and rejecting any kind of social prejudice and harassment.
 - b) **Responsibility, integrity and transparency**

The University promotes behaviours guided by the principles of responsibility, honesty, integrity, transparency, and impartiality. The University ensures that its actions and decisions are made according to the same criteria for everyone, in pursuit of the common good. The University also commits to make its actions and decisions available to the public, so that the University members are able to evaluate the conduct of each member and body, and make informed choices according to their role.
 - c) **Commitment and merit**

The University upholds the importance of competencies and professional skills, fosters growth through educational and development activities, adopts merit-based methods, and recognises the central role of individuals.
 - d) **Confidentiality**

The University safeguards the confidentiality of all information it acquires when sharing tasks among its members and through the University's scientific and institutional activities.
 - e) **Quality of research, teaching, learning, and services**

In recognition of the social relevance of its institutional activities, the University believes that research, teaching and the transfer of knowledge can contribute to social well-being and development, as well as to the improvement of the quality of life. Consequently, the University strives to foster a scientific and institutional environment where the following aspects are promoted: continuing education, opportunities for discussion and mobility, freedom of opinion, participation in the scientific and academic international community. The University also fosters the dissemination of knowledge and scientific outcomes, so that each member of the university community can contribute to scientific and research activities, and the safeguard of the intellectual property rights. Striving for constant improvement, the University is also committed to the quality of its services, investing resources in order to understand the needs of its users. The University also strives for excellence, implementing assessment procedures for teaching, research activities, students' learning ability and services, aimed at guiding decision-making processes to achieve such goals.
 - f) **Freedom of speech, to conduct research, to study and teach**

The University considers the freedom of teaching and research and the intellectual independence as essential requirements for the correct implementation of activities at the University and for the achievement of its own institutional and academic objectives.
 - g) **Environmental protection**

The University is committed to protecting the environment, intended both as ecological system – by making environmentally sustainable decisions – and professional place for work and study.

CHAPTER II – RULES OF CONDUCT

The rules of conduct, inspired by the general principles and values set out in the previous articles (Art. 3 and 4), are laid down in the following articles (from Art. 5 to Art. 11).



Art. 5 – Respect for the individual, equality and solidarity

1. **Courtesy and respect**

The members of the university community are expected to treat each other with courtesy, respect and integrity taking into account one's specific responsibilities and roles, and should be aware of the negative potential of online communication and social media, if used improperly.

2. **Ban on discriminations**

The members of the university community promote, and have right to, equality and fairness and are protected against any discrimination, both direct and indirect, based on religion, gender, sexual orientation, freedom of conscience, personal beliefs, physical appearance and skin colour, language, ethnical origins, the fact of belonging to a national minority, citizenship, social, personal and health conditions, disabilities, pregnancy, parental status, and age.

3. **Condemnation of sexual harassment**

The members of the university community refrain from any form of harassment based on gender and sexual orientation, intended as a discriminatory conduct detrimental to human dignity. They are also against any form of sexual harassment where a relationship of subordination exists, with particular reference to relationships between professors, students and employees.

Sexual harassment may undermine the victim's health, self-confidence, morale and professional motivation. Moreover, such conduct may seriously damage the organisation, the workplace and the public image of the University.

The members of the university community must always consider, using their common sense, whether their conduct may be tolerated, or considered offensive or improper.

Whilst not an exhaustive list, forms of sexual harassment can include:

- a) implicit or explicit requests for sexual favours;
- b) unwanted or offensive verbal comments of a sexual nature;
- c) discriminatory remarks about one's sexual orientation;
- d) displaying pornographic material at the University;
- e) sexist methods, judgments and expressions in any kind of interpersonal relationship;
- f) explicit or implicit promises of some kind of reward such as a promotion or academic success in exchange for sexual favours;
- g) threats and reprisals as a consequence of one's refusal to offer sexual favours;
- h) unwanted and inappropriate physical contact.

4. **Condemnation of any form of harassment, bullying and mobbing**

The members of the university community strive for a positive work environment based on mutual respect and free from any kind of harassment, bullying and mobbing.

They also refrain from any kind of harassment and mobbing towards any other member of the university community, including threats, blackmail, humiliation, offense, abuse, improper behaviour, offensive remarks, unwarranted criticism.

Examples of mobbing includes (non-exhaustive list):

- a) slandering, defaming, insulting a person and disseminating confidential information that may undermine an individual's self-esteem;
- b) isolating and marginalising an individual, limiting his or her freedom of speech without any reason;
- c) overloading individuals with tasks, or excluding them from work activities; overseeing an individual with excessive control;
- d) undermining the professional integrity of an individual through actions aimed at damaging his or her professional self-confidence;
- e) involuntary or punitive transfer or change in duties without reason;
- f) not being supportive of an individual who has returned to work following a long absence for leave, sickness or injury;



- g) deliberately failing to provide information on administrative or scientific work, or intentionally providing incorrect, incomplete or insufficient information;
- h) undervaluing the work done by an individual without objectively taking into account the relevant assessment criteria and standards.

Art. 6 – Responsibility, integrity and transparency

1. Honest conduct

The members of the university community behave in a way that is honest, unbiased and fair, thus refraining from opportunistic behaviour in their mutual relations and towards the Institution.

Opportunistic behaviour includes:

- a) pursuing individual or group-related goals circumventing rules or ethical duties, or taking advantage from situations of information asymmetry;
- b) neglecting one's own institutional, teaching and research duties;
- c) using, directly or indirectly, one's position or office to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else by forcing other people to provide specific services;
- d) colluding with other members of the university community or with external parties to avoid checks or assessment of one's own work, exchanging favours at the expense of the University's common good, or to exercise influence on decisions in order to obtain advantages in terms of benefits or resources that, in the interest of the University, would be more usefully allocated elsewhere.
- e) not being honest about one's role, affiliation and academic qualifications.

2. Protection of intellectual property rights

The members of the university community refrain from any kind of plagiarism, with particular reference to scientific articles, essays and dissertations.

The university members acknowledge in their scientific articles and other published material the contribution of their colleagues, collaborators and students, even if the relationship between such individuals and the University, or their experience of research at the University, has come to an end.

3. Conflict of interest

The university members whose interests conflict with those of the University must promptly inform the competent authorities and abide by their decisions, while abstaining from performing the activity in question for the time being.

4. Favouritism and nepotism

Professors, researchers and members of staff avoid any suggestion of favouritism and nepotism since these may violate a person's dignity, and they do that by promoting honesty, integrity, professionalism, equality, impartiality and transparency. They also refrain from using their position improperly and against the principle of merit to favour a person when awarding jobs and promotions, especially when based on close personal relationships, as well as using their position or persuasion skills to gain advantages for family members and relatives in law.

5. Use of University's resources, spaces and services

The university members use the resources in a responsible and diligent way and if necessary they provide documents to prove that.

No member shall use, or allow any external individuals or entities to use, the University's research equipments, assets, physical and virtual spaces, as well as the human, material and financial resources of the University for a personal gain, to perform tasks as self-employed, or for other purposes different to those set out by the university institutions, unless expressly approved by the University.

The university members pay particular attention to the aims of the events that are proposed to be held at the University, and they refrain from allowing the university premises or its



virtual spaces to be used by organisations that have as their primary purpose the dissemination of ideas of violence and intolerance such as xenophobia and homophobia.

6. Protection of the name and reputation of the University

The members of the university community must respect the reputation of the University and must not damage its image; they should also be aware of the negative potential of online communication and social media, if used improperly.

University members must not:

- a) make improper use of the logo and the name of the University, also when performing professional activities, duties, assignments or other external activities, paid or not;
- b) express strictly personal views on behalf of the University.

7. Gifts and benefits

University members cannot be offered or accept gifts and benefits, if not of modest value, that could also indirectly affect the performance of their duties at the University.

Art. 7 - Commitment and merit

1. When making decisions and acting on behalf of the University, the members of the university community must always consider first and foremost each individual's skills, competencies and merit, and the quality of the services offered.

Art. 8 - Confidentiality

1. Without prejudice to existing legislation on the processing of personal data and the right of access to public documents, the university members must:
 - a) respect the privacy of individuals or entities whose confidential information is held by the University;
 - b) not disclose to anyone outside the University any confidential data or information relating to the participation of any individual in the governing bodies of the University.

Art. 9 – Quality of research, teaching, learning and services

1. Freedom and responsibility in research

Research must be free, responsible and must strive for excellence. Professors, researchers and all those who work in any capacity in research, holding any position, responsibility and rights, must acknowledge and implement the principles set out in the European Charter for Researchers issued by the European Commission, with particular regard to freedom of research, responsibility and professional development, dissemination and promotion of research results, international mobility, and access to continuing training.

2. Recruitment

Concerning the recruitment of professors and staff members, the university members must comply with the principles of transparency, the recognition of individual merit, the recognition of mobility experience, and the evaluation of qualifications.

With particular regard to the recruitment of researchers and research-related staff, the university members must implement the principles set out in The Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, issued by the European Commission.

3. Freedom, quality and responsibility in teaching

The activity of teaching is free to the extent that it complies with the University's educational objectives and the overall organisation of teaching at the University. Professors and researchers are expected to pursue improvements in the quality of the teaching activities they provide, through the constant updating of knowledge and the recognition of each individual's personal skills and research expertise, based on the highest internationally



recognised standards. Professors and researchers are expected to deliver continuous and planned teaching activities (e.g. lectures, tutoring, internships, exams), and these should be aimed at providing students with the skills they need to access professional opportunities, or further studies.

4. Research outcomes, teaching and open access

Professors and researchers undertake to ensure the widest dissemination of the results of research carried out at the University.

5. Quality of learning

Professors, researchers and staff members give priority to the achievement of the institutional objectives of the University: they consider students as actors of the learning process who are able to independently define their own learning pathway while complying with regulations and teaching plans.

Professors, researchers and staff members undertake to create an environment which promotes the acquisition and the rigorous development of knowledge as an essential requirement for excellence, teaching, professionalism, and for the widest research and intellectual exploration, and pursuit of knowledge.

6. Quality of services

Professors, researchers and staff members strive for the constant improvement of the services offered and their access to them, working with accuracy, punctuality and empathy.

Art. 10 – Freedom of speech, to conduct research, to study and teach

1. The university members are free to express their own opinions on the activities of the University and its governing bodies. Any declaration made in this regard, especially those made to the media, must be always based on the most deep respect for the truth, dignity and honour of the individuals, the role of the Institution and the use of appropriate language.
2. Students collaborate with professors and researchers to ensure lectures, exams and the relevant teaching activities take place in an orderly and correct manner.
3. While enjoying the freedom to conduct research, all those who operate within the University must be transparent and responsible, also taking measures aimed at providing the scientific community and society with a view of the methodologies and outcomes, as well as the integrity and the ethical impact, of the research undertaken. With regard to transparency and research dissemination, each member must acknowledge in his or her own scientific works the Department to which he or she belongs, and the public or private entities that have funded the research and the publication of the relevant outcomes.

Art. 11 – Social and environmental safeguard

1. Social and environmental provisions in public procurement

In awarding contracts for public works, services and supplies, the university members shall adopt social and environmental provisions for the promotion of environmental sustainability, ensuring that facilities are accessible to all users, that accessibility criteria for people with disabilities are in place, and that the environmental impact is duly taken into account.

2. Conduct based on environmental sustainability

The university members shall take environmental sustainability into account in their actions and choices.

3. Dangerous conduct for health and safety

Those who use the university premises and equipments shall avoid behaviours that may put at risk the health and safety of others.



CHAPTER III – CODE COMPLIANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

Art. 12 – Compliance with the Code of Ethics and sanctions

1. All those to whom the Code applies are required to:
 - a) be knowledgeable about the content of the Code;
 - b) conform their behaviour to the requirements of the Code;and, if appropriate,
 - c) contact the Code of Ethics Compliance Committee if they need advice on the implementation of the Code, or guidance on the appropriate conduct in relation to matters relating to the Code.
2. In accordance with criminal, civil and administrative law, and without prejudice to the principle of proportionality and the right to be heard, the violation of the Code by a university member, verified by the Code of Ethics Compliance Committee, may constitute grounds for imposing disciplinary sanctions, or the sanctions referred to in the following paragraph.
3. In the event of a proven breach of the Code pursuant to Art. 11 of the University Statute, the Academic Senate shall apply the following sanctions:
 - a) written reprimand;
 - b) reprimand made public on the University's website.In addition, professors and researchers may be suspended from access to funding for university research and/or teaching, for a maximum of three years.

Art. 13 – Code of Ethics Compliance Committee

1. In exercising its powers to implement, interpretate and update the Code, the Academic Senate shall establish a Code of Ethics Compliance Committee (hereinafter referred to as the "Committee").
2. The Committee shall consist of three members, at least one of whom must be external, appointed by the Academic Senate from among persons with proven competence in the matters covered by this Code. The members of the Committee shall hold office for a three-year term, and may be renewed only once.
3. The member of the Committee who finds himself in a situation of conflict of interest or other incompatibility, will be replaced by a substitute member external to the University, designated by the Senate when full members are appointed.
4. The members of the Committee shall act with independence and impartiality and shall operate in full compliance with the principle of confidentiality.
5. The Committee shall have advisory and investigative functions, and the function of issuing guidelines.
6. The advisory functions are performed upon request of the Rector, the Academic Senate and each member of the university community.
In particular, the Committee shall issue:
 - a) recommendations on behaviour and practices to be adopted;
 - b) opinions on the compliance with the Code of acts, measures and procedures of the University whose content or scope requires an assessment of ethical issues, and proposals for amendments or improvements;
 - c) opinions on the acts and behaviours covered by the Code.
7. The investigative functions are performed by the Committee in accordance with the procedures set out in Art. 14 below.
8. The measures taken by the Committee must be justified. The Committee shall draw up and submit to the Rector an annual report on the activities carried out.



Art. 14 – Procedure for investigating breaches of the Code

1. The procedure for investigating breaches of the Code, which is started by reporting the fact to the Rector and submitting the proper documentation, may be initiated by any member of the university community who believes a breach of the Code has occurred. Allegations must be made in writing and signed, and must include the specific provisions of the Code that were allegedly violated. Allegations may also be made by former members of the university community, whose relationship with the University has ended for no more than six months.
2. Without prejudice to the provisions of Art. 15 below on mobbing and sexual harassment, the Rector shall initiate the procedure by forwarding the allegation and supporting evidence to the Chairman of the Committee and, at the same time, to the party concerned, within 20 days of receipt.
3. In the event of overlapping responsibilities in relation to an allegation, the Rector shall simultaneously summon the relevant institutional officers to define, if needed, the respective areas of intervention.
4. The Committee shall carry out the investigation process, which must be completed within 60 days of the start date of the procedure referred to in paragraph 2. The term shall be suspended for a period not exceeding 20 days if the need for further investigation arises. If there are no grounds for proceeding further, the Committee shall order the case to be dismissed, notifying the complainant, the party concerned and the Rector.
5. At the end of the investigation process, the Chairman of the Committee will forward the results to the Academic Senate which, in the immediately following session and in any case no later than 120 days of the start of the procedure, may apply the relevant sanctions.
6. The procedure referred to in the preceding paragraphs shall be carried out in a manner that ensures confidentiality for the person making the allegation and all parties involved, the right of defence and the principle of the right to be heard. To this end, the individual concerned by the allegation must be able to intervene in the procedure in his or her defence and must have an adequate time within which to examine the allegation, make deductions and, if necessary, call witnesses in his or her defence.
7. No third party access to the allegation and to other procedural documents shall be allowed until the procedure has been completed.
8. The applicable sanctions for infringements of the Code, as set out in Article 11 of the University Statute, shall be applied in accordance with the principle of proportionality and exhaustiveness. The sanction can only be applied for the infringement of provisions expressly stated in the allegation, and the measure to be taken must be adequately justified in relation to the principles of the Code that were violated and the outcome of the investigation.
9. In cases where the allegations concern cases referred to in the second paragraph of Art. 5 above, the Committee, if it deems it useful or necessary for the purposes of the investigation process, may obtain the opinion of the Confidential Counsellor, suspending the proceedings in progress for no more than 30 days. The Committee shall resume the proceedings once the opinion has been received.
10. If the case is dismissed and the allegation is found to be persecutory or defamatory, the Chairman of the Committee, upon request of the party concerned, shall initiate proceedings against the maker of the allegation for violation of Art. 4, paragraph 1, letter b), and Art. 6, paragraph 1, of the Code.
11. In case of violations of the Code attributable to the Chairman or members of the Committee, the investigation process will be carried out by a specific committee appointed by the Academic Senate.
12. Should a disciplinary matter arise from the allegation, the rules set out in the preceding paragraphs will not apply. In this case, the Rector shall report the case to the competent authorities, and shall forward the relevant documentation to the disciplinary bodies responsible for the university member concerned by the allegation, in order to ensure the timely initiation of the disciplinary procedure.



Art. 15 – Mobbing and sexual harassment

1. In the case of allegations concerning alleged bullying or sexual harassment, the Rector will forward the allegation directly to the Confidential Counsellor, who will follow the procedures outlined in a specific Regulation.

Art. 16 – Breaches of the Code of Ethics and disciplinary violations

1. In cases where conduct in violation of this Code also constitutes a disciplinary offence, the disciplinary sanction shall prevail, and will be valid for both disciplinary and ethical purposes.
2. Should a disciplinary matter arise from the investigation, the Chairman of the Committee will normally suspend the proceedings until the disciplinary procedure has been concluded.
3. Only if the disciplinary procedure is concluded without sanctions the Chairman of the Committee shall resume the procedure, which must be completed within 30 days of receipt of the notification of the outcome of the disciplinary procedure.

Art. 17 – Dissemination and implementation of the Code of Ethics

1. At the time of joining the university community, all members shall be provided with a copy of the Code;
2. The University shall promote the widest possible dissemination of the Code through publications, communications, conferences, educational activities and any other suitable means.
3. Where deemed appropriate, the University shall promptly take any measures necessary to implement the Code.