

# University of Vaasa Code of Conduct

Approved by the University Board on the 15 October 2021

**The Code of Conduct of the University of Vaasa applies to all members of the university community – teachers, researchers and other employees, as well as students and board members – regardless of their position or role in the organisation.**

We also expect our partners to comply with the Code of Conduct.

# Compliance with rules is everyone's responsibility

All our operations are based on responsibility, and therefore we comply with applicable laws and regulations as well as this Code of Conduct and other rules and guidelines of the University of Vaasa in all our operations.

Each member of the community is responsible for familiarising themselves with and complying with these laws, rules and guidelines, as well as any other specific rules applicable to their discipline or work.

The university ensures that every member of the community has access to these laws, rules and guidelines. The university also provides guidance in their application.

# A safe university

All members of our university community have the right to a safe, non-discriminatory and equal study and work environment. This also applies to virtual and digital environments. In all our actions, we behave well and with respect for others.

Threatening and violent behaviour, acts disturbing public order and referring to violence, physical and verbal intimidation, and discrimination and harassment are prohibited. If you experience a threat or harassment or notice any other inappropriate activity in the university's premises or tasks, you should contact an appropriate person, such as a caretaker, a teacher or your supervisor.

The University of Vaasa has a whistleblowing channel through which anyone who suspects activities that violate the university's guidelines can report the matter anonymously and confidentially. We can use the whistleblowing channel, for example, in situations where, for one reason or another, reporting is not possible through your supervisor or another university function.

The chair of the university's Internal Control Committee acts as the primary processor of the reports. If the report is submitted under the person's own name, they will receive feedback within the deadline. In connection with the processing of the reports, the timeliness of the university's guidelines is always examined.

# Equality, impartiality and mutual respect

People make the University of Vaasa. Members of the university community study to change the world, conduct world-class research, provide pioneering education, collaboratively reform society, and enable university operations by providing high-quality support services.

At the University of Vaasa, we support and respect human rights defined by the UN. Every member of the university community has the right to be treated with respect, regardless of gender, gender identity or gender expression, age, origin or nationality, language, religion, belief, opinions,

political activity, trade union activity, family relationships, health status, disability, sexual orientation or any other personal feature.

The university community in Vaasa is international and multicultural. We value different cultures and collaborating with people from different cultures. Respect for the local environment and culture of the university is important to us. It is important to act in a mutually agreed way.

We are committed to equality, impartiality and respect for others. This also means that we behave responsibly and respect the right of other members of our community to operate in a safe and

# Equality, impartiality and mutual respect

comfortable university environment where work and study can run smoothly.

We do not tolerate any kind of harassment and we actively address any observed harassment.

Within the limits set by law, teachers have the freedom to teach, researchers the freedom to study, and students the freedom to learn.

In our work environment, employees are recruited and careers progress only on the basis of the qualifications and abilities required for the position.

In recruitment, career path and promotion decisions concerning research positions,

we follow the principles of the national Responsible Researcher Evaluation and the recommendations of DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment). All members of the university community are encouraged to develop and promote their personal skills and abilities.

Guidelines for cases of harassment and bullying are set out in the occupational health and safety guidelines and the equality and non-discrimination plan which also applies to students. In the case of personnel, the person's supervisor or personnel group representative will be contacted. Students also have their own guidelines for situations of inappropriate treatment and harassment.

# Consideration of openness and responsibility in communication

We promote openness and foster an open academic dialogue, both in our learning and work environment and in interactions with our partners, stakeholders and the media. Our values encourage us to have courage, communality and responsibility. We have the freedom to think independently and be proactive – this is the cornerstone of academic thinking and education. At the same time, we understand that there is no openness and freedom without responsibility.

Irrespective of their position, the personnel of the University of Vaasa have a responsibility to behave in an exemplary manner and to foster the university's reputation. We use discretion in all public commenting and activities, including social media, and consider our loyalty obligations to the University of Vaasa. We also express clearly in all our public activities whether we are acting privately or as a representative of the University of Vaasa.

# Commitment to quality education and learning

The University of Vaasa strives to create and maintain an open operating culture that encourages creativity and continuous learning and in which established perceptions are questioned through research and teaching. The openness of our operations is also reflected in the fact that the causes of encountered problems are identified and solutions are clearly and comprehensibly justified.

We believe in the power of the desire for knowledge and encourage our students to seek some-thing new and to learn and do things in a new way. At the same time, however, we respect the copyrights and other intellectual property rights of others.

The University of Vaasa is committed to high-quality research and education, as well as to freedom of science and expression. The University of Vaasa and its teachers treat students equally, fairly and with respect. Students, in turn, are responsible for their own learning and development and undertake to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct and other rules and guidelines related to teaching and learning at the University of Vaasa.



# Good scientific practices are the basis of our research

Research and innovation are the foundation of our success and the core of our strategy. Our efforts to make scientific breakthroughs also involve responsibility for both the results and the ethics and practices followed in conducting research.

In our research and development activities, we follow research ethical principles and good scientific practice. These include practices recognised by the scientific community: honesty and general diligence and accuracy in research, recording and presentation of results, and evaluation of re-search and its results.

We are committed to following the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity, “Responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland”. The University of Vaasa does not accept any kind of cheating – fabrication, distortion, plagiarism or stealing.

The scientific community and our stakeholders expect us to be impartial, independent, responsible and trustworthy. We are committed to the principles of open science and research. We handle all materials appropriately and with ensured security.

# Sharing research results while respecting the intellectual property rights of others

Our vision commits us to high-quality research and societal impact. We strive to create and promote new ideas and concepts as well as innovation. We aim to make the information we convey clear and easy to understand.

We publish research results openly and promote the open use of innovations and other results of our work. In this way, we increase the university's societal impact as effectively as possible.

At the same time, however, we respect the intellectual property rights of others and the confidentiality of secret information. We take the necessary measures to protect intellectual and industrial property rights in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the University of Vaasa. The rights of our researchers to inventions are protected in accordance with legislation.

# Taking care of the property of the University of Vaasa

We respect the property of the University of Vaasa, which includes physical and financial assets as well as intangible assets and confidential information. The property of the University of Vaasa is primarily intended for research, teaching and study, as well as for the performance of related support tasks. Use of the property for other purposes requires separate agreements and instructions. The property of the University of Vaasa must be properly protected from damage and unauthorised use and loss.

Defects and deficiencies found in machines or other equipment and the study environment, as well as factors and activities that threaten safety, must be reported to the caretaker or IT support.

Commercial, political and other declaratory activities by parties outside the university are prohibited on campus without special permission. Behaviour in the premises provided for students must be appropriate, and the premises must be well maintained.

# Respect for privacy and information security

IT systems are an integral part of our operations. The purpose of the University of Vaasa's security rules is to protect these systems for the benefit of all users. As users, we comply with security requirements when processing and managing confidential information, regardless of its form, storage method or location.

We use the University of Vaasa's IT resources, systems, networks and applications (such as email) for the activities of the University of Vaasa, although the university also allows limited use of the systems for private purposes.

We respect privacy and are committed to complying with good personal data processing and privacy practices as well as applicable legislation. Any processing of personal data must have a legitimate basis, and the processing must be necessary for that purpose. It must also be fair, accurate, transparent and limited.

As users, we follow the University of Vaasa's security and privacy policies, rules and guidelines. Our documents are public unless public access is specifically restricted for imperative reasons.

# Working with partners

The University of Vaasa is a reliable partner. We want to understand the expectations of our partners and stakeholders and engage in dialogue with various parties.

Our key task is to understand and anticipate the needs of society. We want to be an active player in society and improve well-being and quality of life globally. This requires networking and extensive cooperation.

Our partners include many external actors such as other universities in research and student exchange programmes; business partners who support our operations or work with us in research programmes, and suppliers of goods and services.

We select reliable partners for cooperation who comply with applicable laws and principles in accordance with this Code of Conduct.

We strive to ensure that we acquire goods and services from responsible suppliers who are committed to international standards on human rights, good working conditions, the fight against corruption and environmental protection. We follow the rules applicable to public procurement and make all procurements in accordance with the procurement rules and guidelines of the University of Vaasa.

# Identifying, highlighting and avoiding conflicts of interest

Members of the university community are encouraged to be active in society and business. However, activities outside the University of Vaasa can sometimes cause a conflict of interest when the employee's personal interests or the interests of a third party compete with the interests of the University of Vaasa. A conflict of interest can be financial, non-financial, or both.

A conflict of interest can arise for many reasons. Conflicts of interest may arise, for example, from outside professional activities or opportunities to influence the University of Vaasa's relationship with third parties in ways that could provide a personal

financial benefit, or situations where decisions may be influenced by a relationship with the persons who are beneficiaries of those decisions or with persons otherwise associated with them.

In such a situation, we are committed to identifying, highlighting and avoiding actual financial and other conflicts of interest that could jeopardise or conflict with our responsibilities to the University of Vaasa or that could impair our ability to perform our duties properly at the university. We identify, highlight and seek to avoid situations in which such a conflict of interest appears to exist.

# Identifying, highlighting and avoiding conflicts of interest

The personnel of the University of Vaasa also have a special obligation to follow the rules related to disqualification. A person is disqualified if he or she relates to a case or party or those affected by a decision in a way that may compromise his or her impartiality in the case.

Every employee of the University of Vaasa must ensure that he or she does not handle matters or participate in the handling of matters when he or she is disqualified.

We follow the rules and guidelines of the University of Vaasa for reporting and reviewing actual and potential conflicts of interest and disqualification, and if necessary, we accurately provide all information to the university's secondary occupation register and related party register.

# Zero tolerance for corruption and bribery

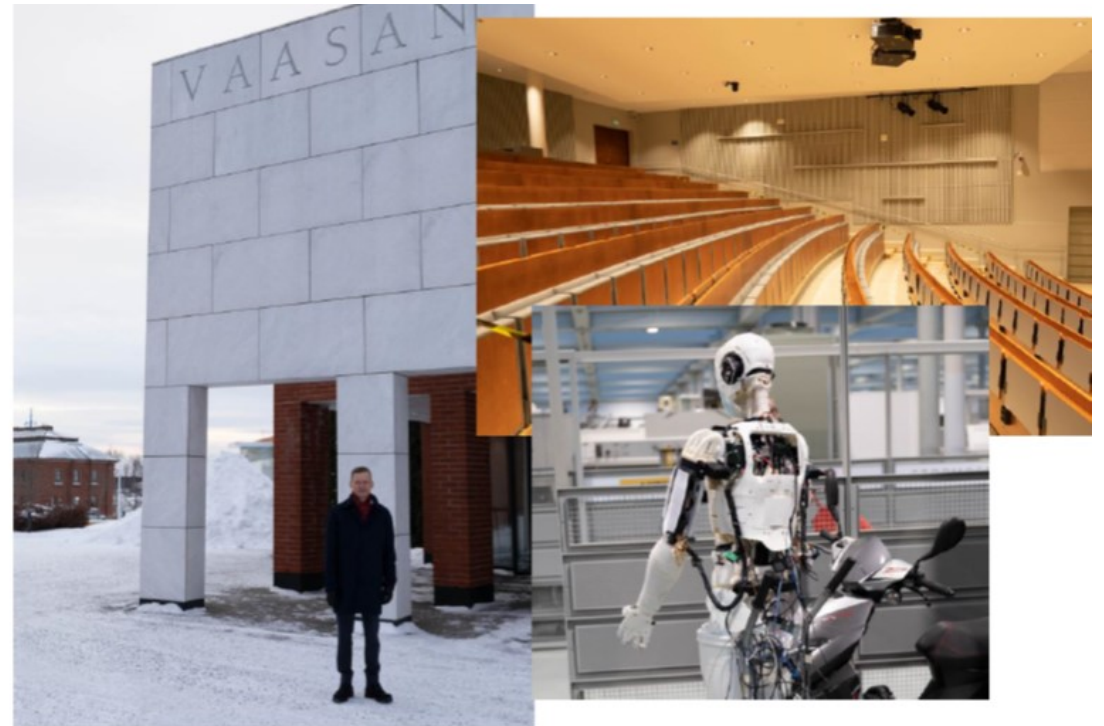
In all our relationships with external stakeholders, we consider our obligation to act honestly and to promote responsible practices. We do not accept bribery in any form and refrain from any action or behaviour that could appear to be bribery or give rise to suspicion or attempt of bribery. Hospitality may be provided or received sparingly, and it must always be justified from the point of view of the university's operations, reasonable in nature and value, and in accordance with the applicable rules and guidelines of the University of Vaasa.





# Openness and responsibility guide our fundraising

The University of Vaasa accepts donations related to the realisation of its purpose. Our fundraising principles are based on respect for the will of the donor, ethics and openness. We are committed to the values and principles of responsible fundraising of the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) and Vastuullinen Lahjoittaminen ry (Association for Responsible Donation). In all its activities, the University of Vaasa makes a clear distinction between gratuitous donation and cooperation for consideration.



# A healthy and safe work and learning environment

We are committed to providing healthy and safe working and learning conditions in accordance with the law. The University of Vaasa complies with all applicable laws and regulations and provides information and training on health and safety issues. Members of the university community follow health and safety practices.

The pursuit of scientific breakthroughs can lead us to work with unknown materials and new methods. Therefore, it is the responsibility of each individual to identify potential hazards and take the necessary protective measures.

At the University of Vaasa, we follow the principle of early intervention. Bringing up various problems and their follow-up guidance take place in accordance with separately agreed practices.

The university campus is non-smoking, and smoking is only allowed in designated areas. Our campus is developed to be physically accessible so that, for example, persons using wheelchairs can move without hindrance.

# Promoting sustainable development in all our activities

Ecologically, economically and socially sustainable development is an integral part of all the activities of the University of Vaasa. We are committed to considering the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to promoting sustainable development in our teaching, in the content and results of our research, and in our research processes and practices.

We use and develop our campus in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. We are actively working to increase the energy efficiency of our existing properties and to reduce energy consumption.

We promote the recycling and reuse of materials, and favour sustainable modes of transport, such as the use of bicycles and the campus bus. We strive to minimise the adverse environmental impacts of our operations and increase the positive impacts.

In its investment activities, the University of Vaasa considers factors related to the environment, social responsibility and good governance. We use fund managers who adhere to the UN Principles for Responsible Investment.

# Implementing the Code of Conduct of the University of Vaasa

It is the responsibility of each member of the university community to act in accordance with this Code of Conduct and to report suspected violations of the law, unethical activities or non-compliance with the Code of Conduct to an appropriate person, such as their supervisor, a teacher or a University of Vaasa lawyer, or anonymously in the university's whistleblowing channel.

Directors, teachers and supervisors have a special responsibility to follow the Code of Conduct, encourage their subordinates and students to do so, and identify and report suspected violations.

Reporting actual or potential violations of the Code of Conduct will not result in adverse consequences for the reporting person if the report was made appropriately.

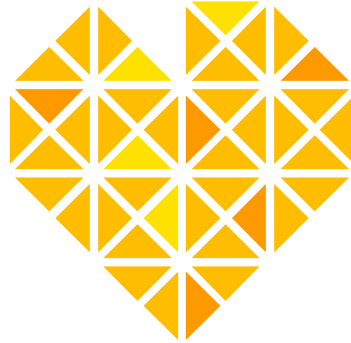
We deal with conflicts and suspicions of misconduct in accordance with established practices, first between the parties directly involved. If necessary, the suspicions are investigated under the supervision of a University of Vaasa lawyer.

# Implementing the Code of Conduct of the University of Vaasa

If a violation is found to have taken place, sanctions and disciplinary measures may be imposed on a person who has been involved in the violation or who has authorised the violation or whose negligence of reasonable care has allowed the violation to continue.

The disciplinary measures are assessed on a case-by-case basis in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

The University of Vaasa ensures that the necessary guidelines are clear and available and that members of the university community are informed of them so that violations can be avoided.



**Vaasan yliopisto**  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA