

The Code of Ethics of the University of Akureyri¹

Staff and students at the University of Akureyri (UNAK) form a community which is based on *justice, respect* and *responsibility*. In the name of these values, the members of the academic community adhere to the ethical obligations described in the following code of ethics. The Code of Ethics is also in the spirit of the fundamental values which UNAK policy 2007-2011 is based on, which are freedom, innovation, trust and equality.

The Code of Ethics is based on a clear distinction between lawful conduct on the one hand, and ethical conduct on the other. Even though these two overlap in many areas, they are in fact two separate things. We follow the law in every area but never forget to take ethical concerns into account.

The staff of UNAK is bound by UNAK's Code of Ethics, and the codes of ethics of professional organizations which they may be members of. Should employees find that there are any conflicting items in the above regulations, this should be reported to the relevant persons within UNAK.

The Code of Ethics of the University of Akureyri is founded on Regulations on the University of Akureyri No. 466/2007, Article 13 and Act on Higher Education Institutions No. 63/2006, Article 2. It contains references to current laws, as well as regulations and procedures which have been approved within UNAK. Such agreements are not a part of the Code of Ethics, but they serve its aims. Individual faculties and organisational units within the University can issue further regulations and guidelines for preferable conduct. Such regulations shall support the UNAK's Code of Ethics and may not be in conflict with it.

Justice and fairness

Equality

1. We do not discriminate between people, e.g. on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, religion or views. Bullying and harassment is never justifiable and we are alert any to signs of such behaviour. We do give preferential treatment based on personal connections.

- Gender Equality Plan for the University of Akureyri (2002)
- Policy on Equal Access to Study and Work at UNAK

Academic freedom

2. We respect academic freedom in research, teaching and studies. We acknowledge the right of individuals to tactfully criticize current laws, the policy of the government and the University authorities, and to voice unpopular or controversial views.

- A joint statement by Icelandic universities on academic freedom

¹ UNAK's Code of Ethics is modeled on the codes of ethics of various universities, both in Iceland and abroad. In particular, the codes of ethics of University of Iceland, Bifröst University, Reykjavik University, University of Southern California, University of Western Australia, and Murdoch University. Also used for reference were the ethical guidelines for university teachers which the Swedish Association of University Teachers (Sveriges universitetslärarförbund) approved in 2005.

Respect for people

Primary duty

3. Our work is based on respect for people, the environment and values.

Mutual respect

4. We respect the personal rights of our employees and students, and we show each other politeness in demeanour, speech and writing. We work together with integrity and avoid letting personal connections or interests influence our work. We respect each other's opinions and show each other tolerance. We take care to stick to the issues and be fair in our reviews, feedback and comments on others within the academic community.

Confidentiality

5. We maintain confidentiality regarding each other's personal issues and the personal issues of third parties. We show the utmost care wherever or whenever the issues of students or colleagues are being discussed.

Professional and personal responsibility

Primary responsibility in academic work

6. We seek knowledge with integrity and objectivity and emphasise a professional approach, critical thought and issues-based argumentation.

Responsibility in research

7. We always maintain honesty and good ethics in our research.

8. We respect intellectual property rights, which means that we do not take credit for the ideas and work of others. We refer to the sources which we use in accordance with academic conventions.

Rules of the University of Akureyri on Penalties for Plagiarism No. 727/2006

9. We safeguard the privacy and watch over the rights and interests of those who participate in our research. We treat animals we use in our research humanely.

The Science Ethics Committee homepage

The Data Protection Authority homepage

10. We are thorough in our research work and know that falsification or distortion of information and research results are inexcusable. If we make a mistake we acknowledge and correct them on the appropriate platform.

11. We respect the rights of research colleagues and ensure that their interests are safeguarded.

12. We avoid letting mutual interests affect research freedom or prevent accepted academic practices. We disclose the interests which are at play in our work.

13. As teachers and specialists, we publish the results of our research in the public arena, unless urgent and generally accepted reasons demand otherwise. We are open to issues-based criticism, collaboration and new ideas.

14. We publish our research results in our own name and as employees of the relevant institution within the University. Such results are not the opinions of the University of Akureyri.

15. We avoid overemphasizing the relevance of our own research or research area, especially in the public arena, for instance for the purpose of securing research grants.

Responsibility in teaching and studies

16. As teachers, we respect the rights of our students and keep their interests at heart.

17. As teachers we serve the students' education through proper guidance, appropriate demands, encouragement, and good example. Our teaching, guidance, training and course assessment meet the highest standards of our academic subjects in terms of best practices.

18. As teachers, we ensure that students receive in a timely manner correct information on what we require of them. We meet our obligations towards students and keep marking and delivery time for assignments to a minimum. Delivery of marks from half term examinations is discussed in the Examinations Rules. If there is any suspicion of student misconduct, we pursue the case in the appropriate manner.

Examination Rules with amendments No. 868/2004

Rules of the University of Akureyri on Penalties for Plagiarism No. 727/2006

Regulations of the Faculties of Social Sciences and Law on the responsibility of teachers

Regulation of the Faculty of Education on delivery dates

19. As teachers, we are aware of our uneven power balance towards students and take care not to abuse it. We do not start sexual relationships with students in our courses. If a loved one or family member (e.g. a parent, sibling, spouse, child, son-in-law, daughter-in-law or grandchild) becomes our student, we ensure that the course assessment is done by others.

20. As students, we are polite to our teachers and fellow students, obey reasonable requests and are honest in our dealings. We do not participate in misconduct, including cheating in exams or plagiarism.

Examination Rules with amendments No. 868/2004

Rules of the University of Akureyri on Penalties for Plagiarism No. 727/2006

Regulations of the Faculties of Social Sciences and Law on the responsibility of students

Responsibility in management, support services and general work

21. We perform our jobs honestly and conscientiously. We strive to provide our clients, and others who seek our help, with professional and good service regardless of their status. As managers we are particularly careful to consider the common good before private interests.

22. We safeguard the privacy and watch over the rights and interests of clients.

The Data Protection Authority homepage

23. We take full consideration of the Administrative Procedures Act and of accepted good administrative practices when handling all issues at UNAK.

The Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993, see especially Article 3 and Chapter VIII of the Act

24. We make sure that the information we provide is as correct and accurate as possible. We do not claim anything beyond our knowledge, but seek information or direct questions to the relevant persons.

25. We handle money and other valuables of the University with care. In particular we take care not to use properties of the University for our personal benefit or to give preferential treatment to those who we favour.

Regulations on safety and access to research and practical training areas and the equipment and chemical storage at the University of Akureyri

26. We guard the honour of the University of Akureyri and do not undertake anything which diminishes its reputation in society.

27. We know that issues-based criticism is always justified, including criticism of one's own institution. We practise issues-based and honest debate.

Environmental awareness

28. We have a responsible attitude towards the environment and the use of natural resources.

29. We realise that everyday human activities have various effects on the environment. Wherever there is any doubt concerning the consequences of these activities, the environment shall enjoy the benefit of the doubt. Our view on environmental disruption is both local and global.

UNAK's Environmental Policy (2005)

On the Ethics Committee and procedures for handling violations of the Code of Ethics

30. If an employee or a student becomes aware of a violation of the UNAK's Code of Ethics, s/he is obliged to report the issue by submitting a case to UNAK's Ethics Committee. A substantiated tip-off concerning a Code of Ethics violation shall always be investigated. The outcome of such an investigation shall never be held against the complainant and the complainant's name shall not be made public. False accusations can however violate other provisions of this Code of Ethics.

31. UNAK's Ethics Committee is an 'administrative board' as defined in the Administrative Practices Act. It determines if UNAK's Code of Ethics has been violated. Persons inside and outside the University may submit cases to the Committee, but the Committee itself does not initiate investigation of cases.

The Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993, see especially Article 3 and Chapter VIII of the Act

32. The University Council takes the initiative in establishing working procedures for the Ethics Committee and approves them. The regulations shall describe procedures for handling cases before the committee, including how the committee collects data and comments from the parties involved and how it solves cases and publishes its results. It bases its procedures on the procedures of the courts and public authorities, which are meant to guarantee impartiality and issues-based consideration.

33. The Ethics Committee's conclusion in a case shall be both substantiated and unambiguous. The Committee does not determine penalties for violations of the Code of Ethics, but gives its position on the seriousness of the violation and whether it was a repeated offence.

34. UNAK's Ethics Committee has the last word on the correct interpretation of UNAK's Code of Ethics. If the conclusion of the Committee indicates that the case involved a professional violation in the sense of the law, it refers the case to the Rector or to the relevant authorities, which will then take the appropriate measures in accordance with the law. In the case of a dispute or violation of regulations which are not part of the jurisdiction of UNAK's Ethics Committee, the Committee will

dismiss the case with a substantiated statement, and will, where applicable, advice on the proper channels for the case in question.

Thus approved in the 268th meeting of the University Council, 21 August 2008.

Þorsteinn Gunnarsson, Rector.

Sólveig Ása Árnadóttir Vice Chair of the University Council