

VARNA FREE UNIVERSITY “CHERNORIZETS HRABAR”

**ETHICAL CODE
FOR THE RESEACRH WORK AT VFU**

Varna, 2013

PREAMBLE

The Academic Council of VFU “Chernorizets Hrabar”, having regard to the acts of the European institutions and of the European Union (Magna Charta Univeristatum of 1988, the Sorbonne Declaration of 1998, the Bologna Declaration of 1999, the Lisbon Strategy of 2000, the European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers of 2005) concerning the establishment of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, as well as of the European knowledge-based economy, hereby expresses their determination to work persistently for turning them into specific research and educational university policies. One key approach for their implementation is to combine the legal and ethical norms for organizing and conducting researches. The moral aspect of this activity has a strong impact on the scientific work of the researchers at VFU and its users.

Led by this conviction, the Academic Council hereby adopts the following **Ethical Code for the Research Work at VFU**, which concerns the university’s lecturers, as well as its Ph.D., Master’s and Bachelor’s degree students.

I. FREEDOM OF CREATIVE WORK AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. The researchers at VFU, as authors of scientific production (products and services) benefit from the right of free creative work and its unimpeded presentation to the society. They are entitled to clarify and defend their scientific theses and convictions within the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Bulgaria, and seek public and government protection in case of illicit infringement of this right.

2. The researchers bear moral responsibility for the observation of the Ethical Code before the society, VFU, the scientific community, the professional circle of colleagues and the students.

II. MORAL OBLIGATIONS OF A RESEARCHER AS AN AUTHOR OF CREATIVE WORK

As an author of creative work, a researcher is morally obliged:

1. To take into account VFU’s priority scientific fields in the selection of research topics and adhere to the requirement for their high and contributive scientific (applied research, artistic-and-creative) value. To consider any potential unfavourable moral or other effect of the scientific results on the society with this choice, and show consciousness and will to prevent that.

2. To try to obtain trustworthy scientific results by using suitable and true evidence and make well-grounded conclusions from it.

3. Not to allow (in any form whatsoever, nor in any scale) and not to cover any plagiarism, while demanding the same from the students.

4. To observe the established rules for working with classified information.

5. When working in a team, to show a spirit of partnership and willingness for collaborative fulfillment of the research tasks.

6. In case of co-authorship, to respect the opinion of the partner-author, and justly acknowledge the way and scale of involvement of each co-author in the scientific work.

7. Not to prevent, but facilitate the preliminary discussion of the work at an organized scientific discussion, show tolerance towards any critical opinions and respect them.

8. During the conducting of empirical studies, not to discredit the honour, nor afflict the dignity, good name or personal life of the people involved, or threaten their physical or mental health.

9. To be honest and responsible in fulfilling the contractual and legal obligations in respect to those assigning the research tasks.

10. To present publicly and trustworthily the results from the completed research work.
11. To assist any audit at any stage of the research.

III. MORAL OBLIGATIONS TO OTHER RESEARCHERS, VFU AND THE SOCIETY

1. As an author of scientific reviews and other types of expert assessments, the researcher is obliged to present them upon having independently, impartially and profoundly explored the relevant scientific productions and objectively pointed out their strengths and weaknesses.

2. With the fulfillment of his/her assigned functions, the researcher is obliged to keep and not make public the official and other type of information used by him/herself without the consent of its bearers.

3. In cases of a conflict of interests, the researcher is obliged to challenge him/herself from the assigned expert task.

4. With the assessment of scientific works, the researcher is obliged to take into account the moral requirements for fair treatment and respect to the authors, and provide objective, balanced and well-grounded positions concerning their works. Subject of assessment should be the importance of the problem, the consistence and argumentation of the statement, the validity of the results and conclusions, and not the view of the world, the personal or professional qualities of the author.

5. The researcher, who is in a training circle, should maintain professional relations with his/her research adviser and acknowledge the contribution of the latter for his/her scientific study.

6. The researcher should take unselfish care of the colleagues, who are junior to him/her in respect to their work experience and rank in the academic hierarchy, and support their research development.

7. As a lecturer, the researcher is obliged to present fairly and tolerantly the pluralism of methods, opinions, concepts and scientific schools, as well as be politically neutral and attentive to students' questions and scientific interests.

8. The researcher is obliged to show team-spirit in the relations with the academic staff.

9. The researcher has no right to coerce other people into breaching the requirements of the legislation and ethics, nor use any dishonest means for achieving personal benefits.

10. The researcher is obliged to implicitly observe the intellectual property rights.

11. The researcher should be unselfish in his/her activities and intolerable to any corruption practices.

12. The researcher should be loyal to VFU "Chernorizets Hrabar", and should not discredit its reputation with his/her overall activities and individual conduct.

13. A moral obligation of the researcher is to undertake and fulfill research assignments only within his/her professional capacity and not mislead anyone else about his/her research competence.

14. The researcher should maintain and enhance his/her professional qualification in line with the principle of "lifelong learning".

15. The conduct of the researcher, both in his/her public and everyday life, should meet the social norms for professional and scientific engagement.

CONCLUSIVE PROVISIONS

1. The norms, regulated in this Code, refer to researchers' activities both on the territory of Bulgaria and abroad.

2. A Committee for Academic Ethics is established to ensure the operation of the Ethical Code and facilitate the resolution of conflicts, where the statute of the latter is regulated by a university bylaw.

3. The Ethical Code shall be presented for implementation to the researcher with the arising of contractual labour relations. The failure to fulfill its norms shall constitute breaching of the labour discipline under the Labour Code with the relevant consequences stipulated therein.

4. Art. 3 of the Conclusive Provisions shall be applied also in case of arising of legal relations under a contract for part-time employment. The non-fulfillment of or breaching any norm of the Ethical Code may provide grounds for terminating the contractual relations.

The Ethical Code for the Research Work is adopted by a resolution of the Academic Council of VFU – Protocol No 11/ 17.08.2012.