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*Erasmus+KA2 DEFEP project
Distance Education for Future: best EU practices in response to the requests
of modern higher education seekers and labor market*



TYPICAL CODE OF ETHICS

(in the distance form of higher education)



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PREAMBLE

- The Typical Code is not an original text and the compilers do not claim authorship or original source.
- The Typical Code was developed as part of the Erasmus+KA2 DEFEP project "Distance Education for Future: best EU practices in response to the requests of modern higher education seekers and labor market".
- The Typical Code is based on existing European and national practices, regulations, methodological developments of individual higher education institutions, as well as on materials and cases from the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine, the National Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education, etc.
- The Typical Code takes into account the experience of DEFEP partner universities from Ukraine, Moldova, Germany, Spain, Italy, and the results of a sociological survey, analytical report, and monograph completed as part of the project.

- The Typical Code is applicable to distance learning in higher education.
- The Typical Code takes into account the peculiarities associated with digital technologies and the remote format of organizing the educational process in a distance form. At the same time, the basic principles, rules and requirements governing the interaction between participants in the educational process described in the Typical Code are universal for all forms of higher education.
- On the basis of the Typical Code, a higher education institution develops its own Code of Ethics (hereinafter referred to as the Code) or implements the provisions of the Typical Code relating to distance learning in the relevant provisions of the higher education institution.

CONTENT

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES	4
2. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PARTICIPANTS	5
3. HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM	6
4. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY	6
5. BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION	8
6. USE OF TECHNOLOGY	8
7. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS	9
8. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES	10
9. ANTI-CORRUPTION WARNINGS	10
10. FINAL PROVISIONS	11

The Code of Ethics (hereinafter — the Code) plays an important role in ensuring the ethical behavior of all participants in the educational process in the online environment. Such a code defines a set of principles, rules and requirements that regulate the interaction between participants in the educational process and ensure an ethical standard in distance learning.

This Code is an integral part of distance education and forms the basis for establishing and maintaining high standards of ethical behavior by all participants. All participants in the educational process are obliged to adhere to these principles and contribute to the creation of a positive and ethical educational environment in a distance format.

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The general principles of the Code define the basic values and norms of behavior that must be observed by all participants in the educational process, such as seekers, academic staff, administration and other stakeholders. These general principles form the basis for creating an ethical environment in distance education and help ensure the quality and integrity of the educational process.

The main principles of ethics in distance education are as follows:

1.1. *The principle of respect for the other* — respect and consideration for the rights and dignity of other participants in the distance education process; tolerance for the diversity of views, beliefs, cultural and personal traits of each person;

1.2. *The principle of integrity* — avoiding any form of plagiarism, forgery and preventing any other violation of intellectual property rights;

1.3. *The principle of trust* — building trust in each other through openness, honesty and responsibility for one's actions;

1.4. *The principle of responsibility* — compliance with rules and requirements, fulfillment of duties, and a responsible approach to learning and teaching; all participants in the distance education process must take responsibility for their actions and the consequences of these actions;

1.5. *The principle of equity* — equal opportunities for all participants in the distance education process; prevention of discrimination or inequality in any form; equal access to resources and opportunities;

1.6. *The principle of professional ethics* — to maintain confidentiality, protect intellectual property rights, and ensure the safety and comfort of all parties.

1.7. *Non-interference with learning* — creating favorable conditions for learning and development for all participants; no action or inaction should interfere with the education process.

2. RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF PARTICIPANTS

This section defines the basic rights and obligations of seekers, academic staff, administration and other participants in the educational process. This section is aimed at ensuring equal conditions for all participants and establishing clear standards of interaction.

2.1. *The rights of seekers:*

- the right to quality education and access to the necessary educational materials;
- the right to confidentiality of personal information and protection of privacy;
- the right to an objective assessment of knowledge and an honest reflection of their achievements;
- the right to participate in various educational activities and programs without any form of discrimination;
- the right to express their thoughts, ideas and questions about the educational process;

2.2. *Responsibilities of seekers:*

- the obligation to comply with the ethical standards and rules set forth in the Code;
- the obligation to be an active participant in the educational process;
- the obligation to fulfill all the requirements of the training programs and to comply with the established rules and deadlines;

2.3. *The rights of research and teaching staff:*

- the right to professional and academic freedom in educational activities;
- the right to an objective assessment of seekers' work and a free choice of teaching methods;
- the right to protect intellectual property and copyrights to educational materials;
- the right to professional development and support from the administration;

2.4. *Duties of research and teaching staff:*

- commitment to providing quality education remotely and supporting seekers in the learning process;
- the obligation to adhere to ethical norms and principles, including avoiding any form of discrimination;
- the obligation to provide clear and accessible training materials and information about the course;
- the obligation to conduct an objective assessment of seekers' work and ensure honesty and transparency in interaction;

2.5. *The rights of the administration:*

- the right to manage and organize the educational process;
- the right to establish rules and requirements governing the activities of participants in the distance education process;
- the right to determine the strategy for the development of distance education and the introduction of necessary innovations;

- the right to support and create conditions for the professional development of research and teaching staff and seekers;
- 2.6. *Responsibilities of the administration:*
- commitment to ensure the effective functioning of the distance education platform and infrastructure;
 - the obligation to ensure the availability and quality of training resources for all participants;
 - the obligation to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings between participants in the distance education process;
 - the obligation to ensure the security and confidentiality of participants' personal information.

3. HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

This section establishes rules for avoiding plagiarism and other forms of unfair behavior that violate copyright and ethical standards. The provisions of this section of the Code are aimed at creating a conscious, ethical and responsible approach to research and learning activities in distance education. The main rules are:

- *A clear definition of plagiarism* as the use of someone else's intellectual material (texts, ideas, images, research, or other creative products) without proper acknowledgment of the source;
- *Prohibition of plagiarism* — establishing a categorical ban on any form of plagiarism in all academic work, including term papers, essays, projects, laboratory reports, and other types of assignments;
- *Awareness of plagiarism* — emphasizing the importance of understanding the consequences of plagiarism by seekers and academic staff;
- *Instructions for citation and use of sources* — explanation of the rules for correct citation and use of information sources with appropriate citation formats to seekers and research and teaching staff;
- *Informing about the consequences of violating the rules* — informing participants of the distance education process about the possible consequences of violating the rules on plagiarism, including possible sanctions and loss of trust;
- *Use of specialized plagiarism detection programs* to check seekers' work and determine the originality of materials;
- *Educational work* — organizing educational events and trainings for participants of the educational process on ethical writing and use of sources;
- *Support and counseling* — ensuring the availability of advisory support and resources for seekers and academic staff on citation and plagiarism avoidance;
- *Plagiarism review procedures* — establishing procedures for reviewing complaints and cases of plagiarism violations with the possibility of determining appropriate sanctions.

4. SECURITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

This section is important for ensuring the protection of personal data of participants in the educational process and creating a safe environment for their activities. The guidelines provided in this section of the Code are aimed at ensuring a high level of protection of personal data and confidentiality of information of distance education participants and maintaining their trust in the educational process.

- *Confidentiality of personal data* - the obligation to maintain the confidentiality of participants' personal information, including educational data, contact information, medical information, etc;
- *Protection against unauthorized access* - ensuring the security and protection of personal data from unauthorized access or information leakage through the implementation of appropriate technical and organizational measures;
- *Encryption and data protection* - the use of encryption and other technologies to protect personal information and confidential data during transmission over the Internet or storage on servers;
- *Data access policy* - development of a data access policy that defines the rights and restrictions on access to information for different categories of users;
- *Monitoring of security systems* - conducting regular reviews and audits of security systems to identify potential threats and improve security measures;
- *Security breach notification* - establishing procedures to immediately notify participants of possible security breaches;
- *Data security education* - informing participants of the educational process about data security rules, protection methods and actions in case of a privacy breach;
- *Compliance with legal requirements* - compliance with the requirements of the current legislation on personal data protection and information confidentiality;
- *Breach response* - taking immediate action in the event of a security breach or confidential information leak to minimize damage and restore trust.

5. BEHAVIOR AND COMMUNICATION

This section aims to ensure mutual respect, openness and constructive communication between participants, as well as to create a positive and friendly environment for learning and collaboration. The principles outlined in this section help to build positive and productive relationships between participants in the online learning environment and contribute to the achievement of common learning and development goals, including:

- *Respect for the interlocutor* — the obligation to show respect for the interlocutor's opinion, experience and emotions in the course of communication;
- *Courtesy and tolerance* — behavior should be free of any form of insult, harassment or distrust;
- *Honesty and transparency* — a commitment to be honest and transparent in all communications, avoiding false information and deception;
- *Responsibility for words and actions* — understanding responsibility for words and actions in online communication and learning activities;
- *Conflict avoidance* is the implementation of measures to avoid conflicts and engage in constructive dispute resolution;
- *Respectful discussion of diverse points of view* — encouraging the free exchange of ideas and diversity of views, as well as the ability to listen and understand other positions;
- *Prohibition of discrimination* — a strong prohibition of any form of discrimination based on race, gender, religion, nationality, orientation or other characteristics;
- *Culture of communication* is the development of a culture of communication in the distance learning environment that involves politeness, openness, interest, and mutual understanding;
- *Effective communication* — promoting effective communication that includes clarity, specificity and openness;
- *Support for collegiality* — creating an atmosphere of mutual assistance, cooperation and support among participants in the distance education process.

6. USE OF TECHNOLOGY

This section sets out the principles and requirements for the ethical, responsible and safe use of technology in the learning process. This section aims to ensure the effectiveness and reliability of technology tools used for learning and communication in an online environment. The principles presented in this section help to ensure the ethical, safe and productive use of technology in distance education, which contributes to the achievement of the best learning outcomes and promotes the development of the educational process.

- *Protection against cybercrime* — being aware of potential cybercrime threats and taking measures to protect against them;

- *Legal use of software and materials* — using only legal software and materials for educational purposes and respecting copyrights;
- *Ethical use of information* — recognition of rights and obligations regarding the ethical use of information in the online environment, avoidance of plagiarism and compliance with intellectual property principles;
- *Accessibility* — ensuring that learning resources and information are accessible to all participants, including people with disabilities;
- *Optimal use of technology* — using technology to its maximum effectiveness and optimizing its use to achieve learning objectives;
- *Transparency and openness* — ensuring transparency and openness in the use of technology, providing information on the use and processing of data;
- *Digital literacy support* — development and support of digital literacy among participants, providing the necessary knowledge and skills for safe and effective use of technology.

7. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACTIONS

This section defines the principles, responsibilities, and consequences of responsible behavior of participants in the online learning environment. It aims to ensure responsible and ethical behavior of all participants in the learning environment, as well as to create an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. Key principles:

- *Awareness of the consequences of actions, with* participants understanding that their actions may have consequences for learning, other participants, and the distance learning environment;
- *Ethics and honesty* — the obligation to adhere to ethical principles and be honest in all interactions, including in academic work, responses, and communication;
- *Responsibility for one's own actions* — awareness of one's own responsibility for one's actions and their consequences in the context of learning and communication in a remote environment;
- *Compliance with rules and standards* — compliance with all established rules, regulations, and standards that govern the learning process in distance education;
- *Interaction and cooperation* — responsibility for promoting positive interaction and cooperation with other participants in the distance education process;
- *Fulfillment of duties* — timely and high-quality completion of all training tasks, compliance with the schedule and other requirements;
- *Responsibility for safety* — the obligation to take care of one's own and others' safety while learning in an online environment, to avoid actions that may create risks;
- *Response to violations* — detection and immediate reporting of any violations of the ethical principles and rules of the Code, as well as taking measures to resolve them; participants are obliged to mutually notify each other of any

circumstances that may affect the distance education process or the safety of participants.

8. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS PROCEDURES

This section establishes mechanisms for participants of the educational process to address complaints, suggestions or other important issues. This section aims to ensure an effective and transparent process of reviewing appeals and solving problems that arise in the course of distance education. Here is a detailed analysis of this section:

- *The purpose of the complaints and appeals procedures is to* establish the principles for reviewing complaints and appeals in order to resolve conflicts, identify problems, and improve the quality of the distance learning process;
- *The right to file complaints and appeals* — ensuring that participants in the distance learning process have the right to file complaints and appeals in accordance with the established procedures;
- *Transparency of procedures* — ensuring accessibility and transparency of complaints and appeals procedures for all participants in the distance education process;
- *Mechanisms for submitting complaints and appeals* — identifying different ways to submit complaints and appeals, including electronic forms, written letters, phone calls, etc;
- *Timeframes for review* — setting clear timeframes for reviewing complaints and appeals to ensure that problems are resolved quickly and efficiently;
- *Confidentiality and protection of personal data* — ensuring the confidentiality and protection of personal data of participants in the distance education process who file complaints and appeals;
- *Principles of objectivity and fairness* — adherence to the principles of objectivity and fairness in the consideration of complaints and appeals, avoidance of conflicts of interest and bias;
- *Informing about the results of consideration* — notifying the filers of complaints and appeals about the results of their consideration and decisions made;
- *Possibility of appeal* — ensuring the possibility of filing an appeal in case of unsatisfactory consideration of the complaint.

The principles set out in this section of the Code contribute to the creation of an open and democratic environment in distance education, where all participants in the educational process have the opportunity to express their opinions, make complaints and help solve any problems.

9. ANTI-CORRUPTION WARNINGS

9.1. Participants in the educational process fully comply with the basic principles of corruption prevention, ensure regular assessment of corruption risks in

their activities, take appropriate measures to prevent and resolve conflicts of interest and corrupt practices that may arise in the performance of their duties.

9.2. Participants of the educational process are obliged to comply with the requirements of the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention of Corruption".

9.3. Participants in the educational process are strictly prohibited from directly or indirectly using their official powers or related opportunities to obtain or accept unlawful benefit or accepting a promise/offer of such benefit for themselves or others, or to make promises/offers or unlawful benefit to a person, referred to in part one of Article 3 of the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention of Corruption", or at his/her request to other individuals or legal entities in order to induce this person to unlawfully use his/her official powers or related opportunities.

9.4. For the commission of corruption or corruption-related offenses participants in the educational process shall be held criminally, administratively, civilly and disciplinarily liable in accordance with the procedure established by law.

10.FINAL PROVISIONS

10.1. Each participant in the educational process is responsible for compliance with the provisions of this Code; Violation of ethical standards may result in appropriate sanctions in accordance with the internal rules and procedures of the University;

10.2. Conflicts arising in connection with the application of this Code shall be resolved in accordance with the established internal control and mediation procedures to ensure a fair and objective resolution of the situation.

10.3. This Code is consistent with other rules and documents governing distance education at the University.

10.4. The Code shall be approved by the Academic Council of the University and put into effect by an order of the Rector of the University or a person authorized to perform his/her duties.

10.5. This Code comes into force from the moment of its adoption and publication and applies to all participants in the educational process. It is mandatory for use and compliance in all aspects of distance education.

10.6. This Code may be reviewed and modified to take into account changes in legislation, technological changes, as well as feedback and suggestions from participants in the distance education process. Any changes require the consent of the responsible persons and notification of all interested parties

10.7. Amendments and/or additions to the Code shall be reviewed and approved by the Academic Council of the University and put into effect by order of the Rector of the University or a person authorized to perform his/her duties.