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Abstract	The following document is a report on the current situation of the ethics committee at the University of Novi Sad
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Report on the current situation of the ethics committee at the University of Novi Sad

1. Introduction

Ethical problems in research until recently were rarely in the centre of interest of scientific community. Faculties of medicine and institutions doing experiments on animals were exception due to the nature of their research. But recently several high profile scandals concerning plagiarism attracted huge attention of the public opinion in the country. European capacity building projects like TEMPUS and ERASMUS+ contributed to the rise of awareness of ethical issues related to the work in scientific institutions. Those institution develop lately their bodies supposed to tackle those problems. Still, the decisions are brought with a lot of difficulties because the culture of solidarity with colleagues participating in non-ethical activities is very strong. It seems that ethical issues in research attract growing interest and we can expect the rising interest for the decisions and solutions brought by the responsible bodies. University of Novi Sad shares those common characteristics.

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2. National legal framework in the partner country

- Law on scientific and research activities (LSRA)
- Law on higher education (LHE)
- Labor relations act (LRA)
- The basis for the Code of academic integrity at higher education institutions in the Republic of Serbia (National Council for Higher Education at its meeting held on 24th October 2016)

Information about what regulates ethics in research and academic integrity in the HEIs in your country.

Statute of the UNINS

Code of Academic integrity (December 2016) defines an ethical principles in higher education and scientific research at the University, the publication of scientific results, relation to the intellectual property, relations between teachers and associates, other employees and students, procedures for the University and its units, teaching staff and students in legal actions, as well as in relation to the public and the media.

Code of Academic integrity determines the form of education and the work of ethics committee, disciplinary actions, the responsibility of teachers for the violation of the Code of Professional Ethics and serious (disciplinary offenses) and lighter (disciplinary irregularities) breaches of duty.

3. Bodies responsible for ethics at your university

Authorities involved in the procedure for determining violations of academic conduct are:

- **Ethical Commission** of the higher education institutions (faculty) as a first instance body to be elected for a term of three years;
- **Professional body** (Scientific council) of a higher education institution;
- **An expert commission** created on the proposal of the ethical committee of the higher education institutions for the establishment of facts and making proposals for the treatment of other organs in the process, for the period up to completion of the procedure for which it was formed;
- **The executive body** of the higher education institution, which is obliged to ensure the implementation of the procedure for determining violations of academic conduct within the deadlines stipulated by the Code and other general acts;
- **Ethics commission** of the University as a second degree body, which is elected for a term of three years.

The authorities of the appeal are:

- **Ethical Commission** of the University;
- **Appeal expert commission**;
- **Professional body of the University- the Senate.**

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All participants in the process of establishing a breach of academic conduct are obliged to comply with the standards prescribed by the Code, and in the case of violation are subject to the measures laid down in the Code.

A request to establish the violation of academic conduct may be submitted by:

- Employees in the higher education institution;
- Students;
- Other persons;
- Organs and the bodies of higher education institutions and research organizations.

When the Commission finds that the request is justified and contains all the required elements, ethical commission shall within eight days of its reception, submit a request to the person against whom the proceedings are initiated.

The person against whom the proceedings are initiated within 15 days may submit a written plea to the request.

It is believed that the delivery was made when it is done via e-mail.

If the first instance ethics committee determines that the person against whom the proceedings were initiated, tries to avoid to receive the request, or if it does not declare in writing in prescribed period, ethics committee can bring Conclusion, within a period of not less than 25 and not more than 30 days from the date of application, that there is a reasonable suspicion of the existence of non-academic conduct.

First instance ethics committee is in obligation to notify in writing without delay the competent body of the University. The competent authority of the University may at any time request a report on the progress of the proceedings conducted in the home institution.

At its next session, the expert authority (scientific council) of the home institution begins the formation of the expert commission and the appointment of two members.

At the same session it indicates a written request to the competent authority of the University and the National Council for Higher Education to appoint one member of the expert commission.

The Commission works in full force and decides by the majority vote of all members.

Persons who previously wrote a positive review of the candidates work, mentor and members of the evaluation committee and the committee for the defense of the thesis, the signatories of the report, and the person who initiated the process, cannot be members of the commission.

The expert commission must bring the decision within 60 days of its formation by the majority of votes and submit it to the first instance ethical committee.

First degree ethics commission shall, within 15 days of the reception of the opinion of the expert commission, prepare a report with an opinion and submit it to the managing authority of the institution.

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Professional authority (Scientific council) brings a decision by a majority vote of the total number of its members, at its next session.

Based on the decision of the professional body of the home institution, finding a violation of academic conduct, the executive of the institution shall impose the measure for the violation of the Code within 15 days.

The person against whom the measure has been ordered, and the person who started proceedings may, within 15 days of the decision, address an appeal to the second instance authority on professional ethics, which was established by the general act of the University. The second instance authority when examining allegations of appeal, may ask for additional explanations of all the participants in the proceedings, as well as other experts, who did not appear in the first instance.

Within 60 days of the reception of the appeal, the appellate body for professional ethics has to bring a decision by confirming or reversing the decision of the first instance, or by canceling it and ordering a repetition of the procedure.

The decision of the second instance authority for professional ethics is final and shall be communicated to the appellant, the home institution and the National Council for Higher Education.

The authorities of the appeal are:

- Ethical Commission of the University;
- Appeal expert commission;
- Professional body - the Senate.

4. Institution's own legal framework

Statute of the University of Novi Sad	28-09-2015
Code of the academic integrity at the University of Novi Sad	13-01-2017

-Statutes and rules and regulations of faculties

- Rules of Procedure to determine violation of the Code of Professional Ethics of Science – Faculty of sciences

- Rules of Procedure of the Committee of Ethics of the Medical Faculty in Novi Sad (12.2001)

- Rules on working with experimental animals (07.2011)

Statute of the UNINS: First procedure for determining the existence of a violation of moral principles and standards established by the Code and the imposition of the measures is implemented by the appropriate authority of the faculty.

Senate appoints the Ethics Committee to conduct the second degree procedure, to give an opinion on the existence of a violation of moral principles and standards established by the *Code*

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of Professional Ethics (Code of Academic integrity from 2016) and proposes to the Senate as the second instance authority appropriate decisions within its competence.

The method of appointment and dismissal of members of the Ethics Committee and the procedure for determining violations of the Code shall be regulated by the general act adopted by the Senate.

5. Remarks/Suggestions for improvement

Improve and enhance the efficiency of the work of the Ethical committees. Consider the possible effects of the existing sanctions and their adaptation.

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