

Code of Ethics of the University of Girona (UdG)

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Code of Ethics of the University of Girona (UdG)

Preamble

The University is an institution dedicated to training, research and the transfer of knowledge, which it generates, transmits, disseminates and shares, and an institution committed to society and its own community. On their own, this nature and purpose of the institution are not sufficient: an essential issue is how it carries out its functions and on what principles it bases its actions. The only response to these questions is that it does so in an ethical way, that ethics is the foundation of every one of its actions, thoughts and reflections, generally in the institution as a whole and more specifically in each individual in the university community.

For all these reasons, the UdG needs a code of ethics, a compilation of the ethical principles or values that embody this nature and helps the institution successfully develop the public service entrusted to it. These principles must be general enough to provide an adequate framework to govern university life and specific to each of its functions (ethics in research, knowledge transfer, teaching, management, etc.).

The principles or values that guide and organise this code are freedom, integrity, equality and engagement, which manifest themselves a number of ways.

The application of this code of ethics is in accordance with the basic principles of the Statutes of the UdG and the fundamental rights of individuals as set out in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Breaches of the principles of this code of ethics may be the subject of investigation, insofar as the legislation in force provides for their classification and possible sanctioning in accordance with administration measures and guarantees.

1. FREEDOM

Freedom is a fundamental principle that enables the generation of knowledge and ideas. It is a vehicle for interpersonal relationships in the community and defines a space for reflection at the service of citizenship and society, independent of any pressure groups.

The institution

- The UdG must contribute to the construction of a free and democratic society through its own functions.
- The UdG must promote critical thinking and reflection, dialogue, creativity, pluralism and mutual respect among the members of the community in all activities that take place within it, based always on scientific rigour and respect for the principles that form the basis of this code.
- The UdG is an open and inclusive space for the free expression of ideas and thoughts, and must encourage critical reflection, respecting the rights and dignity of the people who study or work there.
- The UdG must guarantee university autonomy, a right based on the principle of academic freedom, reflected in the freedom to teach, to conduct research and to study, which are basic conditions for the development of its own functions.

People

- People in the university community must be able to express themselves, assemble and demonstrate freely, and have their voices heard.
- People in the community must be able to carry out their responsibilities, work and study without coercion or abuse of power.
- People in the community must be able to express their beliefs while engaged in academic, research, knowledge transfer and management activities, in accordance with the constitutional principles of a pluralistic and democratic society.

2. EQUALITY

Equality of access and opportunity is a principle that defines a high-quality public university. The UdG must guarantee mechanisms to become a place of inclusive education. It should contribute actively to the enjoyment of equal rights and opportunities, making them available to all people irrespective of their social status, cultural background or educational needs.

The UdG must create mechanisms and positive actions to achieve equity and correct existing structural inequalities based on culture, economics, gender, sexual identity or orientation, or disability, and must denounce and reverse the different types of sexism, LGBTIQ+, racism, xenophobia and any other form of discrimination.

The institution

- The UdG must actively promote policies that guarantee equality and equity in all its functions and dimensions: teaching and training, research and transfer, governance and strategy, campus life and social engagement.
- The UdG must guarantee equal opportunities in access, promotion, and working and studying conditions for people in the community.
- The UdG must provide mechanisms to avoid any type of discrimination or violation of the right to equality, and to respond effectively whenever it occurs.

People

- All people should be respected, regardless of their social status, cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other characteristic or circumstance.
- All the people who form part of the UdG (students, teaching and research staff and administrative and service staff) should show respect. Whether in their place of study or work or in their relations with other people in the community, they must respect the actions, regulations and policies of the University that ensure equality and the defence of vulnerable groups, while denouncing conduct that does not respect them.
- Interpersonal relationships must be rooted in the utmost respect for the equal dignity of all persons, which precludes their instrumentalisation and any kind of aggressive, derogatory, humiliating or similar treatment.
- Relationships between members of the university community must develop in conditions of complete freedom, without any kind of coercion or abuse of power. In circumstances where there is a structural asymmetry or inequality (e.g., faculty-student, permanent faculty-temporary faculty, etc.), the person in power is responsible for ensuring compliance with these conditions.

3. INTEGRITY

Integrity is a principle that must permeate all actions carried out at the UdG, in individual actions as well as in implemented mechanisms and procedures. It includes a

series of sub-principles applied in study and work situations and in the relationships between people and in the performance of their responsibilities.

The institution

- The UdG must develop the necessary mechanisms to guarantee academic integrity, honesty and transparency in research, teaching, knowledge transfer, management and study.
- The UdG will ensure the confidentiality of processes in which the right to privacy of individuals may be affected.
- The UdG must develop policies and regulations to avoid conflicts of interest.
- The UdG must perform its institutional functions with the most scrupulous respect for the values of public service, and staff must refrain from acting for personal gain and not take advantage of the privilege of holding public office.

People

- Everyone working at the UdG must act with academic integrity in the pursuit of research and the dissemination of knowledge, the development of student capacities and the achievement of the university's goals. They must never plagiarise, copy or cheat in academic life and activity.
- All students at the UdG must act responsibly and honestly in their academic life and activities and avoid plagiarism, copying and cheating.
- In the performance of institutional and managerial duties, staff decisions must be justified in a transparent manner and must not impose personal criteria or ideas arbitrarily, or exercise any abuse of power.
- People who work and study at the UdG must always act responsibly and honestly in their relationships with other members of the university community.

4. ENGAGEMENT

As a public university, the UdG understands that it must be accountable for its actions and decisions in teaching, research, knowledge transfer and management from a triple perspective: economic, social and environmental. In the territory surrounding the UdG, this takes the form of community and social engagement and commitment to the environment, which are interrelated aspects of the same principle.

The institution

- **Community engagement**

The UdG must develop its activity in a way that is integrated with the territory and aware of its obligations to society. For this reason, it must strengthen community engagement in all its functions (teaching, research, knowledge transfer and social engagement) to become an agent for territorial and social development. It should be active in networking with external actors, both local and global, so that all benefit mutually from the relationship by contributing their expertise and facing shared challenges to improve the empowerment and well-being of citizens.

- **Social engagement**

As a public institution, the UdG must ensure that its actions contribute to promoting justice and social cohesion, and to improving the opportunities and conditions of life and well-being of the population as a whole, especially of the most vulnerable sectors. It must create a dialogue with the economic, cultural, political and social actors involved in the university's sphere of influence. This social engagement is a key part of its commitment to the community and must permeate all the university's actions.

- **Commitment to the environment**

The UdG must promote the common good by fostering training, research and knowledge transfer in line with sustainable development criteria, emphasising the interdependence and vulnerability of the planet. It must promote and encourage the global transformation of values, attitudes, lifestyles, ways of thinking, and the social and economic system to foster respect for animals and other living beings, thereby contributing to reversing the progressive degradation and destruction of ecosystems as a whole.

People

- All members of the university community must show their community, social and environmental commitment. This is achievable through professional responsibility at work or study and, more generally, in university life. It is also possible in personal aspects, with a caring attitude towards people, so that the values and principles promoted at the University have effects beyond the institution and beyond the years of education, especially in the students who leave the university and will be key to social development.