

THE CODE OF ETHICS

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.

A registered code of ethics has a counterpart in various laws and other rules. By its very nature, it is desirable that there is as much consistency as possible between the two. The most important role of a written code of ethics is to provide more detailed criteria for conduct and professional responsibility than legal and other rules provide, as they have wider scope than other rules. The Code of Ethics is intended to support other rules on work practices and communication that apply within the University of Akureyri.

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 the [Act on Higher Education Institutions No. 63/2006](#). 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 UNAK's Code of Ethics and may not be in conflict with it.

[The Ethics Committee Rules of Procedure](#) were approved by the University Council, 29 August 2024 (Icelandic)

Justice and fairness

Equality

Article 1

We do not discriminate between people, e.g. on the basis of gender, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, nationality, religion or views. Harassment is never justifiable and we are alert to any signs of such behaviour, whether it be in direct communications or online. We do not give preferential treatment based on personal connections.

[Gender Equality Plan for the University of Akureyri](#)
[Strategy on Equal Access to Studies and Work at the University of Akureyri](#)

The University has [regulations](#) on responding to bullying, violence, gender-based and sexual harassment and gender-based and sexual violence within the University of Akureyri. A Professional Council processes cases that concern the above-mentioned offences within the University of Akureyri, see further information [here](#).

Academic freedom

Article 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](#) (Icelandic)

Respect for people

Primary duty

Article 3

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

Mutual respect

Article 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, whether it be in direct communications, by letter or online.

Confidentiality

Article 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

Article 6

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

Responsibility in research

Article 7

We always maintain honesty and good ethics in our research.

Article 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.

Article 9

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

[Website of the National Bioethics Committee](#)

[Website of the Science Ethics Committee of the universities in Iceland](#)

[Website of the Data Protection Authority](#)

Ethics committees of the hospitals:

[Ethics committee of Akureyri Hospital \(SAK\)](#)

[Ethics committee of health research at Landspítali](#)

[Ethics committee of administrative research at Landspítali](#)

Article 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.

Article 11

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

Article 12

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

Article 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.

Article 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.

Article 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

Article 16

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

Article 17

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

Article 18

When preparing and conducting research for a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree, special attention should be paid to the range of responsibilities of the supervising teachers, who are generally responsible for the research on which such theses are based.

Article 19

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.

Article 20

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.

Article 21

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.

Responsibility in management, support services and general work

Article 22

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.

Article 23

We safeguard the protection of personal data and watch over the rights and interests of clients.

[Website of the Data Protection Authority](#)

Article 24

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

[Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993](#), see especially Article 3 and Section VIII

Article 25

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 person.

Article 26

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

Article 27

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

Article 28

We know that objective criticism is always justified, including criticism of one's own institution. We practice objective and honest debate.

Environmental awareness

Article 29

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

Article 30

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.

[Environmental and Climate Policy](#)

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

Article 31

If an employee or a student becomes aware of an employee violating 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.

Article 32

The Dean of School, the Head of Faculty and faculty meetings decide on matters related to individual students (see Articles 15, 20, 23 And 43 of the regulations for the University of Akureyri). If they believe that a student may have violated UNAK's Code of Ethics, they can seek the opinion of UNAK's Ethics Committee on whether this is the case. Disciplinary matters and cheating in examinations appertain to the Head of Faculty, while plagiarism can appertain to the Ethics Committee.

Any suspicion of plagiarism in bachelor's, master's or doctoral theses should be referred to the UNAK Ethics Committee. See the [rules of the relevant faculties on bachelor's and master's projects](#).

[Regulations No. 822/2022 on Doctoral Studies and Doctoral Examinations at the University of Akureyri](#)

All enquiries to the Ethics Committee must meet the requirements of the Ethics Committee Rules of Procedure, see Article 3.3. of the Rules of Procedure.

Article 33

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.

[Administrative Procedures Act No. 37/1993](#), see especially Article 3 and Section VIII

Article 34

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.

Article 35

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.

Article 36

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 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 by the University Council, 29 August 2024.