

eman ta zabal zazu



Universidad
del País Vasco

Euskal Herriko
Unibertsitatea

CODE OF ETHICS

of the University of the Basque
Country / Euskal Herriko
Unibertsitatea

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Prologue

■ Eva Ferreira
Rector of the University of the Basque Country

It is a great honour to present the first Code of Ethics approved at the University of the Basque Country (UPV/EHU). It is not a legal stipulation: its value, its enormous value, lies in its inspiration of patterns of conduct and the transmission of values. It provides us with a behavioural model, it helps us interpret the rules of the present day, and sheds light on the way in which we must draw up the rules of the future.

This code singles out a set of common values, which pose questions concerning the action we take: equality; freedom; truth; respect; public service and social commitment; and also sustainability. Likewise, it states the commitment of our institution to the creation, criticism and expansion of learning; integral education of the student body; a contribution to the development and normalisation of Basque language and culture; a boost for international cooperation; integration of those with special needs; peace, justice and support for democratic co-existence, rejecting all kinds of terrorism and violence. The Code also leads us to undertake a guarantee of equality between women and men, the prevention of any discrimination, and respect for diversity and difference.

Such an ambitious document must be durable, and to this end it must enjoy a solid consensus. This has been the case. The document was drawn up by means of consensus, with participation by the working groups from all university collectives, across the full range of sensitivities, and ultimately with dialogue among the members of the Governing Council, where it was approved unanimously.

I am aware of the work that went into this, and I wish to express my gratitude to all those who took part in the project and who, with their open-minded, flexible and dialogue-friendly attitude and contributions, have succeeded in making the UPV/EHU's Code of Ethics a reality.

It has certainly been a long process, but we can display the result with a common pride, the pride of a community.

Now we must disseminate it, share its values and act in consonance with them, because by doing so we shall, beyond any shadow of a doubt, produce a better university. And thus a better society.

Eman ta zabal zazu (Give and transmit)

Statement of purpose

The University of the Basque Country / Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV/EHU) is a public-law institution at the service of society, which is autonomous and has legal capacity and personality and its own assets, to provide, within its sphere, with an undertaking of quality, excellence and social transformation and commitment, the service of higher education through lecturing, research, study, cultural and university projection, the management processes and the services that afford its activities.

Its activity is geared towards satisfying the needs of Basque society, and those stemming from its history and its social and economic, political, artistic and cultural transformations, in which it disseminates the knowledge of culture and universal science, focusing first and foremost on the Basque culture and language, and going about its daily round in a sustainable fashion (UPV/EHU Statutes, Title I).

The University of the Basque Country's Code of Ethics has arisen with two fundamental objectives:

- To act as a benchmark for the entire university community and all its collegiate or unipersonal bodies, stimulating the highest principles of conduct in all action taken by those of us who make up this community, in a bid to secure greater transparency and protection of common interests. The ultimate purpose of the foregoing is to achieve university excellence, and to disseminate and consolidate democratic values, embellish the intellectual, humanist, cultural and scientific heritage of Basque society, and gain maximum recognition of this institution at the highest possible level.
- To inspire the specific regulations of the University and assist with decision-making. To act as a tool in order to facilitate the freedom and co-existence of those forming part of the university community and to proclaim the values and the philosophy of this institution.

The Code of Ethics fosters attitudes and conducts the central basis of which is constituted by ethics and integrity, within the scope of the institution and of the individual, of the different people and the different bodies making up our university community and those to which it is applicable, establishing parameters for action to be taken which, on occasion, may go beyond the regulations in force. Indeed, the social responsibility of UPV/EHU reaches beyond mere compliance with laws, because it constitutes a firm commitment to the fostering and application in its actions of the values of this code, of its dissemination and transparency.

The prestige and reputation of UPV/EHU, as in all institutions, depend on the integrity of its professional staff, its collegiate bodies and those who comprise our university community, since it is all of us who, with our behaviour, turn the practices of the University into reality.

This Code of Ethics establishes that we in the university community must do all we can so that those who engage with us and, most particularly, those who do so on a steady, durable or frequent basis, can familiarise themselves with the Code and the criteria of conduct that govern us. This is something that cannot be anything but positive for quality of relations, to preserve and enhance university activity and to boost the prestige and reputation of UPV/EHU.

Through compliance with this Code, we at this University manifest our commitment to the good name, prestige and image of the institution, and our desire that all our actions be guided by social responsibility criteria. This responsibility is understood as a comprehensive undertaking to a high-quality public service, with mutual care and attention afforded by all sectors and persons in the university community, listening and attempting to furnish the best response to their expectations, in due observance of legality and with rigorous levels of integrity and transparency. An undertaking which caters for all dimensions of activity (legal, economic, human, social and environmental), and which is defined by its mission of a public service of excellence in all its actions. This undertaking is fully in keeping with the mission and vision defined in the University of the Basque Country's 2022-2025 strategic plan.

Section I. General considerations

Nature

The nature of the UPV/EHU Code of Ethics is not regulatory, but rather seeks to inspire the conduct of all those who make up our university community, of its bodies and of those who habitually engage with it. This code, moreover, seeks to make the values and commitments of the university known to society.

The Code of Ethics shall serve as a criterion for the interpretation of UPV/EHU's current internal rules of operation, and its principles must also inspire any developments in regulations subsequently.

This Code of Ethics does not modify UPV/EHU's employment or functionary relations with its professional staff, nor does it create any rights or contractual obligations whatsoever.

Scope of application

The Code of Ethics shall inspire the conduct of all the bodies and of all those in the various groups making up our UPV/EHU university community, and shall be applicable to any activity carried on within the University.

In particular, this Code shall be borne in mind in the actions of staff in all its centres, departments, administrative services, bodies and governance units, and also by other structures of the University with no legal personality. It shall also be ensured that the Code is made known to and is applied by staff and bodies with links to its foundations, associate centres, its suppliers and external associates.

Section II.

The University of the Basque Country's values and commitments to society

The university community and activity, in its manifestations and in its various sectors, must subject their action or behaviour to the following values:

1. Equality

In our actions and decisions, those of us who comprise the university community and the governance and representation of UPV/EHU must safeguard the effective equality of people and prevent discrimination among them due to any personal or social condition or circumstance. Equality between women and men shall be nurtured as a most particular concern.

2. Freedom

In our actions and decisions, those of us who comprise the university community and the governance and representation of UPV/EHU must nurture and protect freedom of thought, opinion and expression, and facilitate freedom of action in university tasks.

3. Truth

In our actions and decisions, those of us who comprise the university community and the governance and representation of UPV/EHU must be truthful, eschewing falsehood, deceit and the omission of relevant information, which also entails nurturing and protecting integrity and transparency in academic, scientific and managerial spheres.

4. Respect

In our decisions and actions, those of us who comprise the university community and the governance and representation of UPV/EHU must act at all times with respect, i.e. showing tolerance and consideration for all people (along with their different ideas, beliefs, perspectives and ways of relating to one another and cooperating), avoiding any physical or emotional harm.

This specifically requires: stimulating attention, care, active and critical listening, and the use—exclusively and always—of words and arguments, at all times eschewing the use of violence, threats or coercion.

5. Public service and social commitment

In its task, the university community shall seek at all times to respond to the necessities of social transformation of the society of which it forms part, thereby helping to build a fairer and more cohesive society within its own surroundings and also on the international stage.

6. Sustainability

In our actions and decisions, those of us who comprise the university community and the governance and representation of UPV/EHU must nurture and protect sustainability and social, economic and environmental welfare, and prevent any harm in these areas, whether this is immediate or whether its consequences may emerge in the medium or long term.

This specifically requires stimulating the sustainable development goals, environmental transition, preservation of assets and management of resources on criteria of effectiveness, efficiency and responsible rationalisation of expenditure.

In particular, the University of the Basque Country is committed to:

a. The creation, critique and transmission of learning, furthering knowledge and social development through research and the transfer of its results to society.

b. Assistance with the embellishment of the intellectual, humanist, cultural and scientific heritage of Basque society and its economic development and social welfare.

c. Work towards quality higher public education to provide its students with comprehensive instruction and prepare them professionally to enter the world of employment.

d. A contribution to the development and normalisation of Euskera and Basque culture within the scope of its activity.

e. Continuous training of professionals and the instruction either on a permanent basis or during the lifespan of any other social groups seeking higher education.

f. The university's dissemination and projection, geared in particular towards diminishing social and cultural inequalities, and to creating the conditions for improved participation in political, cultural and social life.

g. A contribution to international exchange and cooperation, with a particular focus on the European framework and cooperation for development.

h. Seeking conditions that facilitate the personal and professional development of each and every person forming part of it.

i. Fostering the integration of those with special needs in the University Community.

j. Peace, justice and encouragement of democratic co-existence, and fair and sustainable development of society, rejecting all kinds of terrorism and violence.

UPV/EHU undertakes to guarantee the equality of the women and men who comprise the University Community and to take the necessary measures to prevent or eliminate any discrimination owing to birth, ethnic group, sexual orientation, religion, opinion, language and any other personal or social condition or circumstance. To this end, UPV/EHU shall take account of the principles of equal opportunities, with respect to diversity and difference, integration of the gender perspective, positive action, elimination of roles and stereotypes relating to sex, and balanced representation.

Section III.

Criteria of conduct for people at the University of the Basque Country

In areas of lecturing, research and management

The Code of Ethics shall serve as a guide in terms of co-existence within the university community itself, in the relations of the university with other agents and in the exercise of the responsibilities of each member, whether they belong to the student body; technical staff, management and administration and services; or lecturers and researchers. All areas of the university: teaching and study; research and scientific, cultural, artistic and technical development; management; knowledge transfer; and relations with the public at large, social organisations, business and public authorities, must be considered in the light of these values which must be nurtured and protected in the exercise of the functions of each person forming part of UPV/EHU.

All of us forming part of UPV/EHU and its bodies and structures shall support public, inclusive, participative, critical, quality education, in which the student body is an active collective within the educational process, regulated or non-regulated. The educational needs of the student body are one of the main focuses of university activity, and must therefore be addressed as a priority, in a bid to secure the maximum contribution to knowledge and to its personal development. Relations which generate trust, but which are based on reciprocal rigour and requisites.

The student body, simply because they are enrolled at UPV/EHU, shall likewise draw inspiration for their conduct from the values of this Code of Ethics in all matters concerning them. All students must observe the following aspects most strictly:

■ Undertaking the personal effort required to assimilate knowledge or carrying out assessment tests properly, refraining from copying, plagiarising or availing themselves of means or strategies incompatible with honesty and effort.

■ Using the means provided for them by UPV/EHU properly and in a responsible fashion.

Research is also an indissociable central component of the university's task, focused on furnishing a response to the demands and needs of society and governed by the criteria of freedom, transparency and ethics. In particular, lecturing and research staff shall carry out their task with scientific rigour, honesty, and recognition of effort and collaboration, without plagiarising or availing themselves of the knowledge of others in an irregular fashion.

In the university community

We who form part of this university, and its governance bodies and structures, shall strive towards a secure, healthy environment for UPV/EHU's employees, students, suppliers, contractors, associates and visitors. In this regard, we undertake to act, beyond mere compliance with the legal stipulations in place, supporting the adoption of good practices and requiring from all of those forming part of our university community maximum diligence to guarantee the achievement of this goal.

In particular, we shall strive to improve the safety and healthfulness of the environment in order to prevent accidents, to act responsibly if any should occur, to respect and preserve the environment, and to make efficient use of resources. The UPV/EHU rules of co-existence also form part of this Code of Ethics.

This requisite shall extend to an undertaking to the consolidation of a professional environment, presided over by an atmosphere of trust, by informative transparency and fluid communication, by the desire for team work, and by a boost to creativity and responsibility.

Those of us who form part of UPV/EHU contemplate academic and university relations between ourselves from the perspective of listening and empathy, reciprocity in the commitments undertaken and the generation of results to the benefit of one and all and to the common public interest, furnishing the necessary resources for best possible fulfilment of our function. Accordingly, we manifest our desire to grant priority in our relations with professional people to achievement of the best possible working environment; adherence to contractual conditions; non-discrimination for any reason (ethnic, national, religious, ideological, relating to gender, sexual diversity, language etc.) and equal opportunities, compatible with the particular attention paid to people with disabilities; appreciation of merit and of results; the establishment of transparent, open, participation-friendly channels for communication and dialogue; the implementation of transparent objective criteria in selection processes; the attribution of decisive importance to training; the provision of employment health and safety systems; the consolidation of channels for a work/life balance; and solid defence of human rights, and of employees and students, based on respect for legislation in force, International Law, the universal declaration of Human Rights, and employment regulations.

It is of crucial interest to UPV/EHU to draw in professional people of the highest quality, as befits its vocation for excellence, arranging selection processes that grant priority to professional merit and integrity, albeit at all times within the confines of criteria in relation to ethics, to objectivity, to transparency, and to respect for equal opportunities. These characteristics shall also govern appraisal of performance, the acknowledgement of merit, and opportunities for professional development.

UPV/EHU shall prevent any conflicts of interest which may arise by establishing measures geared towards ensuring that, in its decisions and actions, in all cases the interests of the university shall take precedence over any others.

In governance and representation

The activity of the university's bodies of governance and representation shall be guided by the principles of this Code of Ethics and on the basis of transparency and accountability, pursuant to the rules applicable in each case and guaranteeing proximity and accessibility to the university community and to society. Those who hold unipersonal posts, or who form part of the university's bodies of governance and representation, shall carry out their functions with integrity and transparency, acting in a proper and impartial manner, undertaking the responsibility arising from their actions and from the bodies they represent. The duty of confidentiality with respect to issues requiring this must be upheld during and subsequent to the exercise of their functions. They shall also display exemplary conduct in accordance with the values of this Code.

In relations with society and the environment

The University of the Basque Country has a commitment to building and furthering Basque society. As a public university, our governance bodies and structures and those forming part of our university community must make an active contribution to the social, economic and cultural development and welfare of Basque society in its entirety.

We who work and study at UPV/EHU shall at all times nurture the prestige and good name of the University and of its values, and shall work towards greater and better recognition of it by society. We shall respect the UPV/EHU brand and we shall adhere to the protocol for its utilisation.

In the performance of our functions and within the facilities of the university, all of us who make up the university community shall be obliged to conduct ourselves in a respectful and educated manner. We must also eschew and combat all situations of personal intimidation or harassment in any of their manifestations and any action constituting an assault on personal dignity, and we shall also be obliged to observe maximum respect for people. Likewise, we shall work towards care and protection of the environment, and also towards the efficient utilisation of natural resources and sustainable development.

Those of us who form part of UPV/EHU shall make responsible and efficient use of the possibilities and resources with which the university provides us, towards optimum performance of our functions, and they must not be used for purposes other than those contemplated in these functions.

Any relations between UPV/EHU and its suppliers, contractors and external associates, beyond legal obligations, shall be relations of equality, trust and shared value, with due observance of timelines and undertakings. An especially positive appreciation shall be made of those who, with no impairment of the overall quality of the product or service supplied, share the criteria of this Code and the general commitment to ethics and social responsibility, with an appraisal of whether they have officially promulgated them and have institutionally supported generally acknowledged agreements or treaties.

Also, those of us who make up the university community and our bodies of governance and representation shall strive to adopt good practices in these areas among these groups, and shall attempt to eschew commercial relations with those who engage in abusive or discriminatory practices or those who clearly infringe the criteria of this Code, legislation in relation to public sector contracts permitting. In particular, the university shall not contribute to the development or incitement of bellicose or violent activities.

Section IV.

System for guaranteed compliance

Guarantee system

Proper functioning of the UPV/EHU Code of Ethics calls for optimum adherence to it by all the agents and bodies concerned, and supervision and assessment of its application by those who comprise our university community.

The Coexistence Committee, created pursuant to Law 3/2022 on university coexistence, shall serve as an observatory of the functioning of the Code of Ethics. The Coexistence Committee shall be tasked with the basic competencies to nurture, apply and supervise this Code. In particular, and notwithstanding the competencies of other UPV/EHU bodies, the functions of this Committee pursuant to the Code of Ethics shall be as follows:

- To facilitate the greatest dissemination and understanding of this Code for all those concerned by its contents and for the university's bodies of governance and representation.
 - To implement and stimulate a permanent reflection on the ethical principles which must govern the conduct of a university institution and of those comprising our university community, spreading awareness of how important this is for the proper functioning of the institution and for optimum achievement of the legitimate objectives of all people in that community.
 - To clarify any doubts that may arise from the interpretation of the principles and precepts in the Code, and to make any suggestions that may be considered advisable for best possible achievement of its stipulations.
 - To identify any shortcomings in the procedures, systems and structures that could adversely affect compliance with this Code and its functionality for UPV/EHU.
 - To analyse and, where applicable, recommend courses of action in relation to any conduct contrary to the precepts of this Code that may be detected.
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Legitimation to consult or elicit intervention by the Coexistence Committee

All of those who comprise our university community and its governance bodies may submit any doubts we may entertain concerning the Code of Ethics to the Coexistence Committee. We likewise acquire the undertaking to inform the Coexistence Committee of any action or circumstance in which, in our opinion, this Code is possibly being infringed or is not being properly observed, or in which patterns of behaviour may be observed contrary to its wording or its spirit, should this be observed either in the fulfilment of our functions, or in any other situation. A suggestion mailbox shall be provided to this end, along with a procedure for processing the suggestions.

Confidentiality

All those working in the administrative units receiving the communications stipulated in the preceding paragraph, and those tasked with processing them, shall be obliged to strictly observe the confidentiality of communications and of the situations and persons involved, and also to inform them with the greatest celerity of the criteria to which they must adhere in relation to any doubts they may have, of the procedures to resolve the situations reported, and of any solutions that may be decided with regard to these.
