

APPROVED

According to Order No \_\_\_ of the  
Director of Vilnius University of  
Applied Sciences of \_\_\_ September  
2022

## **REGULATIONS OF THE RESEARCH ETHICS COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE OF VILNIUS UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

### **SECTION I GENERAL PROVISIONS**

1. The Regulations of the Research Ethics Compliance Committee (the Regulations) determine the structure, functions, and working procedure of the Research Ethics Compliance Committee of Vilnius University of Applied Sciences (the Committee).

2. The Regulations were drafted in accordance with the Guidelines for the Assessment of Compliance with Research Ethics approved by Order No V-60 of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania of 10 December 2020 (amended by Order No V-24 of 10 May 2021 and Order No V-16 of 6 June 2022 of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania).

3. The Committee is guided in its activities by the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Science and Studies, the Guidelines for the Assessment of Compliance with Research Ethics, the Statutes] of the University, these Regulations, and other legal acts.

4. The Committee only assesses the compliance with the General Principles of Research Ethics of applied research and experimental development (ASRED) and/or artistic activities, commissioned research, and research where the investigator is required to hold a research ethics clearance, when the research is planned to be carried out under international and national research programmes (foundations).

5. The Committee carries out pre-research ethics reviews of research in the social sciences and humanities where human subjects are involved, reviews of research in other sciences where social science research methods are used, and reviews of research in all sciences that involves the collection and/or processing of personal data.

6. For approval of compliance with research ethics for clinical trials in the medical and health sciences, researchers must apply to the Lithuanian Bioethics Committee or the Vilnius Regional Biomedical Research Ethics Committee.

7. Researchers must apply to the State Food and Veterinary Office for authorisation to carry out animal-related research.

8. The Committee does not assess the compliance of students' final theses/projects with research ethics.

### **SECTION II COMMITTEE STRUCTURE**

9. The Committee is formed for three years. The same member may not be appointed for more than two consecutive terms.

10. The University's website provides information on the members of the Committee: names, areas of expertise, terms of office.

11. The nine persons who receive the highest number of votes from the members of the Academic Council of the University are appointed to become members of the Committee. The permanent members of the Committee are the Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson (if appointed), and the Secretary. The Committee is composed of members with the broadest possible range of academic and/or professional backgrounds necessary to provide the fullest and most appropriate assessment of compliance with the ethics of the research to be conducted at the University:

11.1. Seven (7) persons representing all faculties and working in the University, where their competence in relevant research data collection and analysis methods has been validated according to the field of science and the subject of the research, and who have at least two (2) years of research experience;

11.2. One person working in the administration of the University with at least five (5) years' experience in research management;

11.3. One representative of the social partners who has been involved in the University's activities for at least two (2) years and has a PhD.

12. A member of the Committee must be able to determine whether the planned research complies with the general principles of research ethics and to assess the acceptability of the planned research in the light of the University's strategy, the University's documents governing ASRED and artistic activities, and other regulations.

13. Members of the Committee must be of good repute and sign a confidentiality commitment, which they must keep for five (5) years after the end of their term of office. The confidentiality of personal data is protected indefinitely.

14. The members of the Committee referred to in paragraph 11.1 of the Regulations are elected by the members of the Academic Council of the University for a period of three years by secret ballot. Voting may also be carried out electronically.

15. The representative of the University's social partners is nominated by the University's administration.

16. Each faculty of the University, on the recommendation of the Dean, have the right to nominate up to three lecturers who meet the requirements for membership of the Committee, by writing to the Chairperson of the Academic Council and submitting the written consent of the nominee to be elected to the Committee.

17. The Chairperson of the Academic Council of the University submits the composition of the Committee for a three-year term of office to the Director for approval.

18. The first meeting of the new elected Committee is convened by the Deputy Director for Science and Partnerships of the University no later than within one month after the election of the Committee members.

19. The Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson, and the Secretary of the Committee are elected by secret ballot by a simple majority at the first meeting of the Committee.

### **SECTION III COMMITTEE FUNCTIONS**

20. The Committee's functions include:

20.1. Preparation and submission to the Director for approval of the University's

Description of the Procedure for Assessing Compliance with Research Ethics and publication of the Description on the University's website;

20.2. In accordance with the University's Description of the Procedure for Assessing Compliance with Research Ethics, assessment of the compliance of ASRED and/or artistic research referred to in paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Regulations with the general principles of research ethics prior to the commencement of research;

20.3. Assessment of the acceptability of the planned research, taking into account the University's strategy, the University's documents governing ASRED and artistic activities, and other provisions;

20.4. Cooperation with other authorities on the application of operating principles and/or on complex cases, taking into account their respective areas of competence;

20.5. Publication of descriptions of all ASRED and/or artistic activities carried out and approved by the Committee as compliant with research ethics on the University's website.

#### **SECTION IV COMMITTEE WORKING PROCEDURE**

21. The meetings of the Committee are convened as required.

22. The Committee meetings are private. In the case of several ASRED and/or artistic projects being discussed at the same meeting, the persons concerned must be invited separately.

23. Meetings of the Committee are convened and chaired by the Chairperson of the Committee. In the case of a discussion of compliance with research ethics based on documents submitted by the Chairperson of the Committee, the meeting is convened by the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee. If a member of the Committee is presenting documents for the consideration of compliance with research ethics, the above-mentioned member is obliged to abstain from the matter under discussion.

24. A member of the Committee who has a conflict of interest in relation to an ASRED and/or artistic project submitted for evaluation must abstain from the research ethics compliance meeting by notifying the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee. In the event of a conflict of interest for the Chairperson of the Committee, the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee chairs the meeting. The Committee may, if necessary, call upon independent experts in the relevant scientific field to give an opinion on the assessment of compliance with research ethics and to advise the members of the Committee. Experts have no voting rights in the adoption of decisions.

25. The Committee must be objective, impartial and independent of the researcher and any other undue influence. The assessment of research ethics must take into account the laws and regulations of Lithuania and/or the countries in which the research is to be carried out, as well as applicable international norms and standards, but they must not allow for the reduction or elimination of the protections afforded to any subjects in the submission of documents.

26. The Committee should take a decision on the compliance of an ASRED and/or artistic activity with research ethics within 20 working days (10-15 working days to organise and discuss the meeting) from the date of submission of the application. Decisions on matters submitted for consideration are taken by a simple majority of the Committee members present at the meeting.

27. The Chairperson (or Secretary) of the Committee informs the provider of ASRED

and/or artistic activity about the decision by email within three (3) working days.

**SECTION V  
FINAL PROVISIONS**

28. All procedural matters not provided for in these Regulations are dealt with at the meetings of the Committee.

29. The Regulations and any amendments or additions thereto are approved by the Academic Council of the University.

30. The Regulations are published on the University's website.

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