

of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili



The University Senate, 14 July 2020

Presentation by the rector

The new Code of Ethics of the URV was approved by the University's Senate on 14 July with the aim of providing guidelines for coexistence within the university community and between the university community and the society and territory that it serves.

The document has been written by a technical committee and a committee of members of the Senate in response to the electoral commitment of the management team to draw up an Code of Ethics that updates the principles set out in the Statute of the URV, broadening them to include new principles that have emerged as a result of the changes that have occurred to make our society fairer and more inclusive.

This code is based on ten principles that seek to promote good practices in the teaching, management and conduct of the members of the university community and to guide us all towards achieving a university characterised by its ethical qualities. The ten principles concern social engagement, well-being and health, equality in diversity, gender equality, integrity, academic freedom, respect, solidarity, sustainability and good governance.

We hope that this Code of Ethics will be a road map that guides the actions of our institution and that enables us to produce graduates who, in addition to standing out due to their excellent professional aptitudes, are characterised by a humanity and ethical attitudes that enable them to act as citizens engaged with and committed to society.

María José Figueras Salvat

Rector

Table of contents

Presentació de la rectora.....	2
Preàmbul.....	4
<i>Lema</i>	4
<i>Objectius</i>	4
<i>Marc general</i>	5
Àmbit d'aplicació.....	6
Principis ètics inspiradors de la vida universitària.....	6
Mecanismes de seguiment i revisió.....	9
<i>Claustre Universitari</i>	9
<i>Comissió d'Ètica</i>	9
<i>Canal Ètic</i>	10
Relació amb altres codis o bones pràctiques sectorials de la URV.....	10
1. <i>Agents</i>	10
2. <i>Estatut URV</i>	10
3. <i>Plans d'actuació sectorials</i>	10
4. <i>Normatives d'aplicació general</i>	10
5. <i>Programes d'actuació específics</i>	11
Procés d'elaboració	11
<i>Cronograma</i>	11
<i>Comissió d'elaboració</i>	13
Interpretació.....	13
Referències.....	14

Preamble

Slogan

“Sapientiae liberi, libertati sapientes” (liberty through knowledge, knowledge through liberty). This has been the slogan on the coat of arms of the Universitat Rovira i Virgili (URV) since it was created in 1991. It is a graphical representation of the Estudi General de Tarragona, the first educational institution founded in Tarragona by Cardinal Gaspar Cervantes de Gaeta in 1572. The border surrounding the arms contains the name of the University and this slogan, a phrase that encapsulates the spirit of the Code of Ethics of the URV whilst at the same harking back to the origins of the institution.

The Code of Ethics respects and takes into consideration the history of our University and the idiosyncracies and characteristics that define it. The Universitat Rovira i Virgili has an academic and social commitment to the human rights, the institutions, the laws and the democratic ideals of the people and territory that it serves, in particular to the language, culture and knowledge generated in Catalonia.

At the same, the Code of Ethics has been drawn up in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the declaration of the climate emergency and the environmental and social challenges posed by the Sustainable Development Objectives. It is, therefore, an Code of Ethics rooted in the current moment but with its gaze firmly fixed on the future.

The Code of Ethics takes its inspiration from university life and aims to promote ethical principles that inform the activities of the entire URV community.

The Code of Ethics is intended to be as clear as possible to ensure that it can be easily understood and adopted by all members of the URV community. The Code of Ethics does not prescribe specific behaviours nor does it establish any hierarchy among the values that it espouses.

Aims

The Code of Ethics of the URV is intended to provide transversal guidelines for coexistence within the university community, both in all the areas that the community operates and in its relations with the society and territory that it serves. To achieve this, the Code of Ethics must:

- ✓ Reflect the social commitment of the institution by updating the principles set out in the Statute of the URV.
- ✓ Guide, inspire and motivate the conduct and best practices of the people who make up the URV.
- ✓ Define how the ethical qualities of the University are to be managed.

The binding nature of the Code of Ethics must be based on the fact that all members of the university community accept it as a valid and shared model and identify with its principles and values.

General framework

- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** with principles that aim to promote peaceful coexistence within the university community and to help build a fairer university.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** with principles that inspire responsible behaviour among all individuals, that contribute to personal and professional development and that improve human well being as part of a shared commitment that strengthens the sense of community.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** for a public university that understands the need for ethical standards of the highest rigour, such as honesty, transparency, accountability, impartiality and equality.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** that promotes respect for protection of nature in harmony with life on Earth.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** that responds to the needs of the Sustainable Development Objectives and the challenges of the social and climate crisis.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** that seeks to promote social awareness and the well being and care of individuals as a shared responsibility, taking into account the challenges of the moment.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** that respects social justice, human rights and the fundamental freedoms of the current legal system.
- ✓ ***An Code of Ethics*** that is participatory, created by a representative committee of the URV's Senate and shared with the university community, which takes into account all voices, opinions, observations, proposals and suggestions.

- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** that, despite being a primary point of reference, is also complemented by other agents, tools, codes and good sectorial practices at the URV, which are mentioned at the end of the present document and are materialized in the ethical commitment of the URV.
- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** that is accompanied by initiatives for knowledge dissemination and training.
- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** that provides mechanisms that guarantee supervision, compliance and periodical review in a framework of overall institutional integrity.

Ambit of Application

- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** for all members of the University.
- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** that guides all the University's activities and its relations with society, as part of an overall policy of institutional integrity.
- ✓ **An Code of Ethics** that inspires external individuals, companies and other entities and their relations with the URV.

Ethical Principles that Inspire University Life

Social engagement

The URV must promote social transformation locally and globally by generating and transmitting knowledge, cultural development and training for individuals who possess a critical and reflective spirit and who are committed to democratic values, humanity and solidarity.

Welfare and health

The URV is committed to looking after individuals and fostering the conditions needed to promote a healthy and fulfilling quality of life for the whole university community. The URV must encourage people to look after themselves and each other by promoting socio-emotional feelings

of prosperity, happiness and satisfaction.

Equality in Diversity

The URV must recognise the dignity of all individuals and will strive to ensure diversity and equal opportunities in a framework of democratic coexistence. No member of the university community may be discriminated against on the grounds of their origins, gender, sexual orientation, identity and gender expression, beliefs, religion, socioeconomic status, language, ideology or any other personal or social circumstance. The University will guarantee inclusion both in terms of accessibility and in its measures to adapt the curriculum or place of work.

Gender Equality

The URV will ensure that women and men have the same opportunities for personal development and to participate in the university community life. For this reason, the conduct, aspirations and needs of each person must given equal consideration and value.

Integrity

The URV must strive to ensure that all members of the university community act with integrity, that is, by acting with honesty and truthfully and establishing secure bonds based on trust and honour.

Academic freedom

The URV must promote critical and free thinking based on academic freedom, understood as the right of teaching staff and students to freely disseminate their thoughts, ideas and opinions when teaching and studying, and the freedom to carry out research whilst maintaining scientific and ethical rigour.

Respect

The URV must strive to ensure that people are treated fairly by showing respect for their opinions and positions, and it must use dialogue, debate and constructive criticism to maintain civic and peaceful coexistence. Such respectful treatment must also be shown in all spoken and written communications. Respect implies the rejection of any manifestation of violence against individuals, biodiversity or physical or intangible heritage.

Solidarity

The URV must encourage the whole university community to engage in social activities, in particular by promoting volunteering and cooperation with people, communities and institutions and by helping to empower people to achieve a fulfilling existence, sustainable development and peace, in particular among the most vulnerability sectors of society.

Sustainability

The URV will promote a balance between social, cultural, economic and environmental development to satisfy the needs of the university community and of society, without compromising those of future generations and whilst striving to ensure quality of life and well being for individuals and for other living things and ecosystems.

Good governance

The URV will promote improvements to the governance and management of the institution that serve the general interest, the participation of the university community in decision making and the development of initiatives and changes that improve the ambits in which it operates in the future. It must also ensure that it operates with transparency,

accountability, impartiality, efficacy and consistency when taking decisions and it must ensure data privacy.

Monitoring and Review Mechanisms

The University Senate

The University Senate is responsible for approving, modifying and monitoring the Code of Ethics and for promoting the initiatives that arise from and are related to it.

Ethics Committee

The Senate must approve the regulations governing the composition and functioning of the Ethics Committee during its the session that immediately follows the entry into force of the Code of Ethics of the URV.

The Ethics Committee is responsible for:

- ✓ Interpreting, monitoring and updating the Code of Ethics.
- ✓ Disseminating the Code of Ethics of the university community of the URV, promoting and advising on matters relating to the Code of Ethics and receiving and managing suggestions for improvements.
- ✓ Promoting training and awareness among both the university community and society in general.
- ✓ Ensuring compliance with the Code of Ethics and receiving and managing notifications of non-compliance through the ***Ethics Channel***.
- ✓ Maintaining unhindered communications with the Ombuds Office of the URV.
- ✓ Any other function specified in the regulations.

The Ethics Committee's announcements will be binding.

Prior to the approval of the Code of Ethics, the committee that has written it will assume the functions of Ethics Committee and draft the regulations governing it.

Ethics Channel

Channel for communicating proposals and suggestions for improvements, for asking questions and for providing notifications of non-compliance with the Code of Ethics. This channel must be confidential (not anonymous).

Relation of the Code of Ethics with other sectorial codes of best practice at the URV

This section details the agents, mechanisms, codes and sectorial good practices at the URV that must be aligned with the Code of Ethics of the URV:

1. Agents

- Data Protection Officers ([link](#))
- Ombuds Office ([link](#))
- Equality Observatory ([link](#))
- Office for Social Engagement ([link](#))

2. Statute of the URV

- Statute of the URV (under review)

3. Sectorial action plans

- 3rd Equality Plan ([link](#))
- Strategic Plan for the Third Mission of the URV ([link](#))
- Environmental Plan ([link](#))
- Transparency Portal of the URV ([link](#))

4. General Regulations

- URV Regulations on Solidarity and Cooperation for Development (under review)
- Regulations of the Entities governing Ethics in Research and Innovation

(link)

- Regulations governing the Iubilo URV programme (link)

5. Specific Action Programmes

- European Charter for Researchers (link)
- URV Code of Good Practice in Research, Research Training, Development and Innovation
- Code of Good Practice for Researcher Recruitment (link)
- COVID-19 Transparency Commitment (May 2020) (link)
- Ethical Commitment of the Management Team (February 2020) (link)
- Guides on prevention, detection and handling of plagiarism in teaching (students, teaching staff and faculties, schools and departments) (link)
- Delegates Programme (link)
- "Healthy and Sustainable University Project" (in process)
- Protocol for Prevention and Action in the event of assault on URV or FURV staff members in the workplace (link)
- Protocol for Prevention and Action in the event of violence against LGBTI and women students at the URV (link)
- Protocol for graduation and ethical commitment promise (link)
- Protocol for change of name and gender identity for members of the URV community (link)
- Student Action Protocol in Emergency Situations (pending)

Creation process

Time line

- Start date: creation agreement (University Senate), 21 November 2019
- End date: approval agreement (University Senate), 14 July 2020
- December 2019 – January 2020: constitution of the design committee and start of the process
- January-May 2020: committee meetings

- Design committee meetings (senate committee and technical committee):
 - 1/2020, 31 January
 - 2/2020, 28 February
 - 3/2020, 8 May
 - 4/2020, 15 May
 - 5/2020, 10 July
- Technical committee sessions:
 - 1/2020, 7 February
 - 2/2020, 21 February
 - 3/2020, 24 March
 - 4/2020, 31 March
 - 5/2020, 14 April
 - 6/2020, 17 April
 - 7/2020, 22 April
 - 8/2020, 28 April
 - 9/2020, 22 May
- June-July 2020:
 - Public presentation of the proposal and consultation with the university community
 - Creation of the final proposed version of the Ethical Code by the committee
- July 2020:
 - Approval, if necessary, of the Code of Ethics of the URV by the University Senate
 - Reporting, if necessary, of the Code of Ethics to the Governing Council
- Once the Code of Ethics has been approved, the following have to be drawn up:
 - A training plan (open to the university community)
 - A communication and dissemination plan

Design Committee

- Chair: rector or delegated person
- Senate committee:
 - 1 representative of the deans or heads of faculty/school: Maria Jiménez
 - 1 representative of the heads of department: Òscar Pàmies
 - 1 member of the teaching and research staff per group:
 - Joaquín Escribano (Group A)
 - Maria Bargalló (Group B)
 - Ana Beatriz Hernández (Group C)
 - Silvia de la Flor (Group D)
 - 2 members of the administrative and service staff: Samuel Garcia and Gema Duarte
 - 2 students: Francina Segura and one undesignated
- Technical Committee:
 - General Secretary: Laura Roman
 - Vice-Rector for Institutional Relations, Culture and Social Engagement Cori Camps
 - Adjunct to the Vice-Rector for Social Engagement: Susana Borràs
 - Officer from the Unit for Territorial Development and Research and Innovation Promotion: Carlos García
 - Head of the Rector's Bureau Helena Fraga
 - Officer for Social Impact, Cooperation and Volunteering: Joan Fuster
 - Environmental Management and Radioisotopes Officer: Antoni de la Torre
 - Joint President of the Student Council: Albert Moragas

Interpretation

The Code of Ethics is intended to serve as a guide and to be open, flexible and modifiable and requires constant interpretation. It will be subject to

any revisions needed to update and validate it as a tool for consultation and guidance in the event of any ethical questions that may arise from its application.

The Ethics Committee must monitor the interpretation and application of this code, in accordance with the mission, vision and values of the University.

References

Code of Best Practice in Research of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. 2013 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics governing the Scientific Journals of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. 2017 ([link](#))

Diversity and Guidance Research Group of the Autonomous University of Barcelona. Code of Ethics. 2018 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics, Integrity and Best Practice of the University of Barcelona. 2018 ([link](#))

Code of Conduct at the Complutense Universidad Complutense de Madrid. 2008 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics of the Open University of Catalonia. 2017 ([link](#))

Proposed Code of Ethics of the Pompeu Fabra University (pending)

Code of Ethics of the University of Lleida. 2006 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics of Jaume I University. 2017 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics and Best Practice governing the staff and students of the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. 2011 ([link](#))

Code of Ethics governing the Public Services of Catalonia. 2020 ([link](#))

Annual Report on social responsibility University of Barcelona. 2017 ([link](#))

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Quality Policy of the URV. 2020 ([link](#))