

*Approved by the resolution of the Academic Council
(Minutes #2, 24., 2025)*

Code of Ethics

Tbilisi

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Chapter 1. General Provisions

Article 1. Purpose and Scope

1.1. The Code of Ethics (hereinafter “the Code”) applies to the academic, invited, administrative, and support staff, as well as to students of Alterbridge University LLC (hereinafter “the University”);

1.2. The purpose of the Code is to establish norms of conduct within the institution that contribute to:

- a) the proper fulfillment of official duties by University staff;
- b) the reinforcement of responsibility and the principles of fairness among the University’s staff and students;
- c) the realization of the University’s mission, goals, and objectives;
- d) the protection of the principles of academic freedom and integrity;
- e) the strict observance of legislation and the normative acts in force at the University in professional activities.

1.3. In line with the University’s mission and goals, the Code of Conduct aims to establish ethical standards that foster the creation of a healthy social, professional, educational, research, and creative environment.

Article 2. General Principles

University staff and students must carry out their activities with integrity, honesty, and a strong sense of responsibility. In their work, they must be guided by the principles of culture, courtesy, dignity, mutual respect, tolerance, trust, impartiality, equality, fairness, and objectivity.



Article 3. Duties of Staff

3.1. Staff, based on their professional and official responsibilities, are obliged to strive towards:

- a) upholding the Constitution of Georgia, current legislation, and universally recognized human rights and freedoms;
- b) respecting the values and traditions of the University;
- c) protecting and maintaining the University's reputation;
- d) promoting the strengthening of the University's name and authority in society;
- e) maintaining academic integrity in relation to colleagues;
- f) treating colleagues and students with fairness and respect;
- g) sharing their experience with colleagues without interfering in their activities;
- h) refraining from communications with the media or third parties that could negatively affect the reputation of the University or colleagues;
- i) fostering trust and goodwill among colleagues.

3.2. Staff are required to:

- a) demonstrate professional solidarity in relations with colleagues and create a healthy working atmosphere;
- b) act according to the principle of teamwork to achieve common goals and assist colleagues in fulfilling their duties;
- c) respect the freedom of speech and expression of others;
- d) refrain from actions aimed at undermining the authority of others;
- e) not demand benefits or concessions not provided for by law, which could place colleagues or students in an ethical dilemma;
- f) not use their position or authority for personal gain;
- g) avoid spreading anonymous letters or unfounded/grounded comments or rumors regarding a colleague's personal life;

- h) safeguard the University's property during the performance of duties and use it only for official purposes;
- i) take appropriate measures in cases of academic ethics violations (plagiarism, self-plagiarism, compilation, fabrication/falsification);
- j) treat interlocutors with respect and express opinions tactfully.

3.3. The following is prohibited:

- a) using information obtained in the course of professional duties for private interests;
- b) being under the influence of alcohol or other psychoactive substances, or in any other condition incompatible with the dignity of the University, while performing official duties;
- c) any form of discrimination or provocation/incitement of personal or other conflicts;
- d) using one's position or authority in ways that negatively affect colleagues;
- e) deliberately misleading colleagues, personal criticism, insult, humiliation, defamation, or anonymous accusations against colleagues or students;
- f) accepting gifts and/or money for the purpose of benefit or personal gain.

3.4. Academic/invited staff, in addition to complying with the above-mentioned ethical norms and obligations, must also observe the following rules:

- a) conduct the teaching process in accordance with the respective syllabi developed within the educational program;
- b) contribute to the formation of a transparent learning environment;
- c) develop and implement teaching and assessment methods that ensure students' academic integrity and exclude violations of academic ethics;
- d) exclude discrimination of students in evaluation based on favoritism, protectionism, or similar factors;
- e) not use the abilities or resources of students or their relatives for personal benefit or gain;
- f) observe academic dress style on the University premises.



Article 4. Duties and Rights of Students

1. A student is obliged to:

- a) contribute to enhancing the authority of the institution and safeguard its reputation;
- b) not bring alcohol, narcotics, or weapons into the University;
- c) refrain from gambling or committing any unlawful act as defined by the legislation of Georgia;
- d) not smoke tobacco inside University buildings;
- e) take care of the University's property;
- f) not offer gifts, money, or any other benefit to staff representatives for personal advantage;
- g) respect the University's staff and other students, and not insult them;
- h) not commit academic fraud, in particular:
 - copy from another person's work or use any supporting material without the consent of the course instructor;
 - sit an exam in place of another student, or ask another person to take an exam on their behalf;
 - obtain and/or use confidential information about an examination;
 - cite another's work or statement without proper reference to the source;
 - falsify their personal data.

2. A student is entitled to demand the protection of their legal rights (e.g., appeal an undesirable academic result, etc.) and to apply in writing to the relevant structural unit.

Chapter 2. Disciplinary Proceedings

Article 5. Initiation and Time Limits of Disciplinary Proceedings

1. Violation of the requirements of this Code may lead to the initiation of formal disciplinary proceedings, which may result in the imposition of corresponding disciplinary liability.
2. Any person who believes that a standard established by the Code has been violated may submit a written complaint to the Dean of the School, the Chancellor, or the Rector, depending on the nature and significance of the violation.



3. Disciplinary proceedings against a student or school staff are initiated within the relevant school, based on a complaint submitted to the Dean.
4. Disciplinary proceedings against units operating under the supervision of the Head of Administration are initiated based on a complaint submitted to the Head of Administration.
5. Disciplinary proceedings against a Dean are initiated based on a complaint submitted to the Rector.
6. A complaint submitted directly to the Rector may, depending on its nature and significance, be redirected to a lower hierarchical level, except in cases where the complainant objects.
7. Complaints against academic or invited staff concerning academic ethics norms are considered at the school level, unless the person against whom the complaint is filed requests that the matter be reviewed at the Rector's level.
8. The general timeframe for disciplinary proceedings is 30 working days from the date of receipt of the complaint. This period may be extended for a reasonable time if required by the complexity of the matter or by the objective necessity of investigation.

Article 6. Disciplinary Body, Its Authority, and Involved Persons

- 6.1. Disciplinary proceedings at the University with respect to the violating party are carried out by a temporary body — the Disciplinary Commission — established by decision of the School Council, the Head of Administration, or the Rector.
- 6.2. The composition of the temporary commission is determined for each specific violation.
- 6.3. The complainant and the person against whom the proceedings are initiated may not be members of the commission.
- 6.4. The commission must consist of not fewer than 3 and not more than 5 members, who may include University staff, students, and/or other invited persons.
- 6.5. The Disciplinary Commission has the following powers:
 - a) to investigate the circumstances;
 - b) to obtain explanations from the complainant and the respondent, and to interview other witnesses;
 - c) to review the matter and impose sanctions on the person against whom the proceedings are conducted;
 - d) to submit the decision for enforcement to the responsible person.

6.6. Participation of the offender in the proceedings:

- a) The alleged violator is entitled to attend the commission meeting and defend their position. They must be notified of the meeting 5 days in advance.
- b) If the violator does not appear, the meeting is postponed for 5 days, or for a period justified by a valid reason for absence. If the violator fails to appear again without a valid reason, the commission is entitled to review the case in their absence and, where appropriate, issue a decision.

Article 7. Procedures and Rules for Reviewing Complaints

7.1. The Disciplinary Commission must review the complaint fairly and impartially. Commission meetings are closed, and the information obtained during the proceedings is confidential. The commission investigates the matter and appoints a responsible person. The complainant and the violator must be informed of the investigation results at least 5 days before the meeting.

7.2. Commission meetings are chaired by the Chairperson, while the Secretary documents the proceedings.

7.3. Witnesses and parties involved in the case may be invited to the meeting.

7.4. The complainant and the violator are given the opportunity to present their positions, question witnesses, submit written or other evidence, and request the involvement of other persons or experts for testimony.

7.5. The commission adopts decisions by open vote, with the majority of its full membership. The minutes are signed by the Chairperson and the Secretary. A dissenting opinion must be submitted in writing and attached to the decision.

Article 8. Types of Disciplinary Sanctions

8.1. For administrative, support, academic, and invited staff, the following disciplinary sanctions are established:

- a) reprimand;
- b) warning;
- c) dismissal, as an extreme measure.

8.2. For students, the following disciplinary sanctions are established:

- a) reprimand;
- b) warning;
- c) severe warning;
- d) restriction of the right to use established benefits/scholarship;
- e) expulsion from the University.

8.3. A reprimand is applied for a first disciplinary offense, or when the decision-making body/person considers the offender's attitude toward the act as grounds to impose a lighter sanction instead of a heavier one.

8.4. A warning is applied in cases of repeated disciplinary offenses, or for violations of academic integrity norms by students.

8.5. A severe warning is applied depending on the seriousness of the violation, also in cases of breaches of academic integrity norms by students.

8.6. Dismissal applies to academic, invited, administrative, and support staff when, considering the requirements of applicable legislation, continuation of the employment relationship is impossible.

8.7. Restriction/deprivation of benefits may be temporary or permanent, depending on the severity and nature of the violation.

8.8. When multiple offenses exist simultaneously, the more severe sanction supersedes the lesser one.

8.9. Expulsion from the University, as an extreme measure, is applied only when the violation is gross and intentional, or when repeated recidivism occurs, and the violation results in negative consequences for the University, its staff, students, or third parties.

Article 9. Preventive Mechanisms for Detecting and Avoiding Plagiarism

9.1. Academic and invited academic staff, as well as students, are obliged to uphold the principles of academic integrity in scientific and research activities and must not commit plagiarism. The rules stated in the Code of Ethics, through adherence to principles of publicity, information campaigns, and relevant surveys, contribute to the prevention of plagiarism, the detection of plagiarism cases, and provide appropriate response mechanisms in cases of violation.

9.2. The following shall be considered plagiarism:

- a) copying another person's work (including that of a student), without attribution to the author and/or source and without permission, and presenting it as one's own;
- b) using another person's opinions, ideas, or arguments verbatim, by citation or paraphrasing, without attribution to the author or source, and presenting them as one's own;
- c) presenting one's own previously prepared work as a new one (self-plagiarism);
- d) serious violation of the requirements established by the University regarding the execution of a scientific paper, particularly with respect to citation standards.

9.3. For the purpose of plagiarism prevention, the University offers *Academic Writing* as a mandatory subject in the first year of undergraduate and master's programs, and also conducts informational consultation sessions for students, academic staff, and invited staff.

9.4. For plagiarism detection, the University uses specialized software.

9.5. Cases of plagiarism are considered only through a commission procedure, and if confirmed, due to the reputational harm to the University, in addition to the disciplinary sanctions provided under Article 8, the following sanctions may also be applied:

- a) refusal to publish the work;
- b) revocation of the academic degree;
- c) annulment of the results of the work;
- d) public announcement that the University disassociates itself from the work;
- e) requirement for the author of the plagiarism to publicly disclaim the University's connection with the work;

f) suspension of research-supporting activities within the University.

Article 10. Content and Notification of the Decision

10.1. The decision must include:

- a) the name of the initiating unit and the composition of the commission;
- b) the name, surname, and status of the violator;
- c) the date of initiation of the proceedings;
- d) the dates of the hearing and the decision;
- e) a description of the factual circumstances related to the case;
- f) the substance of the ethical violation;
- g) the legal basis of the decision;
- h) the type of disciplinary sanction imposed.

10.2. A certified copy of the decision of the disciplinary body/person must be sent to the violator within five (5) days from the date of the decision.

10.3. A copy of the decision must be attached to the violator's personal file.

10.4. The decision of the commission may be appealed in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

Article 11. Duration of Sanctions

The disciplinary sanctions of reprimand, warning, and severe warning apply only for a limited time. A disciplinary sanction is extinguished as follows: a reprimand loses force three months after the entry into effect of the respective decision, while a warning and a severe warning lose force six months after entry into effect.

Chapter 3. Concluding Provisions

Article 12. Concluding Provisions

12.1. This Code enters into force from the date of issuance of the relevant order by the Rector.

12.2. This Code must be published in accordance with the established procedure.