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ΤΜΗΜΑ ΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΗΣ ΦΥΣΙΚΗΣ ΑΓΩΓΗΣ & ΑΘΛΗΤΙΣΜΟΥ



**RESEARCH ETHICS REGULATION**  
POSTGRADUATE STUDY PROGRAM  
**EUROPEAN MASTER IN SPORT AND EXERCISE PSYCHOLOGY**  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT SCIENCE  
UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY



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## INTRODUCTION

This Research Ethics Code of the postgraduate Program “European Master in Sport and Exercise Psychology” (EMSEP) of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science (DPESS) is fully harmonized with the approved Research Ethics Code of the University of Thessaly which was approved during the meeting of the Senate No.233/29-5-2020, which is available at: <https://www.uth.gr/panepistimio/thesmika/themata-deontologias>.

## **CHAPTER 1: GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

### **Article 1. Scope**

This Code applies to all research activities, as well as the activities of providing specialized services, training programs or other scientific applications, carried out inside or outside the premises of the University of Thessaly (UTH), under the responsibility of its scientific staff, with or without financing.

### **Article 2. Research Ethics Committee (R.E.C.)**

2.1. The mission of the Research Ethics Committee (R.E.C.) is to provide, on a moral and ethical level, a guarantee of reliability of the research projects carried out at the University of Thessaly.

2.2. In the context of its above mission, R.E.C. controls:

a) whether a research project is carried out with respect for the value of human beings and animals and the autonomy of the persons participating, their privacy and personal data, as well as the natural and cultural environment.

b) the observance of the generally accepted principles of the integrity of research and the criteria of sound scientific practice, in accordance with the "Regulation of Implementation of Principles and Operation of the R.E.C. of UTH"

### **Article 3. Written statement of information and compliance**

Researchers, when submitting proposals or applications or contracts in order to conduct research, declare in writing to the Research & Management Committee of ELKE UTH. that they have knowledge of this Code, and undertake the obligation to comply with and observe the conditions and provisions provided for herein and to immediately inform of any changes or modifications that occur to the project during the course of the research.

### **Article 4. The value of the research activity, independence and responsibility of the researchers**

4.1. The research conducted at UTH aims to promote scientific knowledge which, through its utilization, contributes to the prosperity of society as a whole. For the Institution, scientific research is both a social good and the subject of a fundamental right of those who carry it out. As a social good, it promotes human knowledge and innovation and thus contributes to improving the quality of individual and collective life. This dimension is inextricably linked to the freedom of the researchers, without which it cannot be carried out. The research activity is an integral element of freedom of the researcher and is institutionally reflected by its recognition as an object of individual right (Greek Constitution, UNESCO Declarations). These two dimensions of research value are inextricably and organically linked.

4.2. Researchers enjoy the constitutionally guaranteed academic freedom within the context of the University of Thessaly. The freedom of research is ensured by the public character and institutional autonomy of the Institution which guarantees its independence from political and economic dependencies.

4.3. The inspection of research ethics by the research community itself is a guarantee of the independence of the research in the context of self-regulation processes, as they arise in the context of the relevant scientific branch, as the researchers primarily have the specialized knowledge and the interest in ensuring the integrity and reliability of their activities.

4.4. Researchers must disclose the funding sources of their research work. When entering into a funding agreement they must review and reject any terms that compromise their freedom to design, conduct or publish their research.

## **Article 5. Guarantees of respect for the independence of researchers - Obligations of the Research Organization - UTH**

5.1. The University of Thessaly, through its competent bodies, guarantees the independence of the researchers. It is responsible for the transparency of its financial resources, especially the terms of accepting private funding.

5.2. In the framework of the guarantees of the independence and integrity of the researchers, the University of Thessaly ensures compliance with safety rules, both for the protection of the researchers themselves and for the protection of public health and the environment, in relation to research conducted in its facilities.

5.3. The University of Thessaly must provide support for the continuous training of its researchers, including their training in the principles of research ethics and those of scientific integrity, as well as facilitate by any suitable means their awareness about international scientific developments.

5.4. The University of Thessaly ensures the dissemination of the knowledge produced, in the context of its research activities, to the international scientific community. It also ensures, in collaboration with its researchers, the transmission of the knowledge produced to the wider public, by any suitable means and in a responsible manner, which contributes to the social utilization of science and, through it, to social progress and in improving the quality of human life.

## **CHAPTER 2: BASIC PRINCIPLES OF RESEARCH ETHICS**

### **Article 6. Principles of Scientific Integrity**

6.1. The responsibility of the researchers

Research must be conducted with honesty, commitment to scientific truth, respect for human dignity, personal autonomy, biological and intellectual integrity of individuals, intellectual property and personal data, as well as care for life, nature and the environment. The researchers of the University of Thessaly accept that scientific responsibility and social responsibility apply equally to humans and animals.

6.2. Scientific integrity

Scientific integrity refers to the refusal to compromise scientific values motivated by financial gain or public recognition. Integrity is specialized in specific epistemological and methodological obligations, which vary according to scientific disciplines.

6.3. Reliability

All scientific research must be conducted in a way that guarantees its reliability, which is reflected in its design, methodology, analysis and use of resources and the communication of its results, thus ensuring its quality.

6.4. Fairness / Honesty

All members of the research community of the University of Thessaly are committed to the principle of fair treatment of all individuals with whom they cooperate, as well as the observance of the principles of justice, meritocracy and impartiality. They must refrain from any activities or actions that could constitute, or suggest, favor or prejudice or negative bias towards cooperating individuals. The

development, conduct, monitoring, reporting and provision of information about a survey must be conducted in a transparent, fair, complete and impartial manner.

#### 6.5. Equal treatment

All members of the research community of the University of Thessaly enjoy the right to equal treatment, but are also obliged to respect the corresponding right of other researchers and their collaborators, without any form of direct or indirect discrimination, which is based on racial, ethnic and cultural characteristics, language, gender and sexual orientation, religious, political and philosophical beliefs, privacy, health and physical ability, and economic and/or social status of individuals.

#### 6.6. Respect and rights of persons

During any research activity all involved members must behave with respect to the rights and freedoms of the individuals with whom they cooperate, rejecting any form of deception, coercion, or harassment. The behavior of researchers is governed by respect for the biological and spiritual integrity of humans, and care for nature and the environment. In addition, all research activities are governed by respect for the intellectual property rights of the Institution's members and collaborating bodies at the international and national level.

#### 6.7. Accountability and Transparency

Each researcher, or the group in which he/she participates, has an obligation to allow access to the full results obtained from a specific research project. The research methodology must be or become apparent. Research protocols, in the areas where they exist, must be followed in a convenient and demonstrable way so that the results of the research are verifiable.

Commitments to accountability and transparency cover research from conception to publication, management and organization, training, supervision and mentoring, and its wider implications.

#### 6.8. Respect for intellectual property

Plagiarism, the appropriation of foreign achievements as well as the falsification of results are impermissible and are subject to sanctions within the framework of the Regulations of the University of Thessaly and the provisions on the protection of rights (see Article 16).

## CHAPTER 3: PRINCIPLES OF SOCIAL RESEARCH

### Article 7. Principles of Bioethics for human research

7.1. Those who conduct human research must be aware of the ethical principles and more specific ethical rules that govern their subject matter. In particular, any research involving humans must be conducted in accordance with fundamental bioethical principles:

- of the autonomy of individuals,
- of benefit,
- of non-harm and
- of justice.

7.2. Respect for human dignity and the associated principle of the primary importance ("inherent value") of human beings constitute the core of bioethical principles, which are reflected in international conventions and declarations (Oviedo Convention, UNESCO Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome) as well as in the Constitution and legislation of Greece.

7.3. The interest and well-being of individuals participating in the research always take precedence over the interest only of science and society. In the event of a conflict, priority must always be given to the individual.

7.4. Social research in particular has the main goal of contributing to the development of knowledge and the progress of social sciences to improve the lives of people and society as a whole. The particularity and the weighty importance of human research require the drawing up of certain special regulatory directions.

#### **Article 8. Respect for dignity and personality and avoidance of discrimination**

The researchers of the University of Thessaly, when conducting their research, must show respect for the dignity, personal autonomy and individual rights of third parties involved in the research activity. They owe respect to their private and family life and to the beliefs and values they hold. They are required to avoid any discrimination against persons on the basis of ethnicity, race, national origin, language, gender, religion, privacy, physical ability, socio-economic status, or any other factor unrelated to scientific competence and integrity.

#### **Article 9. Obligation to inform the persons participating in the investigation**

9.1. The researchers of the University of Thessaly must inform, in a concise but comprehensible and as complete way as possible, honestly and adequately, the people who are going to take part in their research, about the research's objectives. The information must be complete and concern the methodology that will be used during research, the purposes of the research and the possible risks and any burden or discomfort for the persons participating in it. The information is provided in a transparent, comprehensible and easily accessible format, in a way that can be perceived and understood by the research participants. The information is provided in writing or by other means, including, if appropriate, electronically.

9.2. There is also an obligation to inform individuals who, while not participating in the investigation, are directly affected by its conduct.

#### **Article 10. Obligation to obtain the consent of individuals participating in the research**

10.1. No social research on humans can be carried out without prior consent after the participant has been thoroughly informed of the purpose, scope and possible risks, in accordance with the previous article. The consent of the individuals, who are going to participate in the research, must be provided in writing. In those cases where the provision of written consent is not possible, or is not appropriate due to the nature of the research or any particular cultural and other characteristics of the research participants of individuals or groups, consent may reasonably be provided by any clear affirmative action, which constitutes a free, specific, explicit and fully aware indication of the subject's agreement in favor of the processing of the data concerning him, for example by a written statement and by electronic means or recording.

Obtaining the informed consent of the participants does not always, nor exclusively, guarantee the protection of the individuals concerned. An important part of the responsibility for their protection remains with those responsible of planning and conducting the specific research.

10.2. Those who are legally incompetent and minors are only allowed to participate in research if it is carried out in their best interest, after the written consent of their legal representatives, based on the Oviedo Convention and the applicable legislation on the protection of personal data, regarding their own opinion and the free withdrawal of consent at any time. The written consent of the legal

representatives of incompetent persons and minors does not exempt the researcher from the obligation to obtain consent from minors and incompetent persons.

### **Article 11. Obligation of special justification for the choice to have minors participate in the research**

11.1. Research on minors must be specifically justified when its results cannot be produced in any other way or with the participation of other groups. In these cases, special care is required from the researchers of the University of Thessaly for the protection of the rights of children, minors and vulnerable groups, when their participation in research programs is deemed necessary.

Including:

a. Researchers may not use any research procedure, which may be harmful to the child either physically or psychologically. However young the children may be, their rights take precedence over the rights of the researcher.

b. Before starting the research, the researchers must obtain the participants' informed consent. They must inform the child of all features of the research that could affect their willingness to participate and answer their questions in terms that match their level of understanding. Researchers should respect the child's freedom to choose to participate or not in the research, as well as to stop participating at any time. Participants should voluntarily agree to take part in research after being informed, which should be commensurate with their maturity. For the participants, in addition to the above, the written consent of their parents or legal guardians must be obtained.

c. When it comes to research with infants, researchers should provide all necessary explanations to parents, and be particularly sensitive to indicators of infant distress, in order to obtain written informed consent from parents.

d. For the participation of children and minors in research, in addition to their own opinion, the written consent of their parents or legal guardians is required. The informed consent of the parents or legal guardians, or those acting in the place of the parents (e.g. directors of institutions, etc.), should preferably be obtained in writing.

e. There must also be written consent - after being informed - of any person whose interaction with the child is the subject of the study (e.g. teachers).

f. Personal information given by participants during the survey must remain confidential. The anonymity of the participants should be maintained and no information should be used for which there is no approval. In cases of named participation in research [or in cases where named participation in research is deemed necessary or desirable) (e.g. cases of research of artistic practices, and/or artists/works, testimonies in the context of oral history research)] the consent of the participants based on article 10 of the code of ethics is required.

### **Article 12. Obligation of special justification for the choice to participate in research persons who are vulnerable to coercion**

12.1. The responsibility of the researchers of the University of Thessaly is increased according to the social environment in which they will seek volunteers and conduct the research. Some environments and situations involve conditions which, in fact, can decisively influence the will of the person and consequently limit their freedom and self-determination, such as detention in prisons, hospitalization in psychiatric institutions or even in intensive care units and dealing with emergencies, living in old



people's homes or in places where refugees and immigrants are accommodated, in conditions of domestic, social or political violence, emergency situations due to natural or other disasters, etc. In such cases, researchers have increased responsibilities and must justify and thoroughly document that they ensure the conditions, so that research participants do not become mere "means" to experimentation and research.

12.2. For research on refugee populations, the principles contained in the General European Rules and Codes of Ethics must be observed (DG for Research and Innovation, Guidance note – Research on refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, H2020 Programme, Guidance. V6.1, 04.02 .2019).

12.3. In potential investigations of prisoners, investigators must comply with the special provisions that apply to them (Penal Code, special Codes of Ethics of Criminology or Criminal Investigation). Experiments aimed at the search for interrogation methods or other means that may cause risks to their physical and mental health, or reduce their moral status and insult their humanity, are not permitted under any circumstances.

### **Article 13. Obligation to respect diversity**

13.1. In all social research (including those carried out in an interdisciplinary context) the researchers of the University of Thessaly must respect cultural and individual differences in roles and positions, including those due to age, gender, race, minority, national origin, religion, sexual preference, disability, language and socioeconomic status. They are sensitive to the real or perceived hierarchies and inequalities of relationships between researchers and research participants and ensure the necessary theoretical, methodological and research conditions for the emergence of genuine discourse and perspective of the research participants. They do not exploit individuals with whom they have a consulting or similar relationship, which objectively creates a relationship of inequality (e.g. patients, clients, etc.) and avoid in any way harming or putting research participants at risk.

13.2. They create, maintain, distribute, keep, maintain and dispose of records and data related to their research, in accordance with applicable law and with this Code of Research Ethics.

### **Article 14. Protection of the privacy and data of the individuals participating in the research**

14.1. The University of Thessaly is recipient of multiple types of information, including personal data and private information. The researchers of the University of Thessaly are committed to the protection of the privacy of the persons participating in the research, as well as to their protection during the processing of their personal data, electronically or in any other form. Researchers must process the personal data exclusively for the purposes of the processing and with the means of processing determined by the Data Processor. Any other processing of this data for other purposes, even similar ones, is excluded. The University of Thessaly, as the entity responsible for the processing, and the researchers performing the processing, undertake implementing the necessary technical and organizational measures to comply with the principle of data minimization, ensuring the appropriate level of protection and security during their processing, protecting them from destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorized access, disclosure or transmission in any way.

Appropriate measures may include the use of pseudonyms, codes or other methods that completely exclude the identification of participating subjects. If, exceptionally, the possibility of identification is necessary to be maintained for the purposes of the specific processing, it must be specifically justified and appropriate protection measures must be taken.

14.2. The researchers must strictly observe before, during and after the research, the principles of protection and integrity of the personal data collected and processed, as well as the applicable legislation for their protection. Each investigation is conducted in accordance with the principles and rules of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the applicable Greek legislation.

The researchers performing the processing must, throughout the processing, comply with the requirements of the legislative framework on the protection of personal data, in particular with the GDPR and the relevant legislation of Greece, as well as with the decisions and instructions of the Hellenic Data Protection Authority (HDDPA).

14.3. In the event that in the context of research carried out at the University of Thessaly there is a request from the Professor responsible for the project for the transmission of personal data to a country outside the European Union, this request should be accompanied by the corresponding documentation, i.e. an official certificate, which first mentions the number of the contract with the recipient of the data in the third country and secondly, that, from the contract, it follows the observance of the guarantees of protection of personal data, provided by the Regulation of the EU. If there is no such contract, the Professor responsible for the project must state the reason, and is required to provide specific written consent of the subjects participating in the research for the transmission of their data, provided that the consent form contains explicit information that EU protection guarantees do not apply in the third country (which must be named).

14.4. Those researchers who process personal data of subjects participating in research, and themselves are not bound by statutory confidentiality nor are they in a relationship of dependence with the Institution, i.e. those who are not officers or employees of the Institution nor are they connected with it in terms of carrying out the specific research with a work relationship (not a project or provision of independent services, etc.) enter into a contract with the University of Thessaly additional Terms Agreement for the processing of personal data.

14.5. All persons participating in research have the right to be forgotten or delete their data. In order to strengthen the right to be forgotten in the online environment, as well as the right to delete personal data, if there is a relevant request from a person participating in the research, the person carrying out the procession must inform the Data Processor, so that any links or copies or any reproduction of said personal data are deleted.

14.6. Processing of special categories of personal data

Especially for the processing of special categories of personal data, all the strict provisions concerning them will be taken according to the applicable legislation.

14.7. For all matters of personal data protection, researchers must comply with the instructions of the Data Protection Officer of the University of Thessaly (DPO), having the obligation to justify their decision in writing in the case that they act otherwise and to assume the civil and criminal responsibility of any adverse or harmful results that may occur due to it.

## **Article 15. Compliance with safety rules**

15.1. The researchers of the University of Thessaly must apply all safety rules recognized in the relevant scientific field. In the event that compliance with safety regulations depends on infrastructure/equipment issues, they inform the authorities so that the necessary measures can be taken immediately.

15.2. The researchers of the University of Thessaly who conduct research programs must inform the participants in them, fully and honestly, and take all necessary and mandatory scientific measures to protect the health of the participants and workers in the programs from accidents or side effects that may arise from the particular conditions of research.

15.3. Systems security. The basic principles that all secure systems must incorporate are confidentiality, integrity and availability:

Confidentiality: Data must be able to remain confidential and not leaked. It is necessary to control access to the data so that it is done only by authorized persons, as well as to operate mechanisms that will control the creation of copies, and will record all forms of access to the data.

Integrity: The system must guarantee the integrity of the data, i.e. it should make sure that the data has not been changed by unauthorized intervention. If a change has been made, it should be detectable (e.g. through the creation of logs, which record all forms of data access, through encryption, which can guarantee their confidentiality and integrity, etc. etc.)

Availability: The system must be available to users when they need it. If a system becomes unavailable (e.g. due to failure or malicious action), it should be able to return to normal operation within a reasonable time, or be replaced as necessary (e.g. by an alternative system available to take over, at the beginning of availability restoration).

## **Article 16. Respect for intellectual property**

16.1. When conducting research activity, the researchers of the University of Thessaly must take into account and not in any way infringe on the intellectual property rights of third parties.

16.2. Any person who receives, officially or unofficially, knowledge of the progress or the product of the investigations before the completion and publication of their results, must observe complete confidentiality and refrain from any action of exploiting the knowledge or the product of the research for his own benefit.

16.3. The researchers acquire intellectual property rights over the object of the research they conduct and its products depending on the degree of their contribution to it, the contract in the context of which they acted, their relationship with the University and in any case with the relevant provisions in current legislation.

16.4. Intellectual property includes the right to exploit the research work (property right) and the right to protect the personal connection to it (moral right).

## **CHAPTER 4. RELATIONS BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE RESEARCH TEAM**

### **Article 17. Relationships between researchers**

17.1. Researchers have an obligation of mutual respect and the right to equal treatment. Younger researchers deserve respect for their personality and a fair assessment of their abilities. They themselves have, respectively, an obligation to respect and recognize the experience of the more experienced researchers.

17.2. The individual contribution of each researcher to collective research efforts should be acknowledged. Accurately recording this contribution, either in scientific publications or in any public presentation of the research program, is the right of the researcher. The relevant responsibility rests with all members of the scientific team and especially the heads of the program.

## **Article 18. Obligations of collaborators**

18.1. Research partners must:

- a. carry out their research activity with the main purpose of promoting scientific knowledge and the benefit of society as a whole.
- b. observe the provisions of the legislation referring to the research objects, the ethical principles, the rules of good practice in research, and the ethical rules of their profession and this Code.

In conducting research, collaborators enjoy freedom of expression and opinion. They must at the same time respect the directions imposed for the organization and guidance of the research activity by the person in charge of the research.

18.2. Violation of the provisions herein by the research collaborators, or their non-compliance with the instructions of those in charge regarding the violation of ethical principles and rules of conduct, may entail their replacement.

## **Article 19. Obligations of Scientific Coordinators**

19.1. The scientific coordinators of the research project must, during the conduct of the research:

- a. comply with the provisions of the current legislation, the fundamental ethical principles, the rules of professional ethics, as well as this Code, and
- b. monitor compliance with the aforementioned rules by their partners during the execution of the investigation, as defined in the previous article.

19.2. Those responsible for collaborative research should not appropriate research findings for their own personal promotion, or display research findings as their individual work.

In collaborative research, the team leader must ensure that all team members adhere to the basic ethical principles and rules of conduct. The respect and recognition of the individual contribution of each researcher and the observance of the principle of transparency and mutual information are the obligation of all research participants. Honesty in the publication and reporting of scientific findings, integrity in keeping promises and commitments, confidentiality in relation to data disclosed during one-on-one meetings, or in the consideration of proposals submitted for funding or work to publication, social responsibility, protection of volunteers and respect for their personality, especially when it comes to vulnerable groups, are basic principles of good research practice and should be observed by all researchers.

19.3. Any assignment to third parties of part of the research or research support tasks is under the responsibility and supervision of the person in charge of the research project.

19.4. In the case of more than one person in charge, compliance with the obligations herein shall be the responsibility of all equally.

19.5. Violation of the provisions of this article by those in charge of the research may be grounds for the termination of the specific research project. The suspension is decided by the Senate of the University of Thessaly, after a recommendation from the Research and Management Committee of ELKE UTH. and of the relevant Research Ethics Committee, which is issued following a relevant written

and signed complaint. Before any recommendation of the R.E.C., both the complainant and the person in charge of the investigation are called before it, to express their opinions regarding the complaint orally or in writing.

## **Article 20. Presentation of investigations**

20.1. Signs, announcements and general means of promoting the programs are designed and used in a way that serves the briefing of the scientific community or the general public, and not the professional promotion of research in an unfair way. The mention of potential sponsors in the activities or forms of the research groups must be done with care, so as not to create confusion as to the body of the research, not to give the impression of advertising a specific product or of a permanent connection of the sponsor with the University.

20.2. Signs and general promotion forms of the programs must mention all the scientists who took part in the research.

## **Article 21. Employment of University of Thessaly Faculty members in research projects outside UTH**

The faculty members of the University of Thessaly must notify the Research and Management Committee of the ELKE of the University regarding their participation in research projects, which are carried out in Foundations, Centers or Institutes outside the University of Thessaly.

## **ANNEX**

The following applications and forms for completion are provided in the Code of Ethics and Conduct in Research of the University of Thessaly provided at:

<https://www.uth.gr/panepistimio/thesmika/themata-deontologias> :

1. Application template - questionnaire for granting approval by R.E.C..
2. Additional Terms Agreement for the processing of personal data.
3. Confidentiality Obligations of Referees for the protection of personal data & confidentiality, privacy, secrecy.
4. Confidentiality Obligations of Researchers for the protection of personal data & confidentiality, privacy, secrecy.
5. Decision of R.E.C. of the University of Thessaly for research project approval.