

Guideline of the Ethics Working Group of the Board of FH JOANNEUM

Version 1.0 from December 1, 2023

A. Options regarding ethical issues in connection with academic activities in teaching and research

1. All members of FH JOANNEUM (staff, external lecturers, as well as students of FH JOANNEUM), have the option of confidentially turning to a member of the Ethics Working Group or the (entire) Ethics Working Group in matters related to ethical considerations in connection with academic activities in teaching and research, as follows:"
 - a. **CONSULTATION through inquiry to a member of the Ethics Working Group:** A queried member of the Ethics Working Group provides a non-binding assessment of the ethical relevance of the presented issue and, if necessary, issues recommendations. The inquiry and the corresponding assessment by the member of the Ethics Working Group, along with any recommendations, are to be documented by the involved member of the Ethics Working Group and conveyed to the inquiring individual. This documentation serves as a qualified opinion for the inquiring person. However, it does not absolve them of taking responsibility for ensuring ethical appropriateness."
 - b. **ASSESSMENT through consultation with the Ethics Working Group:** The Ethics Working Group assesses the ethical relevance of the presented issue. The inquiry and the corresponding statement by the Ethics Working Group are to be documented accordingly and communicated to the inquiring individual and the Academic Director. The inquiring person may rely on and refer to this statement."
2. Every member of FH JOANNEUM is encouraged to cooperate with and provide the Ethics Working Group with information and documents to the best of their ability."

B. Composition and Internal Operation of the Ethics Working Group of the Board of FH JOANNEUM

1. The Ethics Working Group of the Board of FH JOANNEUM consists of at least six individuals appointed by the Academic Board of FH JOANNEUM from the body of the elected Board members. The Academic Board ensures that each department is represented by at least one person. The Ethics Working Group is active for the duration of the Academic Board's term of office.
2. An individual is qualified to be a member of the Ethics Working Group if they possess relevant expertise in a specific subject area and demonstrate credible professional ethical competence."
3. The term of office for a member of the Ethics Working Group commences upon appointment by the Board of FH JOANNEUM and concludes upon resignation, departure from the Board of FH JOANNEUM, removal by the Board, or the end of the Board of FH JOANNEUM's term of office."
4. Members of the Ethics Working Group operate independently, are not subject to directives, and are bound by confidentiality in the execution of their duties. However, they may openly discuss and consult with each other regarding presented inquiries and consultations."
5. The Ethics Working Group elects from its members, for the duration of the Board of FH JOANNEUM's term of office, an individual to serve as the Chair of the Working Group and another as the Vice Chair. The Chair represents the Ethics Working Group externally, particularly to the Academic Director and the Board of FH JOANNEUM, schedules and presides over the Ethics Working Group meetings, and in case of unavailability, delegates these responsibilities to the Vice Chair. If both the Chair and Vice Chair are unavailable for an extended or permanent period, a

new ballot for the Chair or Vice Chair is to be held. Until the Chair or Vice Chair has been elected, the oldest member of the Ethics Working Group, in terms of age, assumes these duties."

6. The term of office for the Chair or Vice Chair of the Ethics Working Group begins with their election by the Ethics Working Group and concludes upon resignation, removal by the Ethics Working Group, or the end of the term of office in the Ethics Working Group as per Paragraph 3.
7. Each member of the Ethics Working Group has the right to request the scheduling of a meeting of the Ethics Working Group, with at least one meeting per year to be held.
8. Meetings of the Ethics Working Group take place in person or virtually. Meetings of the Ethics Working Group are not open to the public and are confidential. The chair of each meeting may invite guests for specific agenda items, ensuring the necessary confidentiality in such cases. The chair of each meeting is responsible for ensuring adequate documentation of the meeting outcomes.
9. The Ethics Working Group makes decisions by a simple majority with the presence of at least three members. However, the election and removal of a chair or vice chair require a qualified majority of all members. It is not permitted to make decisions by circulation.
10. Upon the release of resources by the Academic Director, the Ethics Working Group is authorized and encouraged to issue general position papers on relevant ethical topics or issues on behalf of the Board of FH JOANNEUM. Similarly, the Ethics Working Group can initiate in-house activities, aimed at enhancing ethical awareness, upon the release of resources by the Academic Director. These position papers and activities are to be developed in coordination with the FOS Department, where applicable.
11. The Ethics Working Group is required to submit an annual report to the Board of FH JOANNEUM, and the Academic Director is to present it as an agenda item during a regular Academic Board meeting.

D. Entry into Force:

1. These provisions come into effect on December 1, 2023.
2. Upon the above becoming valid, the previously established body of Ethics Liaison Persons is considered dissolved.