



## Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Council Procedures

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## PURPOSE

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) is dedicated to maintaining a community that encourages personal and intellectual growth. As a community with high standards and expectations, USEK has established a Code of Conduct to foster behaviors that align with a civil and educational environment. This Code applies to all students, governing behavior both on campus and in off-campus activities related to university functions.

The foundational principles of integrity, respect, honesty, responsibility, and accountability guide the behavior expected within the university community. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to promote a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for all members of the USEK community.

Members of the University community are expected to comply with all bylaws, University policies, and campus regulations, conducting themselves in ways that support a scholarly environment. The USEK Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Measures (referred to herein as the "Code of Conduct" or "Code") outlines the process for determining if a student has violated the Code and for responding appropriately when violations are sustained.

For any complaints regarding faculty or staff members, individuals should address their direct reporting managers, or otherwise seek guidance of the Human Resources Office for staff-related complaints and of the Office of the Provost for faculty-related concerns.

The Code of Conduct is subject to periodic review and revision to ensure that it remains current and reflective of evolving community standards and expectations.

## I- DEFINITIONS

### **Article 1. STUDENT**

For the purposes of this Code, the term "student" refers to an individual for whom USEK maintains student records and who:

- a) is enrolled in or registered with an academic program at USEK;
- b) is a free-listener or cross-registered;
- b) has completed the previous term and is eligible for re-enrollment, including the inter-semester break.

The Code also applies to:

- a) Applicants who were accepted as students but were found to have committed violations as part of the application process;
- b) Applicants who were accepted as students but were found to have committed violations on campus and/or while participating in university-related events or activities during the application period and official enrollment;
- c) All prospective students who sit for any proficiency test required by USEK, including those found to have committed violations before, during, or in relation to the proficiency testing process.

### **Article 2. DAYS**

For the purposes of this policy, the term "Days" refers to University business days. It excludes Saturdays, Sundays, and days during which USEK is closed.

The Student Affairs Office (SAO), the Deputy President for Student Development and Enrollment Management (DP-SDEM) and the Disciplinary Council may operate outside of typical business hours,

including Saturdays, Sundays, and national or institutional occasions, with the consent of the student concerned.

Holidays and extended periods during which the University is closed may delay the process at all levels, including meetings with the DP-SDEM, Council hearings, and appeals. In such cases, the process will resume as soon as possible upon the University's reopening and the return of university personnel involved in the administration of this process.

### **Article 3. DEPUTY PRESIDENT**

For the purposes of this policy, the term "Deputy President" or "DP-SDEM" refers to the Deputy President for Student Development and Enrollment Management.

### **Article 4. PRESIDENT/CHAIR**

For the purposes of this policy, the term "President" refers to the University President, and the term "Chair" refers to the Chair of the Student Disciplinary Council.

#### **a. Composition of the Council**

The Disciplinary Council (referred to herein as the "Council") investigates alleged breaches of the USEK Student Code of Conduct, determines culpability, and suggests disciplinary measures, if applicable. The Council operates on an ad hoc basis and its members are appointed by the President. Its responsibilities include examining conduct-related offenses, recommending appropriate disciplinary sanctions, enhancing the understanding of university rules and regulations, and helping students transform inappropriate behavior into acceptable behavior.

Members of the Council:

- Chair: A faculty member of the School of Law and Political Sciences.
- Faculty members: No fewer than three faculty members, one of whom will act as rapporteur. In cases of non-academic violations, the President may appoint more staff than faculty members in the Council.
- Staff member: At least one staff member, or more if it is a non-academic violation.
- SAO representative: One representative from the Student Affairs Office (SAO).
- Student Voice representatives: Two representatives of the Student Voice, advised by DP-SDEM/Director of the SAO.

#### **b. Council Sessions**

Any council session comprises three to seven members, one of whom must be the Chair.

#### **c. Duration of Appointment**

Unless as otherwise determined by the President, members of the Disciplinary Council will serve during the President's mandate (three years). The term is subject to modifications and renewals at the President's discretion.

#### **d. Change/Delegation in Appointment**

The President can delegate his role to the DP-SDEM by announcing this directly to the DP-SDEM and informing the Chair of the Council.

### **Article 5. NOTICE**

At whatever point the Disciplinary Council needs to contact any student, a notice will be sent to the USEK student email address and considered a sufficient notification as of the date of receipt of the e-mail. All communication to the alleged violator/student throughout the whole process is to be centralized and handled through the student's USEK email address and sent by the SAO (using the following email [disciplinarycouncil@usek.edu.lb](mailto:disciplinarycouncil@usek.edu.lb)).

### **Article 6. WITNESS**

A witness refers to any individual who participates in a Disciplinary Council hearing, either in person or through a written statement (if approved/authenticated by the Council) arranged for the purposes of the hearing. Hence, any individual, even if not affiliated with the University but is a witness or related to the action in question, is subject to the Disciplinary Council.

### **Article 7. SUPPORT PERSON**

A support person is any individual accompanying a student during the hearing. They may be an advocate, attorney, friend, or parent, who is not directly tied to or involved in the investigation. The role of the support person is only to provide support. While they may offer advice and support before and after the hearing, they may not participate in the hearing itself.

### **Article 8. JURISDICTION**

The University's Student Code of Conduct applies to all conduct, extending to behavior on University premises, at events sponsored by the University, and in off-campus activities that adversely affect the University community, its reputation, or its objectives. Examples of off-campus actions include, but are not limited to, participating in activities that violate University policies during internships, study abroad programs, or social events where the student is representing the University.

## **II- CODE OF ETHICS**

USEK demands the highest levels of academic integrity, ethical conduct, and professionalism from its students. Students are expected to uphold the university's reputation by adhering to Lebanese laws and university policies. Academic integrity is a core university value which ensures respecting the academic reputation of our University, its faculty, staff and students. Honesty and integrity are fundamental to the USEK experience and should guide student behavior both during their studies and beyond.

### **Article 1. BILLPOSTINGS AND LEAFLET DISTRIBUTION**

#### **Approval Requirement:**

- Distributing or posting leaflets, notices, and press releases by the University community requires prior approval from the SAO or the corresponding administration for Regional University Centers. This ensures that such activities do not interfere with teaching, research, and administrative operations.

#### **Documentation Requirement:**

- All distributed or displayed documents must bear the author's signature and the approving seal from the SAO or the respective administration.

- The author is solely responsible for the content and ideas of any document distributed or posted within USEK.

#### **Authorization for Foreign Individuals:**

Foreign individuals wishing to distribute or post documents need prior authorization from the Office of the Vice President for Community Life (OVPCL).

#### **Prohibited Posting Areas:**

Posting outside designated areas is prohibited, and violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary actions.

## **Article 2. SECURITY AND HYGIENE**

#### **Access to Campus:**

- Members of the University community and duly authorized persons (individuals whose names are shared by university personnel in coordination with the Campus Security and Safety Office and the OVPCL)-can access the USEK Campus.
- Security personnel may request vehicle and bag searches as a precautionary measure.
- Students must present their student identification cards to access the campus.

#### **Use of University Facilities:**

- University premises and equipment are available to students within specified availability and office hours.
- Access to facilities is permitted only under the supervision of designated administrative or educational officials.
- Users must be familiar with posted security regulations and rules within the premises.

#### **Handling of Documents and Devices:**

- Documents and devices provided to students must not be taken out of the University premises or mishandled.
- Specific rules apply to the library regarding the handling of materials.

#### **Prohibited Actions:**

- Introducing substances harmful to health and public order is strictly forbidden.
- Consumption of alcohol within the University is prohibited.

#### **Smoking Policy:**

- Use of smoking products indoors, including e-cigarettes, vapes, and IQOS, is strictly prohibited in designated areas.
- Non-compliance with the smoking policy may result in disciplinary measures.

## **Article 3. LOST AND FOUND OBJECTS**

If a student loses something on campus, they should report it to the SAO, providing details about the lost item/s. For found objects, members of the University community, motivated by a spirit of solidarity and responsibility, are required to hand them in to the SAO. USEK cannot be held responsible for the loss or theft of an object belonging to a person within the campus.

If a suspicious object is found, immediately contact the SAO without attempting to move such object. Security agents will be notified promptly.

#### **Article 4. BEHAVIOR AND DRESS CODE**

Any damage caused to the University premises and equipment, as well as to private property belonging to a third party, thefts or theft attempts, and verbal or physical violence within USEK, constitute a disruptive behavior, which according to its severity, is subject to disciplinary action.

The use of mobile phones is forbidden during courses, practical work, exams, and laboratory sessions.

Suitable and decent dress is required within the University. Ostentatious political signs, whether on clothing or any other type, intended to trigger protests, are not allowed.

#### **Article 5. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

Content shared on social media is subject to the same rules, regulations, and legal liabilities as any other form of communication. Students and graduates are accountable for what they post on their own accounts and should only post on behalf of USEK or its affiliated entities without explicit authorization.

##### **a. Content:**

**Prohibited Content:** All members of the USEK community are strictly prohibited from engaging in or sharing content that is hateful, bullying, harassing, or misleading.

**Respect and Tolerance:** Posts should always be respectful, tolerant, and free from discriminatory or offensive language.

**Fact-Checking:** Before sharing information, especially news or research, it is advisable to verify its accuracy and reliability.

##### **b. Privacy and Confidentiality:**

**Respect Privacy:** Students should not share personal information about others without their explicit consent. This includes photos, videos, contact details, and personal situations.

**Confidentiality:** Any confidential information related to USEK, its staff, or students, should not be shared on social media. This includes internal communications, data, and any information not publicly available.

##### **c. Consequences of Violations:**

**Accountability:** Violations of this policy can lead to disciplinary actions, including warnings, suspension from university-related activities, or further administrative or legal actions as referenced in section V. Sanctions.

##### **d. Positive Usage:**

**Promote University Values:** Students should use social media to showcase and uphold the values of USEK. This could be through sharing achievements, participation in academic discussions, or promoting university events.

##### **e. Constructive Dialogue:**

Students are encouraged to use these platforms for educational purposes, engaging in positive and constructive dialogues, sharing ideas, and supporting their peers.

**f. Disclaimer for Personal Opinions:**

When expressing personal opinions, students should include a disclaimer stating that their views are their own and do not represent the official stance of USEK or any of its departments.

**g. Policy Updates:**

This policy will be reviewed and updated regularly to keep pace with the evolving nature of social media. Changes will be communicated to all members of the USEK community.

### III- DISCIPLINARY COUNCIL POLICIES

#### Article 1. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

**a. General:**

These guidelines apply to all USEK property, official University functions, and University-sponsored programs, whether on or off-campus. USEK property includes land, campuses, buildings, facilities, or any asset owned, used, or controlled by the University. This includes the residence halls, library, parking areas, restaurants, sports complexes rented outside the campus, computers, and network systems owned, maintained, or controlled by the University, or funded by university budgets or designated by the campus as subject to these policies. This also applies when our students represent the University abroad or at other universities or events (e.g., sports competitions, moot court, etc.).

**b. Off-Campus Conduct:**

Decisions about disciplinary matters occurring off campus (e.g., internships at schools, hospitals, industry) depend on whether the behavior directly affects the health, safety, or security of any member of the USEK community, or the University's mission, or involves academic work or University records/documents. Factors considered by the SAO in determining jurisdiction, include the severity of the offense, potential harm, involvement of the individuals affected with the USEK community, and whether the off-campus behavior is part of a pattern of actions occurring both on and off University premises.

#### Article 2. REPORTING PROCEDURE

A student must not be considered responsible for any violation of conduct until the violation and/or offense is confirmed. Students accused of infringement of the Code of Conduct are informed regarding their rights when they meet with the ODP-SDEM and SAO. All through the procedure, they are qualified for the accompanying procedural securities:

**a. Notice:** Upon notification of an accusation, students have five days to schedule an initial meeting with the SAO. They are provided with:

- A brief description of the reported behavior and the basis for the accusation, including date, location, and specific policies allegedly breached.
- Information on how to access the full version of the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Council Procedures.
- Notification that no degree may be awarded until all accusations and sanctions are resolved, with a potential academic hold on the student's records.

**b. Choosing not to participate:**



The conduct process works best when students collaborate with the ODP-SDM and SAO to reach an informal resolution of cases. However, students may choose not to participate in the resolution process.

- The SAO will resolve the charge without the student's involvement and inform them of the decision in writing for their notice and to abide by the decision.
- Decisions made without student participation have the same force and effect as if the student had participated.
- Students may choose to remain silent at any point of the conduct process. No inference will be drawn from such decision.

**c. Hearing:**

The person accused of infringement of the Code is recommended to fully explore the informal resolution of his/her case. They may, in any case, choose to have a formal Disciplinary Council to resolve the issue.

The student may assign one support person at any stage of the process (refer to section I, Article 7).

**Article 3. TYPES OF MISCONDUCT**

Students are responsible for adhering to this Code of Conduct and may be held accountable for any violations, including actions that facilitate or encourage misconduct by others. Violations include the following types of misconduct:

**a. Academic Violations:**

All actions and behavior are assumed on goodwill and proper intentions. The following are examples of actions deemed in violation of the Student Code of Conduct; they are not intended to define misconduct in exhaustive or exclusive terms.

Any student who violates the principles described in the preamble to this document shall be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct.

**a.1 Cheating**

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the use of unauthorized materials, data, or study aids in any academic exercise; the change of any answers on an evaluated report before submitting it for re-reviewing; cheating during online exams and/or exams monitored by online lockdown programs, or the failure to observe the stated procedures or instructions of an academic exercise (e.g., examination instructions regarding alternate seating or conversation during an examination).

**a.2 Fabrication**

Fabrication includes, but is not limited to, the falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise, including fabrication or falsification of research. Fabrication of research is making up data or results and recording or reporting them. Falsification of research is manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

**a.3 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use of another person's work (including words, ideas, designs, or data) without giving appropriate attribution or citation. This includes the use of any generative Artificial Intelligence tool such as Chat GPT. Examples include copying, paraphrasing, or submitting previously submitted work as original; intentional omission of citations, etc.

Unless otherwise specified by the course instructor, all works, whether drafts or final versions, to meet course requirements (including papers, projects, tests, computer programs, oral presentations, or any other work) should be the student's own work, or otherwise the source be should clearly acknowledged.

#### **a.4 Facilitating Academic Dishonesty**

Facilitating academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of academic dishonesty.

#### **a.5 Pressure Regarding Grading or Evaluation of Coursework**

Using influence or exerting pressure on an instructor to change a grade or assess the student's work based on criteria that are not legitimately reflective of the coursework.

#### **a.6 Unauthorized Collaboration**

Unapproved joint effort implies working with others without the consent of the instructor on any submission, whether drafts or final versions, to meet course prerequisites (including papers, projects, take-home tests, PC programs, oral presentation, or other work). Cooperation between students will be considered unauthorized unless it is explicitly part of the assignment or explicitly allowed by the instructor.

#### **a.7 Other Forms of Dishonesty**

Other forms of dishonesty, include, but are not limited to, fabricating information, knowingly disseminating false information, or reporting a false emergency to the University.

#### **a.8 Forgery**

Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University document, record, key, electronic device, library books, or ID, or submission of any forged document or record to the University, or theft of library books.

#### **a.9 Computer Misuse**

Robbery or misuse of University PCs or other University electronic assets, such as PC and electronic correspondences offices, frameworks, and administrations.

Misuses include, but are not limited to:

- Unauthorized access, use, transfer, or alteration of communications belonging to others.
- Using software or physical devices to fraudulently enroll in classes for oneself or others, using measures other than those undertaken by the Registrar's Office.
- Interference with the work of others or with the operation of computer or electronic communication systems or services.

Infringement of copyright laws, including:

- Theft of copyrighted materials
- Unauthorized sharing of copyrighted materials
- Other abuse of copyrighted materials such as music, movies, software, photographs, or text.

#### **a.10 Unauthorized Use or Sale of University Materials**

Students are prohibited from giving, selling, or otherwise distributing any recordings made during a course without prior written consent from both the University and the instructor/moderator. This applies to any material in any medium, including handwritten notes.

Consideration of Rights: Before recording, distributing, or communicating course materials, students must obtain authorization from all relevant parties, including:

- Privacy rights of enrolled students
- Rights of guest speakers
- Copyright interests in materials owned by others delivered during the course
- Any other applicable rights or permissions required by law or policy

Notwithstanding the approval of the University and the instructor/moderator, it is also important to make sure authorization from these parties before any recording, distribution, publication, or communication is legitimately allowed.

#### **a.11 Selling Academic Materials**

Selling, prepping, or distributing academic materials for any commercial purpose, including, but not limited to, written, video, or audio recordings of any course, is prohibited unless explicitly approved by the University and the instructor. The unauthorized sale or commercial distribution of academic materials is an infringement of the USEK Disciplinary Code, whether it is the student or another person who prepared the materials. This policy applies to any format, including handwritten or typed notes.

#### **a.12 Selling Tickets**

Selling tickets for any activity is prohibited.

#### **a.13 Inappropriate Conduct in Library**

Users of the library facilities and participants in library programs should adhere to the following conduct guidelines:

- Adherence to respectful behavior while using library facilities or participating in library programs.
- Avoidance of disturbance or distractions while abiding by the library's rules and regulations.
- Involvement in typical activities associated with library use while inside the building.
- Individuals not engaged in reading, studying, or using library materials or computers may be requested to leave the premises.
- Failure to comply with these guidelines may result in disciplinary measures.

#### **a.14 In-Class Disruption**

Students are expected to behave appropriately in class. Disruptions, including extraneous conversation or misbehavior during classes or exams, are not permitted.

### **b. Non-Academic Violations**

#### **b.1 Theft**

As mentioned in Article 4t – Behavior and Dress Code, theft, alteration, destruction, or damage to any property of the University or any property of others while on University premises is prohibited., This also includes possession of any property if the student knew or reasonably should have known that it was stolen.

#### **b.2 Harassment/Bullying**

**Definition:** Harassment or bullying is defined as conduct that is serious, unavoidable, and hostile enough to hinder an individual's admittance to the University's projects or exercises, effectively denying them equal access to the University's resources and opportunities.

**Scope:** Harassment or bullying includes behavior based on the individual's race, color, national or ethnic origin, citizenship, sex, religion, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, ancestry, physical or mental disability, medical condition, etc.

**Enhanced sanctions:** Sanctions may be increased for conduct motivated by the above motives.

### **b.3 Stalking**

Stalking is a repeated behavior in which a student causes a reasonable person to fear for their safety or the safety of their family. Such conduct must be deemed by the University as a genuine threat and likely to cause reasonable alarm or intimidation, and it must not serve any legitimate purpose.

### **b.4 Failure to Comply**

Refusal to cooperate with the University or public officials, including failure to provide identification or follow their instructions while on university property or at authorized campus locations, as well as obstructing or interfering with their duties.

### **b.5 Controlled Substances**

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, administration, possession, use, or offer of controlled substances, including attempts to do any of these actions.

### **b.6 Alcohol**

Unlawful manufacture, distribution, administration, possession, use, or offer of alcohol in violation of the University policy or campus guidelines, or attempts to do any of these actions.

### **b.7 Destructive Devices, Weapons or Replica Weapons**

Possession, use, storage, or manufacture of explosives, firebombs, fireworks, or other destructive devices or weapons.

### **b.8 Disciplinary Actions**

Violation of the conditions imposed as part of a disciplinary action under this Code or campus regulations and the Code of Conduct.

### **b.9 Violation of Privacy**

- **Violation of Privacy:**
  - Making a video or sound recording, taking photos, or streaming audio or video of any individual in a location where they have a reasonable right for privacy, without informing them and obtaining their consent.
- **Scope:**
  - These arrangements do not extend to public events or conversations, nor does it apply to lawful actions taken by policy enforcement.
  - These arrangements may not be used to infringe upon legally protected rights such as freedom of speech or assembly.
- **Consent:**
  - “Express consent” is clear, unmistakable, and voluntary consent that can be provided in written, oral or nonverbal forms.
- **Private Locations:**
  - “Private locations” are settings where individuals reasonably expect privacy, such as residential living quarters, bathrooms, locker rooms, and personal offices.
- **Private Conversations/Meetings:**

- “Private, non-public conversations and/or meetings” include any communication conducted in circumstances that reasonably indicate that the parties wish the communication to remain confidential. This does not include communications made in public gatherings or situations in which the parties reasonably expect that their communication may be overheard or recorded.

#### **b.10 Use of Foul Language**

Use of foul language against staff, faculty and students.

#### **b.11 Inappropriate Sexual Behavior**

Publicly engaging in sexual behavior is prohibited as defined by Lebanese law.

### **c- Violations of University Policies**

#### **c.1 University Residence**

Violations of the policy related to the University Residence, facilities, or other University property.

#### **c.2 University Parking**

##### **Parking Times:**

- Monday – Friday: 7:00 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.
- Closing time: 10:00 p.m.
- **Access Requirements:**
  - Students must use their USEK ID to enter the parking lot.
  - Cars are routinely searched for security reasons.
  - It is strictly forbidden to leave cars in the parking lot at night. In case of emergency, contact the Campus Security and Safety Office.
- **Behavioral Expectations:**
  - Students must respect security personnel at all times and follow their instructions within the parking lot.
  - The administration is not responsible for cars or their contents in the parking lot, and reserves the right to search or remove any car if needed.
- **Consequences of Violations:**
  - Failure to abide by the parking rules or any other anti-social behavior will result in disciplinary action as mentioned in section V. Sanctions.
  - The University reserves the right to amend the parking regulations without prior notice.
  - All incidents or accidents within the parking area fall under this code's jurisdiction as the parking lot is within the USEK Campus.

#### **c.3 University Identification Card**

Infringement of policies, guidelines, or rules related to the use of official University ID cards, including: the possession or use of false ID cards, using someone else's USEK ID card to gain benefits or establish identity, encouraging the misuse of one's USEK ID card by others to gain benefits or establish identity, or any other abuse of the USEK ID card.

Students must present their ID cards at all times to access the campus and must respect security personnel and follow their instructions.

#### **c.4 Unauthorized Entry**

No student shall knowingly enter or remain in any University premises:

- 1) Without proper authorization;
- 2) With the intent to obstruct University activities;
- 3) With the intent to damage, destroy or steal University property;
- 4) After having an administrative withdraw.

### **c.5 Political Party Activities**

The practice, advertisement, or promotion of meetings and/or any activities or events (including but not limited to political debates, political meetings, political posters, distribution of leaflets, etc.) related to any political party on any university campus or premises is forbidden. Political student elections are also forbidden at USEK.

### **c.6 Use of USEK Logo**

#### *Statement:*

The USEK logo and marks are important institutional assets, utilized in a variety of activities, including, but not limited to, USEK's endeavors in training, research, and administration. As with other University assets, the USEK logo and marks should be viewed as distinctive property and used consistently with this policy and the USEK brand guidelines, reflecting USEK as a unified system.

#### *Approval Process and Responsibilities:*

Any use of university assets not expressly authorized in this policy requires approval from the OVPC.

#### *Unapproved Uses:*

Certain uses of University assets are strictly prohibited, while others require prior written approval before they can proceed:

- **Strictly Prohibited** - The following activities are strictly prohibited:
  - Using the official seal of the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik by anyone other than the President and Registrar.
  - Creating new logos or proxy logos representing or implying an organization or group's association with USEK.
  - Modifying the USEK seal or University seals.
  - Using the University assets on personal business cards.
  - Creating new or alternate USEK logos or type treatments.
- **Restricted** - The following activities are prohibited unless prior written approval has been granted in accordance with this policy:
  - Notices (including official statements, case studies, and other non-paid positions) that show or list the University as a client or as the source of research related to a product, program or publication, including but not limited to promoting the use of any USEK logo or mark, including pictures, landmarks, structures or other indicia.
  - Any use of university assets by, for, or with a non-USEK third-party entity.
  - Any use of university assets by an association with members who are students, faculty personnel or staff that has not officially registered as a campus association.
  - Any use of university assets by formally enlisted campus associations, except for the admissible "at USEK" designation in the group's name as provided in this policy.

USEK staff, workforce, and individual students are prohibited from using the University assets or their association with the University in any way that suggests or infers University backing, endorsement or promotion of, or opposition to, any issue, action, or program, whether political, religious, economic,

or otherwise; or the use of the USEK name in any website address/URL format (e.g., usek\_organization.edu). However, "at USEK" is permissible in a gathering's name as specified in this policy.

*Requesting Approval:*

Requests to use University assets require the prior written approval of the authorizing official. Any necessary approvals may be granted, retained, or withdrawn at USEK's absolute discretion. When such approval is not granted in writing (including email), then the proposed use is objected and may not proceed. It is the requesting individual or group's responsibility to maintain a record of all required approvals.

**c.7 University Sports Teams**

Students selected to represent USEK in the university sports teams must abide by the Athletic Code of Conduct in addition to complying with all clauses herein.

## IV – Reporting Student Misconduct

**Article 1. FILING A FORMAL COMPLAINT**

In order to file an official complaint against a student, the complaint process starts at the SAO. The complainant must present a written statement by email, expressing the name of the alleged violator/student(s) and describing with reasonable particularity the claimed incident(s) that needs to be resolved, including the date and location and all necessary evidence of the incident(s) if available. The SAO notifies the DP-SEM of the issue and includes them in the initial unofficial hearing (with the DP-SDM and SAO) or any designee (see **Article 7. Informal Resolution**).

There is no time limit for filing a complaint against a student, provided he/she was a USEK student at the time of the alleged occurrence.

**Article 2. NOTICE**

Refer to Section II: Student Rights – Notice

**Article 3. DOCUMENT COLLECTION**

***a. Documents of Complaint***

The SAO will allow the complainant up to seven working days to incorporate all materials supporting the complaint ("Documents of Complaint"). Archives of the complaint may incorporate, but are not limited to, written correspondence shared between the parties, photographs, receipts, medical reports, etc. The Director of the SAO or designee will review and authenticate the evidence/records to ensure their consideration and may seek help from other offices or community members for further validation. The various University departments and units must support and provide the SAO with all the information they require, maintaining complete confidentiality.

***b. Documents of Response***

Upon receiving from the complainant all the Documents of Complaint, the alleged violator/student will be given access to all reports used against him, ideally during the first unofficial hearing with the DP-SDM and SAO. The alleged violator/student will be allowed to present their materials and explain their side of the story, supporting their response to the complaint ("Documents of Response"). The Director of the SAO or designee will review and authenticate the reports to ensure their consideration,

with the help of different offices and community members, if need be, ensuring utmost confidentiality.

The Director of the SAO will keep the DP-SDEM informed of all findings and progress of the complaint.

#### **Article 4. CASE FILE**

Once all materials have been submitted, the Director of the SAO or designee will gather all relevant materials into the official case file ("Case File"). The Director may redact or eliminate any material considered to be character declarations, biased, or duplicative within the submitted documents, taking the into account the perspectives of all parties involved in the complaint.

#### **Article 5. INVESTIGATION**

Upon receiving the report from the Director of the SAO regarding alleged infringement(s), the rapporteur will review the information presented and may conduct further investigation to augment that information. If the DP- SEM determines that there is sufficient data to proceed with the disciplinary council process, the SAO will give written notice (by email) to the student of the alleged violation(s).

#### **Article 6. CASE NOT PURSUED**

##### ***a. Insufficient Information or Evidence***

If the DP-SEM determines that there is insufficient information or evidence to support an allegation of violation of the Code, charges against the responding student will not be pursued. Both the complainant and respondent will be notified by the SAO.

#### **Article 7. INFORMAL RESOLUTION**

Students accused of Code infringement are offered the chance to meet with the SAO and DP-SEM to resolve their case without a formal hearing. If the student chooses this option, the meeting will take place within ten working days of the student's response to the complaint. If the meeting for informal resolution does not happen within the ten-day timeline, the case might automatically proceed to a formal hearing. Cases might be settled informally if the charged student, at any time before the hearing, admits disregarding the Code as charged or otherwise accepts an informal resolution. Informal resolutions generally encompass sanctions as described in Conduct Sanctions joined with enhancements, for example, university service hours, additional educational requirements, written assignments, etc. In such cases, students will receive an official notice or warning from the Director of the SAO regarding the sanctions, which will be filed at the SAO for future reference. After accepting this informal resolution session, the student waives the right to an informal hearing by meeting with the SAO. If the Director of the SAO and the student cannot reach a mutually acceptable agreement regarding sanctions, the Director of the SAO will advise the DP-SEM that informal resolution was unsuccessful, and the Director of the SAO will schedule a formal hearing to determine the charges.

#### **Article 8. FORMAL HEARING PROCEEDING**

##### ***a. General guidelines:***

Upon the Council's identification and appointment, the Director of the SAO will convene the Council and provide all details of the case. The Director will notify the student(s) in writing within [specify timeline] after convening the Council. This notification will include information regarding the alleged violation, as well as the date, time, and place of the Council hearing, which will be communicated through email.



At the start of each Council, the Chair will inform all members of the confidentiality of the case and their obligation to maintain discretion at all times unless in direct communication with other Council members.

The Chair will present a short overview of the case, including all relevant evidence, such as video footage, written complaints, security reports, and any other physical evidence. The Council may request experts from the university community to interpret technical evidence.

The concerned student(s) must attend the scheduled hearing, as per the email shared by the SAO (point 1). If the student encounters an unforeseen emergency, they must present acceptable documentation to support the emergency. If a student chooses to waive their right to appear before the Council, the outcome of the case may be determined by the Council, in consultation with the President (according to paragraph IV. 8. e).

The Council may call witnesses to provide additional information pertinent to the case. All witnesses have the responsibility to truthfully testify (according to paragraph III. 2. d). Additionally, to ensure fairness and impartiality, the hearing process will include a detailed procedure for selecting and questioning witnesses, which will be outlined during the hearing.

***b. Presentation of Information***

Hearings are not governed by formal rules of process and evidence. The members of the Council and the charged student will all be permitted a chance to question each witness. When the Council has finished its questioning of a witness, the Council and the charged student will be allowed to pose any outstanding questions. The student and the panel will be also allowed to make both opening and closing statements. Leading and orchestrating the Council is the sole responsibility of the Chair.

***c. Questions and Answers***

It is the duty of the student to ensure that their witnesses are present. However, if a witness is unreachable or refuses to attend, the board will decide if written or other recorded statements of such a witness will be admitted.

***d. Information Presented at the Hearing***

The Council's verdict will be founded uniquely upon information presented at the meeting. Neither the charged student nor the Council may convey information regarding the merits of the case or its disposition to the meeting body without the other party being provided a chance to respond.

***e. Choosing Not to Appear***

Except if a valid reason is shown, if the student does not show up at the hearing/meeting, the Council may hold the student accountable for some or all the charges and may apply some or all the suggested sanctions against the student. The Council's decision will be founded uniquely upon the information accessible at the hearing, which might be presented informally.

***f. Admissibility of Information***

The Council will not consider data that it determines has been acquired by generally unreasonable methods. "Unreasonable methods" are defined as any means of obtaining information that violate established ethical standards, infringe upon privacy rights, or involve coercion or manipulation.

***g. Record of the Hearing***

The rapporteur will take notes of the hearing, a copy of which must be made available to the charged student upon request.

***h. Hearings Generally Closed to the Public***

To protect the student's privacy, hearings are closed to the public except if an exemption is addressed to the SAO upon written request by the student. The student may demand an open hearing by presenting a written request for a formal hearing alongside a waiver of confidentiality to the SAO within a reasonable time ahead of the planned hearing date. If the request for an open hearing is denied, the SAO will provide an answer in writing. In a consolidated hearing, all charged students must waive their rights to confidentiality and to a closed hearing before the hearing may be opened to the public. In all hearings, charged students may have a non-partaking observer present. The SAO may close any hearing to the public when it is necessary to maintain order or to ensure the privacy of the participants, including the protection rights of witnesses or others.

***i. Reports to the DP-SEM***

At the conclusion of a consultation, the Chair of the Disciplinary Council will share the below with the Director of the SAO, who will subsequently share it with the DP-SEM:

- A summary of the charges.
- A summary of the data presented.
- A verdict on whether the accused student has violated any of the university policies or campus guidelines they have been accused of breaching, based on a majority vote of the Council.

The rapporteur will prepare a report which includes this information within ten days of the end of the hearing. The DP-SEM and the respondent will receive a copy of this report. The DP-SEM will update the President or can delegate this task to the Director of the SAO.

***j. Decision Basis***

*Decision by the Chair of the Council*

The final decision regarding a case that has been heard by the Council will be made by voting.

*Basis for Decision*

The Council will base their decision on the report submitted by the Council including the outcomes of the Disciplinary Council and the recommended sanction(s).

*Final Decision*

Following the testimony provided by the suspected violator and witnesses, the Council will deliberate and determine the appropriate disciplinary measures and special conditions. All council members will vote to reach a final agreement. The Chair will compose a letter with the final decision to be shared with the DP-SEM to be reviewed/amended and approved by the President. The final word will be with the President. The final letter then will be shared by the SAO council member through email to the concerned student informing him or her of the Council's decision and any additional recommendations. This letter may be shared with the members of the Council, the President, the complainant, the Registrar, the SAO (if the student(s) housing is affected by the decision), and the Financial Aid Office (if the decision involves any financial matters).

***k. Record Keeping***

All letters will be kept in students' permanent file in the SAO, and to an email will be sent to the Registrar's Office and/or the Financial Aid Office (FAO) for their records and action on all sanctions. This will be taken into consideration regarding any other disciplinary actions in the future.

### ***I. Disciplinary Council Appeal***

Students who wish to appeal against the decision of the Council have 72 hours (three working days) from receipt of the decision letter or email to complete their appeal. All appeals must be submitted electronically to the President, copying the DP-SDEM, who will follow up. Students may request a meeting with the President to discuss the appeal.

Appeals are granted only in exceptional circumstances, such as: inappropriate penalties based upon the severity of the violation, newly discovered evidence, the case was mishandled, absence of the suspected violator(s) due to a documented emergency. The President can grant an appeal at his own discretion. If changes take place after original sanctions, the DP-SDEM should immediately inform the SAO to follow up on any modifications and notifications necessary to implement the change.

The President will respond to students' appeals in writing or verbal with input from the DP-SDEM. The SAO will then share the changes by email directly with the students as well as with the Chair of the Council and any other relevant parties involved or impacted.

The President has the right to overturn the Council's verdict or suggest reconvening the Council to reexamine the case. In exceptional cases, the President will inform the Chair of the Council in writing of the decision to overturn the verdict and the reasons behind the decision.

## **V. Disciplinary Measures**

### **Article 1: List of Disciplinary Measures**

a. Below are the measures that can be used collectively or selectively:

#### ***a.1 Verbal Warning:***

A verbal warning may be given to a student whose conduct violates any aspect of USEK's Code of Conduct. Such a reprimand does not necessarily restrict the student in any way but implies that they have been given the opportunity to behave in a more appropriate manner and that any further violation will result in additional disciplinary action. A record of the verbal warning will be documented in the student's file in the SAO. Verbal warnings are to stay at an informal level.

#### ***a.2 Written Warning:***

A written warning is a formal notification to a student indicating that their behavior is of such a nature that further disciplinary action may be necessary. A written warning becomes a permanent part of a student's academic record. All written warnings issued by the SAO, whether informal or formal, will be documented in the student's file.

#### ***a.3 Community Service Hours***

Community service hours is an on-campus volunteer service that directly benefits the USEK community and/or is physically conducted on campus. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Hours spent working in a research lab/ or research in any field.
- Hours spent working with the Green Committee
- On-campus event assistance
- Student job hours

A student may be required to complete a certain number of service hours on campus, commensurate with the initial penalty. This will be negotiated, approved, and monitored by the SAO in consultation with the units in need of volunteers.

Students who do not complete volunteer service or other disciplinary requirements within the specified timeframe will be put on *Registration Hold* until they complete the requirements. Failure to comply may result in additional disciplinary action.

***a.4 Campus Housing Expulsion:***

Students residing on campus may be subject to losing their housing privileges for a specified period or permanently, depending on the nature of the case and the assigned penalty (refer to the SAO for further details and guidelines).

***a.5 Campus Access Restriction:***

Depending on the severity of the case and the assigned penalty, students may be restricted from accessing campus resources, which includes but is not limited to campus events and facilities.

**b. Sanctions**

***b.1 Disciplinary Reprimand/Probation***

A Disciplinary Reprimand is a verbal or written notice given to a student who is in minor violation of USEK rules of conduct that includes but not be limited to plagiarism and misconduct in an exam. A Disciplinary Reprimand will not be shown on the student's academic transcript but will be recorded in the student's file at the SAO. Any further violation of the *Code of Conduct* during this time period will result in a more severe penalty, which may include dismissal from the university.

Students must sign a pledge letter at the SAO after being notified by email of the sanction, committing to refrain from future misconduct. Once signed, the letter is shared with all Council members and the DP-SDEM by email.

***b.2 Disciplinary Warning***

A Disciplinary Warning is a written notification given to a student who is in major violation of USEK rules of conduct that includes, but is not limited to, academic misconduct, fabrication of results and acting with the intent to harm a fellow student, or after a Disciplinary Reprimand. A Disciplinary Warning will show on the student's academic transcript and will be recorded in the student's file.

Students must sign a pledge letter at the SAO after being notified by email of the sanction, committing to refrain from future misconduct. Once signed, this letter is shared with all Council members and the DP-SDEM by email.

***b.3 Restitution (Reimbursement or Replacement):***

Damage to university property may require a student to pay actual repair or replacement costs. Failure to pay will result in a Conduct Registration Hold, Transcript Hold and/or additional disciplinary actions. Registration and/or Transcript Hold prevents the student from registering for the next semester or prohibits them from obtaining a transcript until they reimburse the costs of the damage. This may go on their transcript depending on the level of sanction decided by the Council.

Students must sign a pledge letter at the SAO after being notified by email of the sanction, committing to refrain from future misconduct. Once signed, this letter is shared with all Council members and the DP-SDEM by email.

#### ***b.4 Administrative Withdraw (AW)***

Administrative Withdrawal refers to the removal of a student from a class or more than one class by administrative decision.

For academic, non-academic, or disciplinary misconduct, the President of the University may sanction a student with an Administrative Withdrawal on one or more classes. A student sanctioned with an Administrative Withdrawal will have to pay all related tuition fees, and the "AW" will appear on their academic transcript.

The sanctioned student will forfeit all privileges, including but not limited to scholarships, financial aid, and campus access. They may petition the Disciplinary Council for readmission for the following term. Showing proper decorum for two consecutive terms, the sanctioned student can petition the Disciplinary Council for financial aid.

If the student's petition (readmission or financial aid) is rejected, the decision of the Disciplinary Council is incontestable.

Should the sanctioned student decide to apply to another university, they may request all required official documents. Terms and conditions will apply.

Students will also have to sign a/pledge letter at the SAO after being notified by email of the sanction, committing to refrain from future violations. Once signed, this letter is shared with all Council members and the DP-SDEM by email.

#### ***b.5 Suspension***

Suspension is a temporary dismissal from the university for a specific period (one semester or more) and may require certain conditions before the student is eligible for re-enrollment.

Suspended students will have to pay all related tuition fees, and a disciplinary notation will appear on their academic transcript.

Suspended students lose all university privileges, including but not limited to scholarships, financial aid, and campus access. They petition the Disciplinary Council for readmission for the following term. Showing proper decorum for two consecutive terms, the sanctioned student can petition the Disciplinary Council for financial aid.

If the student's petition (readmission or financial aid) is rejected, the decision of the Disciplinary Council is incontestable.

Should the suspended student decide to apply to another university, they can request all required official documents. Terms and conditions will apply.

Students must also sign a/pledge letter at the SAO after being notified by email of the sanction, committing to refrain from future violations. Once signed, this letter is shared with all Council members and the DP-SDEM by email.

### ***b.6 Expulsion/Dismissal***

Expulsion is the permanent dismissal of a student from the university, with no possibility of readmission.

Should the Disciplinary Council vote in its majority to expel a student for academic, non-academic, or disciplinary misconduct, the decision is final and cannot be contested. Expelled students will be allowed to request all required official documents, subject to terms and conditions. Students must pay all related fees, will receive an AW on all grades, and a notation regarding the expulsion will be added on the official transcript. The SAO will inform the Registrar's Office (and Financial Aid Office if needed for discounts applications) of this decision and implementation of the sanctions.

Students who have been expelled from the University due to conduct violations are not permitted access to USEK (unless special permission is granted by the DP-SDEM and Director of the SAO). This restriction includes, but is not limited to: campus visits, attending classes, participating in teaching/learning activities, using campus housing, and/or participating in student clubs, activities, and athletics. Exceptions may be granted only with the approval of the University or if students schedule an appointment with university faculty or staff.

### ***b.7 Psychological Follow-up***

The Council may impose provisional measures such as psychological follow-up by the Counseling and Accessibility Office (CAO).

## **Article 2: NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS**

There is no specific limit for the number of violations a student can incur; each violation is assessed individually on a case-by-case basis, depending on the violation, its severity, the student's remorse, and the learning outcome of previous sanctions, among others. All recorded violations, whether verbal or written, are taken into consideration in the assessment of future violations.

Repeat violators will be subject to disciplinary action as determined by the DP-SDEM and/or Director of SAO, in consultation with the President.

Students who receive academic warnings or are involved in serious alleged violations (as assessed by the Council) for two or more consecutive semesters may face automatic expulsion from the University.

## **Article 3: DURATION OF SANCTIONS ON FILE**

A student's sanction remains on their file up until graduation.

## **Article 4. NOTIFICATION OF SANCTIONS**

The SAO will notify the student about the decision after the DP-SDEM and the Chair of the Council have met with the President for final approval and after the Council has signed on the sanctions. The student is notified by email, with the DP-SDEM and Chair of the Council copied. In cases of alleged physical assault, the alleged victim will also receive written notification of the decision. The President may notify other parties of the decision or may delegate this task to the DP-SDEM if there is an institutional interest.

For sanctions such as AW, suspension and expulsion, the security team is always informed by email to restrict campus access where applicable.

### Additional Notifications

All complaints and official conduct records are logged by the SAO in an Excel sheet and shared with the Registrar's Office (and with the FAO if discounts applicable) for record keeping, action where needed, and tracking once the case is finalized and approved by the President.

A copy of the notice will be also sent to the student's Academic Dean, the complainant, and the student's parent(s)/guardian if the student is a dependent. Additional notifications may be sent to other necessary offices or community members as determined by the President.

The President may decide, after consulting the Disciplinary Council, to make the decision public, including the sanction and reasons thereof.

### **Article 5. FOLLOW-UP ON SANCTIONS**

The SAO is responsible for ensuring that all sanctions are followed up on. This includes supervising community service hours and coordinating with other offices where applicable, such as the CAO if psychological support is needed.