NEU

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL UNIVERSITY

# Mechanisms for Protecting Students' Rights and Legitimate Interests

## Preamble

"NEU - National Educational University" in accordance with its mission, vision and values, provides a student centered, safe and healthy environment in full compliance with Georgian legislation and internationally recognized principles. The University is committed to fully protecting the rights and legitimate interests of students.

The University respects the dignity, rights and freedoms of all students, regardless of their race, skin color, language, gender, age, citizenship, origin, place of birth, place of residence, property or rank, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social affiliation, profession, marital status, health status, disability, gender identity and expression, political or other views or other signs, and, in turn, requires from each student, within the framework of the internal university community, to respect the dignity and rights of the university community - academic, invited, scientific, administrative, support and other personnel, and other students.

### Article 1. Mechanisms for the Protection of Students' Rights and Legal Interests

**1.1.** "NEU - National Educational University" (hereinafter referred to as the "University") shall protect the rights and legal interests of students;

**1.2.** A university student is a person who has been enrolled and is studying at the university in accordance with the procedure established by the legislation of Georgia.

**1.3. A student has the right to:**

A. Receive quality education;

B. Participate in research;

C. Use the material - technical, library, information and other resources of the higher educational institution on equal terms in accordance with the procedure established by the university's statute, internal regulations and other internal legal acts;

D. Express one's opinion freely and refuse to share ideas that are offered during the educational process with a reasoned refusal;

E. Participate in the mobility process in accordance with the legislation of Georgia and the legal regulations of the receiving higher education institution;

F. Receive a scholarship or other benefit from the state, the university or other sources in accordance with the legislation of Georgia and the internal legal acts of the university;

G. Participate in the development of an individual educational program;

H. Periodically evaluate the work of academic/visited/administrative personnel;

I. Elect a representative and be elected to the student self-government, school representative bodies and the university senate;

J. Exercise other powers granted to him by the legislation of Georgia.

**1.4.** A student may be offered an individual educational program in accordance with his interests and level of academic preparation, in the development of which he will personally participate;

**1.5.** The University shall ensure the creation of an appropriate adapted environment for students with special educational needs within the framework of inclusive education, so that they can receive a full-fledged education on equal terms with other students, which will promote the integration of students with disabilities into society;

**1.6.** Personal information expressed by a student in the presence of academic personnel, as well as information about their own views, beliefs and political beliefs, which became known to the latter during the educational process, as well as information about disciplinary measures taken against a student, are confidential, except for cases where there is a student's permission or the Academy has a legitimate interest in protecting the safety of others and the rights protected by law. Information about a student's academic performance and disciplinary measures taken against him/her must be kept separate;

**1.7.** Disciplinary action against a student shall be proportionate to the disciplinary misconduct and may be taken only in cases and in accordance with the University Code of Ethics, through a fair procedure. The University Code of Ethics imposes restrictions on student behavior related to the conduct of the educational process;

**1.8**. A student who completes all assignments provided for in the educational program and obtains the appropriate number of credits provided for in the educational program shall be awarded the appropriate academic degree or relevant qualification and shall be issued a diploma/certificate confirming the qualification.

**Article 2. The University is obliged to**

**2.1**. Provide students with appropriate learning conditions, appropriate technical equipment of the educational base, in accordance with safety rules and sanitary norms;

**2.2.** Create conditions for students to receive appropriate education and objective assessment in a healthy and competitive learning environment;

**2.3.** Provide students with the knowledge and opportunity to develop relevant skills and abilities provided for by the educational program;

**2.4.** Eliminate circumstances caused by it that may interfere with the course of the educational process;

**2.5.** Make various educational materials, books and textbooks, international electronic databases available to students or indicate the source of the material, if possible;

**2.6.** Not change the tuition fee established at the time of the student's enrollment during the standard period of study, except for a significant depreciation of the national currency (GEL) against the US dollar. A significant depreciation of the national currency shall be considered a devaluation of the GEL against the USD by at least 5%. This period includes the time during which the student status was suspended and is calculated from the moment the student was enrolled in a higher education institution and granted student status;

**2.7.** To implement a change in the cost of tuition caused by a significant depreciation of the national currency (GEL) against the USD from the next semester of study;

**2.8**. To process the student's personal data in accordance with the procedure specified by the legislation of Georgia;

**Article 3. Protection of students' rights and legitimate interests in the examination process**

**3.1.** The University is obliged to ensure the conduct of an effective, fair, transparent and timely examination process;

**3.2.** The University is obliged to ensure the timely and complete provision of information related to exams to persons participating in the examination process;

**3.3.** The University is obliged to protect the confidentiality of exam questions;

**3.4.** The University is obliged to timely reflect the exam results (student assessments) in the electronic database for managing the educational process.

**Article 4. Protection of students' rights and legitimate interests/appeal mechanisms**

**4.1.** A student is entitled to apply to the University Examination Center in writing within 2 (two) working days from the publication of the exam results to appeal the results;

**4.2.** The Center is obliged, in case of receiving an application/complaint, to immediately inform the Dean about the reasons for the establishment of the Appeals Commission;

**4.3.** The Center is obliged, within 2 (two) working days from the receipt of the application/complaint, to introduce the student's work to the Appeals Commission;

**4.4.** The Appeals Commission is obliged, within 2 (two) working days from the receipt of the application/complaint, to consider the student's work. In case of a change in the obtained result or leaving the same assessment, the Appeals Commission shall submit a substantiated conclusion to the Examination Center**;**

**4.5.** The University is obliged to ensure that the appeals processes are conducted transparently.

**Article 5. Protection of students' rights and legitimate interests/consultation**

**5.1.** The student is entitled to receive appropriate consultation for planning the educational process and improving academic achievements;

**5.2.** The university assumes responsibility to provide students with information about existing consultations upon the beginning of the academic year;

**5.3.** The school provides consulting services for planning the educational process and improving academic achievements;

**5.4.** The Student/Graduate Assistance and Career Development Center ensures that students/graduates are informed about the dynamics and prospects of the employment market. It provides them with consultations regarding the current and future demands of the labor market;

**5.5.** The academic/visited/administrative staff of the university provides individual consultations for students based on their specific needs;

**5.6.** The head/assistant of the University Library ensures that orientation meetings and consultations are held for students in order to provide information on library resources and services.

**Article 6. Student involvement in university governing bodies**

**6.1.** University students are represented in the Senate - 2 (two) students;

**6.2.** University students are represented in the School Council - 2 (two) students;

**6.3.** Student involvement in university governing bodies ensures the protection of students' rights and legitimate interests.

**Article 7. Student support mechanisms**

**7.1**. Academic support

- Information meetings of students at the beginning of the semester;
- Consultations on study courses;
- Selection of study courses taking into account the interests of the student;
- Consultations on the structure of the work;
- Consultations on plagiarism and principles of good faith;
- Promoting the integration of students transferred through mobility into the educational process;
- Promoting the adaptation of students with disabilities and people with disabilities (if any) into the educational process.

**7.2.** Support for socially vulnerable students:

- Socially vulnerable persons;
- Representatives of ethnic minorities;
- Persons internally displaced from occupied territories;
- Large families;
- Persons living in occupied territories;
- Persons living in mountainous regions;
- Children/family members of persons who died in the defense of territorial integrity.

**7.3.** Financial support:

- Internal grant;
- Scholarship;
- Flexible tuition fee payment schedule;

- Individual payment schedule.

**Article 8. Support for people with disabilities and persons with disabilities**

**8.1.** An environment adapted for people with disabilities and persons with disabilities in the administrative building of the university;

**8.2.** Sanitary facilities adapted for people with disabilities and persons with disabilities;

**8.3.** An educational process based on the principles of inclusive education;

**8.4.** Ensuring access to educational materials;

**8.5.** Prior information to academic and administrative staff about the individual needs of students;

**8.6.** Equal involvement of people with disabilities and persons with disabilities in extracurricular activities;

**8.7.** Creating equal conditions for people with disabilities and persons with disabilities.

**Article 9. Mechanisms for obtaining financial support**

**9.1.** University students have the opportunity to obtain financial support from the University's structural unit - the Financial and Material Resources Service;

**9.2.** In order to obtain financial support, university students are entitled to apply in writing to the Student Self-Government;

**9.3.** The President of the Student Self-Government is obliged to apply to the University Financial and Material Resources Service with a request for financial support;

**9.4.** The written request must clearly reflect the type of student initiative and the financial resources to be provided for the service;

**9.5.** The Financial and Material Resources Service shall consider the written request and make a possible decision:

A. Will satisfy the request;

B. Will partially satisfy the request;

C. Will refuse to satisfy the request.

**Article 10. Mechanism for protecting students' rights and legitimate interests and assessment system**

**10.1.** Assessment of the protection of students' rights and legitimate interests is a crucial process that makes it possible to respond to violations;

**10.2.** The effectiveness of mechanisms for the protection of students' rights and legitimate interests is assessed using a special questionnaire developed by the Quality Management Service;

**10.3.** The Quality Management Service studies the effectiveness of mechanisms for the protection of students' rights and legitimate interests, statistics on their use, and plans appropriate measures based on the identified trends, which contribute to the effective use of mechanisms for the protection of students' rights and legitimate interests.

**Article 11. Support mechanisms for foreign students**

**11.1.** The University provides foreign students not only with academic education, but also with the creation of a multicultural environment for them, which promotes their integration;

**11.2.** In order to improve the education and quality of life of foreign students, the University develops mechanisms that contribute to their social, cultural, psychological and legal support;

**11.3.** The University is responsible for facilitating the adaptation and integration process of foreign students, creating equal conditions for them and protecting their rights;

**11.4.** The University has a coordinator for foreign students, who ensures the proper performance of the functions specified in the same regulation.

**Article 12. Support Services for Foreign Students**

**12.1.** The University provides the following support services:

**A. Socio - cultural integration;**

Student socialization.

**B. Buddy Programs;**

Programs where foreign students have the opportunity to connect with local students, which helps them adapt to the university and the city. The advantages of the programs are: getting to know a new environment; new opportunities; making new friends; improving language practice and communication skills.

C. Cultural events and holidays;

- Celebration of traditional and national holidays - foreign students are given the opportunity to get acquainted with the culture of the host country and other countries;
- International student festivals - sharing the culture, cuisine and traditions of different countries;
- Excursions and tours - the University organizes visits to historical and cultural attractions of the city and the country.

D. Multicultural Student Clubs

- Associations of foreign students where they can communicate with each other, share common interests and promote their culture;
- Clubs help promote tolerance and diversity.

E. Language Exchange Programs

- Students help each other learn languages - foreign students teach their native language, and local students - the language of the host country;
- Programs increase opportunities for language practice and improve communication skills.

**Article 13. Psychological and legal support for foreign students**

**13.1.** The University provides free psychological services that help students cope with stress, depression, culture shock and loneliness;

**13.2. Students can use the following psychological services:**

- Individual consultations - personal meetings with a psychologist;
- Group therapy - discussion of common problems and sharing of experiences;
- Webinars and seminars - how to cope with academic and social stress.

**13.3. Students can use the following legal services:**

- Legal advice;
- Issues related to visas and residence permits;
- Issues related to labor rights and legal regulations;
- Information on contracts;
- Legal advice in case of discrimination and violation of rights.

**Article 14. Ensuring the safety of foreign students**

**14.1.** The University ensures the safety of foreign students in the educational process;

**14.2.** The University ensures the safety of foreign students and the safety of the University.

**Article 15. Refund of Tuition Fees Paid by International Students**

**15.1.** Tuition fees paid by an international student may be refunded in the event of a refusal to issue a visa for entry into Georgia, upon submission of an official document confirming such refusal;

**15.2.** In the event of a visa refusal, the student shall submit a written refund request to the University within two (2) weeks from the date of the visa refusal decision, together with an official document confirming the refusal;

**15.3.** If the student fails to submit both the written refund request and the required supporting documentation within the timeframe specified in this Article, the University shall be entitled to refuse the refund of the tuition fees;

**15.4.** Where a refund is approved, the University shall be entitled to deduct any administrative and bank/transaction fees, where applicable, from the amount to be refunded;

**15.5.** Requests for a refund on grounds other than visa refusal may be considered only in exceptional and duly substantiated circumstances, subject to the decision of the Rector of the University.

## Article 16. Final Provisions

**16.1.** This Regulation is approved by the University Senate;

**16.2.** This Regulation of the University comes into force immediately after signing;

**16.3.** The adoption, cancellation, amendments and additions to the Regulation are carried out by the Senate;

**16.4.** This Regulation ceases to be valid in the event of the approval of a new Regulation.