


	<b>Comunicarea digitală. Codul de etică al Universității Tehnice a Moldovei.</b>	<b>Cod: COD-40-CD</b>
		<b>Ediția 1</b>
		<b>Revizia 0</b>

	<b>Digital communication. Code of Ethics of the Technical University of Moldova.</b>	<b>Code: COD-40-CD</b>
		<b>Edition 1</b>
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**APPROVED AT THE UTM SENATE MEETING**  
**OF MARCH 26, 2024, MINUTES NO. 9**

**DIGITAL COMMUNICATION.**  
**CODE OF ETHICS**  
**OF THE TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF MOLDOVA**

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## PREAMBLE

Aware of the important social and educational function of the university institution, the Technical University of Moldova (hereinafter - TUM) recognizes the fundamental principles and ethical values shared by the international academic community, which underlie all university activity in the field of digital technology.


In today's digital environment, compliance with the law is not enough; the ethical dimension of data processing must be taken into account. The EU regulatory framework already leaves room for flexible, case-by-case decisions and protections in the handling of personal information.

The Code of Ethics is a benchmark for assessing the morality of the actions of the members of the TUM university community, whose principles are moral guidelines that will help members of the university community to avoid unwanted moral and ethical conflicts with society.

The principles of the Code of Ethics are intended to respect internationally recognized human rights in areas where these rights may be affected by digital technology. As a whole and in general, the principles formulated should contribute to increasing public trust in digital communication systems.

This Code of Ethics has the following structure:

- I. General terms and concepts
- II. Personal conduct
- III. Fundamental principles
- IV. Ethics in digital education
- V. Digital communication
- VI. Asynchronous digital communication via forum
- VII. Synchronous digital communication: WEBINARS
- VIII. Chat communication
- IX. Communication and ethical behavior in social media
- X. Artificial Intelligence
- XI. Ethical breaches and sanctions

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## XII. Final provisions

### I. GENERAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

**Digital technologies** - information used or disseminated by means of a computer, mainly directed towards the development of intelligent processes. Although in some areas the use of digital technologies is only just beginning, companies are becoming increasingly aware of the need to use them in the competitive global marketplace.

**Big Data** - larger and more complex data sets, especially from new data sources. These data sets are so voluminous that traditional data processing software simply cannot handle them. But these massive volumes of data can be used to solve business problems that you couldn't tackle before.


**Internet of Things (Internet of Things - IoT)** - is a concept that involves using the internet to connect different devices, services and automated systems together to form a network of objects.

**Survivability applications** - surveillance systems essential in providing security and protection in both business and home environments. Two of the most common types of surveillance systems in use today are analog - DVR (Digital Video Recorder) and IP - NVR (Network Video Recorder). DVR or Digital Video Recorder is a traditional surveillance system that records and stores images captured by surveillance cameras on an internal or external hard disk. The NVR or Network Video Recorder focuses on the management of IP (Internet Protocol) cameras, working by recording and storing video data from IP cameras connected over the local network or the Internet.

**Artificial intelligence (AI)** - the ability of a machine to mimic human intelligence, i.e. to perceive its environment, analyze it and react to it in order to perform certain tasks and achieve certain goals. Unlike humans, who use emotions and consciousness alongside cognitive abilities, artificial intelligence uses mathematical algorithms.

**Feedback** - means giving others an effective response to communicate exactly what is bothering us, how it affects us or what we want others to do.

**The Trolling** – the deliberate action of disrupting the normal activity of the project by actions intended to artificially divert the attention of contributors to irrelevant topics (either irrelevant in general or irrelevant in the particular context of the activity taking place where the trolling is taking place). As such, trolling is a deliberate violation of the default rules of Internet social spaces.

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**Online harassment** – is **computer** or **cell phone** bullying. The most common method is sending offensive text messages. The content can be verbal or images.

**The Spam** - is the process of sending unsolicited electronic messages, often of a commercial nature advertising dubious products and services, practiced in the e-marketing industry and by the owners of pornographic sites. Spam is distinguished by its aggressive, repeated and opt-out nature, as well as by the continuous sending of messages (the same) from the same sender, which is generally found on platforms such as Messenger or WhatsApp.

**Webinar** - is actually a seminar conducted online and is used by organizations or individuals to convey a message or information to a wide audience.


**ChatGPT** - is a generative language model developed by OpenAI. It is powered by a deep neural network and has the ability to generate natural language text.

**Chatbots** - (often known as a smartbot, talkbot, chatterbot, IM bot, conversational interface or conversational artificial entity) is a program or form of artificial intelligence that conducts conversations using various methods such as analysis or text.

**ASCII** - is a character encoding system based on the English alphabet. ASCII codes represent text characters for computers, communications equipment and equipment that work with text.

## II. PERSONAL CONDUCT

1. Members of the digital academic community are expected to conduct themselves in an appropriate manner in dealing with colleagues and students. This includes respect for other cultures, customs and opinions. Discrimination, harassment and other forms of offensive or inappropriate behavior are not tolerated.
2. TUM seeks to create a favorable, inclusive and open work environment that promotes engagement and development. All TUM employees must have mutual trust and a positive attitude towards each other. This means having mutual respect for each other's functions, qualifications, time and personality.
3. TUM employees will have access to the necessary technical resources such as computers/IT equipment and telephones etc. to perform their duties. All such technical resources are the property of TUM and all employees are responsible for utilizing and safeguarding these resources in a satisfactory manner in accordance with TUM requirements. IT equipment of TUM, must not be used for downloading, storing or transmitting illegal,


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pornographic or otherwise indecent material or in connection with the violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms and copyright and intellectual property rights.

4. In line with the provisions of Law No. 133/2011 on the protection of personal data and other laws and regulations relevant to the activity of TUM, including the University Charter and other internal regulations, the Code of Ethics Digital Communication and Ethical Principles define the minimum standard for ethical behavior within TUM and on the online platforms used. There are also norms based on human rights, humanitarian principles in international conventions and agreements that are recognized by the Republic of Moldova and will also apply to TUM.
5. Digital ethics is crucial in creating a better, equitable and inclusive digital world for all.

### **III. FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES**


6. The Code of Ethics (hereinafter - the Code) is an internal normative act, which aims to guide and regulate the conduct of all members of the university community involved in digital communication, within the institution and on digital platforms applied in the online education process.
7. Starting from the fact that digital technologies (DT), such as big data, internet of things, surveillance applications, artificial intelligence have become an essential part of higher education, defining new learning, teaching and assessment formats and accelerating digital education, this Code represents a tool to shape the university community in the spirit of generally approved and recognized principles, including by European universities, of right and wrong conduct in a specific context.
8. The Code of Ethics in Digital Education is a set of rules and principles guiding appropriate behavior in the online environment and in the use of technology for educational purposes. These rules aim to promote responsible and respectful digital education.
9. Common principles of online behavior are:
  - (a) Respect for privacy (Respect for human autonomy): respect for confidentiality of personal data and information of peers and other online users. Personal information of colleagues and other online users will be protected and will not be disclosed without their permission.

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- (b) Combating online bullying: not tolerating or participating in the harassment, intimidation or threatening of others on the Internet. Any inappropriate behavior will be reported to the appropriate authorities.
  - (c) Responsible use of technology: using technology and the Internet in a responsible way that does not cause harm to others or to society. Use technology and the Internet for educational and constructive purposes, avoiding harmful or illegal behavior.
  - (d) Respect for copyright and intellectual property rights: excluding illegal copying or distribution of copyrighted content and acknowledging the source when using information from other sources. Respect copyright and acknowledge sources when information from other sources is used.
  - (e) Respectful communication: maintain a respectful tone in online communication and avoid vulgar or offensive language. Respectful and non-offensive language will be used in all online interactions, including comments, messages and forums. Recognize and respect the different opinions and perspectives of other users, even if we disagree with them.
  - (f) Critical appraisal of information: checking the source and authenticity of information before distributing it or using it for educational purposes.
  - (g) Protecting online security: ensuring the security of one's own online devices and accounts to prevent unauthorized access or cyber-attacks.
  - (h) Promoting digital learning: encouraging and supporting others to develop digital skills and online learning.
- 10.** The principles on which to model the behavior of members of the University community in digital learning are as follows: respect for human autonomy, prevention of harm, fairness and explainability.

### **Respect for human autonomy**


- 11.** Respect for human autonomy is strongly associated with the right to human dignity and freedom.
- 12.** The principle of respect for autonomy is a rule for respecting people's capacity to make decisions - people must have the freedom to make their own choices and develop their own life plans (without the control of others and in full knowledge of the facts).

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13. This fundamental principle seeks to ensure respect for the freedom and autonomy of human beings who must retain full self-determination over themselves when interacting with Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI should not subordinate, coerce, deceive, manipulate or condition. AI should be designed to enhance and complement human cognitive, social and cultural abilities.
14. In education, respect for this principle implies respect for freedom of thought, independence from ideologies, political doctrines; the principle of respect for the student's right to hold opinions as a direct beneficiary of the educational process; the recognition and guarantee of the rights of individuals to preserve, develop and express their ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity. This principle insists on treating/respecting the human being as a supreme value.
15. Every member of the academic community has an obligation not to cause harm, not to interfere with the free choices of others, and indeed has a duty to create the conditions necessary for the exercise of autonomy by all, as long as it does not harm others.


#### **Injury prevention**

16. The prevention of harm is closely linked to the protection of physical or mental integrity.
17. The harm prevention principle implies that AI artificial intelligence systems should not cause or exacerbate harm or otherwise adversely affect human beings. This implies the protection of human dignity as well as mental and physical integrity. AI systems and the environments in which they operate must be safe and secure. They must be technically robust and must ensure that they are not open to malicious use. Vulnerable individuals should be given increased attention and included in the development, deployment and use of AI systems. Particular attention should also be paid to situations where AI systems may cause or exacerbate negative impacts due to asymmetries of power or information, such as between employers and employees, businesses and consumers or governments and citizens.
18. Harm prevention also involves taking into account the natural environment and all living beings.
19. Preventing harm also requires appropriate data governance, covering the quality and integrity of the data used, its relevance in light of the domain in which AI systems will be deployed, access protocols, and the ability to process data in a privacy-protective way.

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### Fairness


20. Fairness in the context of digital communication and higher education is often designated as either a situation or practice that has sought to justify unfair practices and/or mitigate bias.
21. Fairness refers to the disparate treatment and disparate impact on certain disengaged groups based on protected attributes such as gender, race, religion, color, age, and many others.
22. Promote honest, truthful and fair behavior in the use of technology and the online environment for educational purposes. This principle involves adherence to ethical norms and values related to academic integrity and respect for the rights of other digital users.
23. Some key issues related to the principle of fairness in digital education:
  - (a) **Academic integrity:** respect for the principle of fairness means that students and academics and researchers should avoid academic fraud, including plagiarism, copying the work of others and presenting the work of others as their own. This promotes the development of critical thinking and original creative skills.
  - (b) **Respect for copyright:** students and academics should be aware of copyright and respect intellectual property. The use of information or content from other sources should be accompanied by proper citation of those sources and respect for usage rules.
  - (c) **Fairness and inclusion:** the principle of fairness implies ensuring that all learners have equal access to resources and opportunities in digital learning, regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender or other personal characteristics.
  - (d) **Objective assessment:** teachers and academics should carry out objective and fair assessments, avoiding favoring or discriminating against students on the basis of unjustified criteria.
  - (e) **Honest and open communication:** in the online environment, digital education implies honest and open communication between students and teachers and academics. Information should be presented in a transparent way and expectations should be clear.

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- (f) **Combating fraud and disloyal behavior:** the principle of fairness implies empowering members of the educational community to prevent and combat academic fraud by fostering a culture of honesty.
- (g) **Respect ethical rules and institutional regulations:** digital communication should be conducted in accordance with ethical rules and institutional regulations to ensure a fair and equitable learning environment.
24. The principle of fairness is essential in digital communication to ensure authentic learning, the development of moral character and respect for individual rights and responsibilities in the online environment. It is important that both students, teachers and academics are aware of and promote these values in order to create a quality and ethical learning environment.

### **Explainability**


25. The principle of explainability in digital education refers to the importance of making digital educational technologies and systems as transparent and understandable as possible for users. This principle aims to ensure that students and teaching staff can understand how their personal data, machine learning algorithms and decisions made by digital systems are used and used. Below are some key aspects related to the principle of explainability in digital education:
- (a) **Transparency of machine learning algorithms:** *when machine learning technologies are used in digital education (e.g. to personalize content), users, including students, should have access to information about how these algorithms work and how they make decisions.*
- (b) **Explanation of assessment processes:** *when digital systems are used to assess students (eg in tests or online assessments), the assessment processes should be clearly explained. Students should understand how grades are assessed and assigned.*
- (c) **Consent and privacy:** users, including students, should be informed about how their personal data is collected, stored and used in the digital environment. They should be able to give or withdraw consent to the use of their data.
- (d) **Clear and relevant feedback:** digital educational technologies should provide clear and relevant feedback to help students understand their progress and know what they can improve.
- (e) **Training and support for users:** users, including teaching and research staff and students, should receive adequate training and support to understand and use digital educational technologies effectively.

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- (f) **Accountability and fairness:** Providers and developers of digital educational technologies should be accountable and ensure that their systems are fair and operate transparently.
26. The explainability principle aims to improve the understanding and control that users have over digital technologies used in education. This promotes confidence in the use of these technologies and helps avoid potential ethical and privacy concerns. It is essential that digital education follows this direction to ensure a more transparent and accountable educational experience

#### IV. ETHICS IN DIGITAL EDUCATION

27. The challenges are numerous in the context of online teaching and learning, both from the perspective of ethical teaching-learning and assessment, and of the difficulties arising in the new learning context, including the ethical risks of using digital materials. The moral dilemmas of members of the higher education academic community and the models for their resolution, as well as the ability of academics and scholars to identify moral dilemmas arising in online teaching, learning and assessment are important and relevant for the quality of higher education in the specific conditions of the pandemic period.

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**28.** The dimensions of performance affected by digital technologies and related ethical principles are:


- a) Organization of education:** the university will ensure that digital education contributes to the elimination of existing inequalities in access to education and promotes education for all. The university will strive to provide equal access to digital resources and tools for all students, regardless of their socio-economic background, geographical location or physical abilities.
- b) Data management:** as the university collects and stores a significant amount of data about students through various digital platforms, data privacy and security must be ensured. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent for data collection, protecting sensitive information and implementing robust cybersecurity measures to prevent data breaches. The protection of personal data is governed by the applicable laws and institutional regulations.
- c) Assessment/Review:** the use of digital technologies can introduce challenges to academic integrity, such as plagiarism and cheating. The university has tools and strategies in place to detect and deter academic misconduct while instructing students about ethical research.
- d) Copyright and fair use:** academics and researchers must comply with copyright laws and fair use principles when using digital materials in their teaching. This includes respecting intellectual property rights and providing appropriate citations for digital content.
- e) Teacher-student relationships:** boundaries between teacher and student may be different in digital environments. Ethical considerations involve maintaining professionalism, avoiding favoritism, and ensuring that interactions remain respectful and appropriate.

## V. DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

**29.** Digital communication is an essential aspect for facilitating the learning process and interaction between students, teaching and research staff and other participants. Effective digital communication can enhance engagement, clarity and collaboration.

Key issues related to communication in digital education include:

- a) Communication platforms:** the use of appropriate communication platforms is essential. Such platforms may include online forums, messaging systems, e-mail, video conferencing or even educational social networks.

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**b) Clarity and accessibility:** Educational messages and materials should be clearly written and easy to understand. They should also be accessible to all students, including those with special needs.

**c) Asynchronous and synchronous communication:** asynchronous communication, such as online forums or emails, provides flexibility for students to participate in discussions and submit questions according to their own schedule. Synchronous communication, such as videoconferencing sessions, facilitates real-time interactions.

**d) Regular feedback:** academics and researchers should provide regular and constructive feedback on student performance. This can be done through comments on homework assignments, quizzes or individual discussions.

**e) Open and participative communication:** students should be encouraged to participate actively in discussions and to express their thoughts and questions. Teaching and research staff should create a safe and open environment to promote communication.


**f) Respect and ethics:** all participants should respect online communication rules and ethics. Abusive or disrespectful behavior should be avoided.

**g) Appropriate use of technology:** teaching and scholarly staff and students should have adequate technical skills to use digital communication platforms and tools effectively. Training may be required to ensure appropriate use of these technologies.

**h) Privacy and security:** ensuring the confidentiality of personal data and sensitive information is essential. Students and teaching and research staff should be aware of and comply with security measures.

**i) Evaluation of communication:** academics and researchers should evaluate and improve communication processes to ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of online learning.

**30.** Communication in digital education is not only a means of transmitting information, but also an important tool for building relationships, fostering collaboration and supporting the learning process. It plays a significant role in creating an effective and interactive learning environment.

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### **Digital communication rules**

**31.** Netiquette refers to a set of rules and conventions to be followed when using the internet in general, and electronic mail in particular. This set of rules reflects a certain experience of harmonious coexistence in the electronic environment and is intended to eliminate possible conflicts, misunderstandings or misinterpretations. Some of the rules of network etiquette are similar to the rules in the code of good manners on issues as varied as politeness, condescension or decency in communicating with our fellow human beings. All deviations from the community rules cannot go unpunished.

**a) Respect and politeness:** treat all participants with respect and politeness, as one would in a traditional classroom environment. Avoid vulgar or offensive language and be conscious of tone in communication.

**b) Limit online trolling and harassment:** participation in trolling, harassment or verbal attacks against others is prohibited. Any abusive or inappropriate behavior will be reported to the relevant authorities or platform administrators.


**c) Use clear and concise language:** communicate in a clear and concise manner to ensure messages are easy to understand. Avoid excessive jargon or complicated technological jargon unless necessary.

**d) Reading and responding to messages appropriately:** read and fully understand incoming messages before responding. Hasty or thoughtless responses should be avoided.

**e) Use appropriate formatting:** if communicating in an environment that allows text formatting (such as forums or e-mail), use formatting to highlight important information and make messages easier to read.

**f) Spam and unsolicited advertisements will be avoided:** no spam or unsolicited advertisements will be sent to other users. Platform rules and policies regarding advertising and spam will be followed.

**g) Confidentiality and protection of personal data:** no personal or confidential information, both personal and that of others, will be shared without their permission. Platform privacy rules will be respected.

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**h) Constructive feedback:** when providing feedback, the sender will ensure that it is constructive and improvement-oriented. Harsh or offensive criticism should be avoided.

**i) Citation of sources and avoid plagiarism:** When using information from other sources, the user shall ensure that it is properly cited and respects copyright. Plagiarism shall be avoided.

**j) Active participation and respect of discussion rules:** active participation in discussions and respect of discussion rules set by educators/instructors or platform administrators.

Expectations regarding behavior in discussions should be clearly communicated.

**k) Asking for help and offering support:** if questions or uncertainties arise, each participant/user shall not hesitate to ask for help. They will also offer support and help to other participants in the learning process.

**l) Maintaining a positive and open tone:** encourage a positive and open learning environment in which all participants feel comfortable to express their ideas and questions.

### 32. User identity rules:

**a)** The same identifier will not be used by multiple users;

**b)** Files or data belonging to other users will not be read, copied, modified or deleted without their consent;

**c)** Commercial use of some facilities and/or services will not be used without obtaining this right officially or legally.

### 33. Rules regarding message content and sender's attitude:

**a)** Harsh and vulgar expressions shall be avoided;


**b)** Never post a private message to a mailing list without the approval of the sender;

**c)** Signs known as smileys or emoticons should be used sparingly;

**d)** Criticize the idea and not the person;

**e)** Do not react violently to what has just been read on the screen;

**f)** Exercise caution in replying to messages that have been sent to several subscribers.

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### **Rules for using ASCII art**

**34.** ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) characters are usually made up of combinations of letters, numbers, and punctuation marks. Some are abbreviations for short English sentences. By this abbreviation, they serve pragmatic functions. In particular, smileys are used to clarify elements of nonverbal and paraverbal communication, such as facial expressions, gestures, and accents. This additional information can be helpful in correctly interpreting the content of messages due to their purely text-based representation. In this way, even in text-based communication (whether synchronous or asynchronous), it can be conveyed whether a sentence has been understood, for example, in an ironic manner.

**35.** The following ASCII characters are allowed to be used:


- a)** :-) I smile while making this joke;
- b)** :-( what I said makes me sad;
- c)** :-< I am genuinely sad or disappointed;
- d)** ;-)) I am winking or hinting in connection with this joke;
- e)** :-( I cry, it's really sad for me;
- f)** :-@ I'm really shocked;
- g)** :-D I am terribly amused by what I wrote before;
- h)** :-o yawn, it's so boring;
- i)** :-7 I say that ironically.
- j)** > :-( I am upset and worried about this;
- k)** :-/ I am skeptical;
- l)** :-T No kidding, I am serious in what I say;
- m)** [:- ) I have my headphones on.

**36.** TUMNet Ethics Rules:

TUMNet users are:

- teachers;
- researchers;
- administrative staff;
- students;


TUM collaborators who apply for user status.

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Unawareness and ignorance cannot be used as an excuse for causing malfunctions of TUMNet or violations of the regulations or legislation in force.

Users shall respect the personal character of data and computing/communication resources belonging to other users. The data transmitted and stored in TUMNet must be information motivated by the academic interests of the users, which may not involve:

- generation of non-academic traffic;
- disruption of TUMNet traffic;
- promotion of unauthorized commercial activities;
- the generation of excessive traffic which hinders the normal operation of the network;
- transfers of pornographic material;
- transfers of material infringing copyright laws (pirated software, movies, music, etc.);
- attempts to exploit security problems that may arise (unauthorized access, alteration or deletion of data or software, spreading of computer applications).
- malicious software: viruses, Trojan horses, worms, spyware, etc.);
- destroying or attempting to destroy TUMNet security;
- compromise or attempt to compromise the integrity of computing/communication resources;
- harassment of other users;
- use of resources, in particular electronic mail, web servers, and bulletin boards, to transmit obscene, repeated, fraudulent, or unsolicited commercially obscene messages (e.g., spam).
- using software without knowledge of the effects it produces;
- examples of prohibited activities:
  - use of peer-to-peer (p2p) software, e.g., eDonkey, eMule, Kazza, DC++, ODC, bittorrent, or others.
  - Generating SPAM both in e-mail and in chat or other applications Flooding (whatever its nature), e.g. ping flooding.
  - Spreading applications such as viruses, Trojans, worms, spyware, worms, spyware, and others.
  - use of key-logging applications.
  - changing the MAC address of the network card.
  - using network scanning programs and exploits.

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- ☐ tunneling.
- ☐ transmitting commercial messages.
- ☐ commercial advertising.
- ☐ use of pirated software on resources on the university's computer network or those connected to the network.
- ☐ online games.

**37.** TUMNet claims to be an academic and open working and communication environment. Users are invited to treat each other in a polite and cordial manner. Our Internet partners expect to find the Technical University of Moldova an academic environment when requesting information, which is why users will take steps to correctly self-identify themselves both within TUMNet and in the electronic correspondence they send.

**38.** TUMNet users will respect the following rules:

**a) Adherence to institutional rules and standards:** TUMNet follows TUM's bylaws and rules of operation, ensuring proper functionality of the network.


**b) Ownership of and access to information:** Information published electronically by TUM on its website and its subdomains is the property of TUM and is available to the public for academic information purposes.

**c) Users' responsibility:** Information posted on the public websites of TUM's administrative and research units belongs to the users, and its use for purposes other than those intended is at the users' own risk.

**d) Rights of use of the electronic domain:** The electronic domain utm.md and its subdomains are managed by TUM, and the rights of use are reserved for the institution.

**e) Confidentiality and security of information:** The electronic information managed in TUM's internal IT systems is the property of the institution and is of a private nature. Attempts to violate the security of these systems will be dealt with in accordance with the legal provisions in force.

**f) Use of TUMNet network services:** TUMNet hardware and software services are made available to TUM users for academic, research or service purposes, in accordance with the commitment signed by them.

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**g) Measures against breach of security:** Any attempt to violate users' rights or the security of the network will be dealt with by applying the legal provisions in force.

**h) Respect for information ethics:** All users of the TUMNet network are obliged to respect the ethics of information ownership and to use the services in accordance with institutional rules and standards.

**i) Users' rights and obligations:** TUMNet users are entitled to benefit from ICT services in accordance with the rights and obligations set out in the signed commitment, and non-compliant use or attempts of fraud will be dealt with according to the regulations.

**39. Rules on the behavior of members of the academic community in the use of IT services and resources:**


**a) Internet communication for educational purposes:** the use of online communications is reserved exclusively for educational and research purposes. Online behavior must be scholarly, characterized by decency, courtesy, and goodwill, excluding antisocial behavior.

**b) Use of Internet access services:** Internet access must be in accordance with the principles of online ethics. Any form of breach of security of systems or equipment on the TUM network is prohibited. Any activity that could result in a breach of security is considered a violation.

**c) Use of computer programs and applications:** The programs and applications on the TUM network are intended solely for educational and research purposes. Their use for other purposes, such as commercial or entertainment, is prohibited.

**d) Optimal use of storage space:** Users must maintain in their directories only the files necessary for academic or research activities.

**e) Respect of access rights:** Users must respect the access rights granted and must not attempt to violate the security of information systems. Violation of these rules will incur sanctions.

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**f) Compliance with regulations and instructions:** Users are required to comply with the regulations and instructions published by DTIC on the TUM website regarding the use of IT services and resources.

## **VI. ASYNCHRONOUS DIGITAL FORUM COMMUNICATION**

- 40.** A discussion forum is an asynchronous method of open communication where members of a community can post announcements, ask questions or answer questions from other members. It is similar to a group chat, structured by categories and threads. The discussion forum can be published as a stand-alone website or embedded in a presentation website.
- 41.** Online teaching-learning-assessment platforms or other more complex online collaboration systems, as described below, typically include ways of communicating similar to a discussion forum.
- 42.** Rules for teachers and researchers:
- a)** Post the article on the appropriate forum a few days in advance and only then clearly ask for responses;
  - b)** One will publish the article on the forum that suits the article in question and only for the students of the course for whom the article is relevant;
  - c)** One will avoid posting the same article multiple times on different forums;
  - d)** Respond to articles using the "Reply to Article" function;
  - e)** Mark sarcastic remarks so that misunderstandings do not arise. There are symbols called smileys used online for this purpose; the most common ones are ":-)"/happy and ":-("/sad;
  - f)** Compose your articles clearly and without errors.


## **VII. SYNCHRONOUS DIGITAL COMMUNICATION VIA WEBINARS**

- 43.** Synchronous digital communication, such as webinars or videoconferencing, involves specific rules to facilitate effective and professional interaction. These rules help to ensure a productive online learning or collaboration environment.

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**44. Rules for synchronous digital communication in webinars:**

- a) Punctuality:** start and end webinars on time and on schedule. Participants will also be encouraged to be punctual.
- b) Pre-technical testing:** Ensure that all equipment, including microphone and webcam, is working properly before the webinars start. Pre-testing will avoid delays and unexpected technical problems.
- c) Welcome and introduction:** at the beginning of the webinars, a professional introduction will be given and participants will be greeted. Introduce and provide information about the topic and structure of the webinar.
- d) Professional language and tone:** Professional language and a respectful tone will be maintained throughout the webinars. Vulgar or offensive language should be avoided.
- e) Use of video cameras:** to the extent possible, participants will be encouraged to activate video cameras to facilitate visual interaction and create a more personal environment.
- f) Moderation of discussions and questions:** ensure that there is a moderator or webinar host responsible for managing the discussions and handling participants' questions in an organized manner.
- g) Questions and discussion:** participants will be encouraged to ask questions and actively participate in the discussion, but will complement the discussion to ensure that it is relevant to the topic of the webinar.
- h) Time for breaks:** if the webinars are longer, break periods should be planned to allow participants to rest and re-energize.
- i) Presentations and materials:** ensure that the presentations and materials used are clear and easy to understand. Presentations or materials will be shared after the webinars for future reference.
- j) Respect platform rules:** respect the rules of the platform used for the webinars and respect copyright and confidentiality.

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**k) Feedback and evaluation:** at the conclusion of the webinars, participants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback and complete evaluations to improve future sessions.

**l) Recording and sharing:** if webinars are recorded, participants will be informed and the recording will be shared for those who could not participate in real time.

**m) Technical troubleshooting:** if technical problems arise, they will be addressed/solved as quickly and professionally as possible to minimize participant discomfort.

**45. Rules to be agreed and confirmed by an online course coordinator:**

**a)** Students are required to turn their cameras on when making verbal presentations (answers).

**b)** Students will indicate first and last name when connecting to the videoconference. This will help course facilitators to properly address course participants and effectively moderate the online session.


**c)** If the students' video background is accepted, it is forbidden for it to show political or commercial content (political party or campaign posters, political symbols, advertising messages, etc.).

## **VIII. CHAT COMMUNICATION**

**46.** Chat communication as part of digital communication requires specific rules to ensure effective and respectful interaction between students, teachers and other participants.

**47.** During chat, it is important that all participants observe the following rules:

- stick to the agreed topic and do not initiate additional sub-topics;
- to ensure equal opportunities for all to participate in the chat, statements can be prepared before the chat and can only be copied and sent during the chat itself;
- always log in with the same name to ensure clear identification of names and individuals;
- references will be used, such as mentioning the name of the person you are replying to and using the @ symbol (Example: @Ion: I agree with you).

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## IX. COMMUNICATION AND ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN SOCIAL MEDIA

**48.** The following principles should be respected when communicating in online and social media channels:

- a)** Fairness - using the power of communication with care.
- b)** Respect - respecting the personalities and opinions of users.
- c)** Accountability - taking responsibility for the content of a statement as a communicator.
- d)** Moderation - defining clear rules for discourse.
- e)** Clarity - defining rules and guidelines as a guideline for a company's employees.
- f)** Transparency - disclosing the communicator's role and motivation.
- g)** Politeness - using the right tone.
- h)** Confidentiality - treating personal matters as individual and confidential matters as confidential.

**49.** In case a person constantly comments on Facebook, Instagram, Twiter, and other social media platforms in which TUM is the administrator and or brings offense or slanders the image of the university in various aspects, TUM will intervene with the following measures to manage this situation viz:

- a) Evaluation and monitoring:** TUM will regularly evaluate comments and activity on its Facebook page to identify such negative behavior.
- b) Warning and intervention:** in the first instance, TUM will contact the individual to inform them that their comments are unacceptable and violate community rules or policy on TUM's Facebook page, Instagram, Twiter, and other social media platforms where TUM is an administrator. It may also be asked to cease such behavior.
- c) Moderation of comments:** If the person continues to post offensive or disparaging comments, TUM has the right to decide to moderate those comments and remove them from its Facebook page, Instagram, Twiter, and other social media platforms where TUM

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is an administrator. This could be a temporary or permanent measure, depending on the severity of the behavior and the administration's decision on a case-by-case basis.

**d) Blocking the User:** In extreme situations or in case the person persists in the negative behavior, TUM is entitled to decide to block the respective user from his/her Facebook page, Instagram, Twiter, and other social media platforms where TUM is the administrator. This means that the person will no longer be able to post comments or interact with the official university page on Facebook, Instagram, Twiter, and other social media platforms in which TUM is administrator.

**e) Reporting to Social Media Platform:** In cases where comments or behavior constitute violations of the terms and conditions of the social media platform, TUM may report the situation to the platform for further investigation and action.

## X. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

- 50.** Ethics in the field of artificial intelligence (hereafter AI) is a multidisciplinary field that involves optimizing the beneficial impact of AI while reducing risks and adverse outcomes.
- 51.** Ethics in artificial intelligence is the set of guiding principles that stakeholders (from engineers to government officials) use to ensure that artificial intelligence technology is developed and used responsibly. This involves taking a safe, secure, humane and environmentally friendly approach to AI.
- 52.** When turning to AI one must be aware of the ethical issues related to AI, which include accountability and data confidentiality, fairness, explainability, robustness, transparency, environmental sustainability, inclusion, value alignment, trust and technological abuse.
- 53.** Lack of diligence in this area can lead to reputational, regulatory and legal exposure, resulting in costly penalties.
- 54.** The purpose of AI is to complement human intelligence. In this sense, TUM applies the basic principles to guide the responsible adoption of AI technologies in digital communication processes. These include:
  - a) *Explainability:*** An AI system should be transparent, especially about what has been included in its algorithm recommendations, to a variety of stakeholders with a variety of goals.

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**b) *Fairness*:** this refers to the fair treatment of teachers and students by an AI system. When properly calibrated, AI can help people make better decisions, counter human biases, and promote inclusion.

**c) *Robustness*:** AI-powered systems must be actively defended against adversary attacks, minimizing security risks and ensuring confidence in system results.

**d) *Transparency*:** to increase trust, users must be able to see how the service works, evaluate its functionality and understand its strengths and limitations.


**e) *Privacy*:** AI systems must prioritize and protect the privacy and data rights of students and teachers and provide clear assurances to users about how their personal data will be used and protected.

**55.** Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most widespread technological trends in society in general and in higher education in particular. Artificial intelligence can be used to improve the learning experience for students, providing personalized learning tailored to each student and new ways of accessibility.

**56.** Used ethically, carefully, creatively and taking into account the need to build individual and institutional capacity, AI tools could support universities to provide students with a more personalized and relevant learning experience, make administrative processes more efficient and to advance research and community engagement.

**57.** In this regard, the university is considering a number of actions to prepare teachers, students and administrators for the appropriate use of AI tools in their work:

- Creating opportunities for faculty, staff, students and other stakeholders to discuss the impact of AI tools on the university and jointly build strategies for AI adaptation and adoption.
- Introducing clear guidance for students and instructors on how and when AI tools can (and can't) be used. Such guidance should be negotiated with students and teachers, not imposed on them.
- Connecting the use of AI tools to course learning outcomes. This helps students understand how AI tools can support their learning and what is expected of them.
- Revizuirea tuturor formelor de apreciere și evaluare în vederea asigurării corespunderii fiecărui element obiectivelor de învățare.


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- Training teachers, researchers, and students to improve the questions asked of AI tools (eg, ChatGPT is most useful when its questions are carefully crafted).
- New programs/courses/modules focusing on the use of AI tools will increase research and development capacity and provide all actors of the university with cutting-edge knowledge.
- Existing programs/courses can be updated to include teaching: AI training – as part of a broader understanding of digital knowledge and skills training; AI ethics; core AI competencies and skills.
- Staff training can ensure the effect that the support they provide to students and other stakeholders builds and increases confidence in technology implementation, rather than replicating what AIA chatbots/tools provide.

## **XI. DEVIATIONS FROM THE RULES OF ETHICS AND THEIR PENALTIES**

**58.** In digital communication, deviations from ethical norms can have negative consequences on the learning experience and affect the online learning environment. The following are examples of common deviations from ethical norms in digital communication:

- a) **Plagiarism:*** copying and presenting other people's work or information as one's own, without properly citing the sources, is a serious deviation from ethics in education.
- b) **Academic fraud:*** using dishonest means to achieve academic results, such as cheating on online tests or providing dishonest answers, violates the principles of fairness in education.
- c) **Misbehavior online:*** harassment, insults or offensive language online are serious breaches of ethics and can create an unhealthy environment for learning.
- d) **Violation of privacy and copyright:*** sharing other people's personal information or copyrighted material without permission violates privacy and intellectual property rights.
- e) **Unfair behavior in assessment:*** using dishonest means to get better results in assessments, such as using unfair help during online tests, represents a deviation from the norms of academic ethics.
- f) **Posting inappropriate content:*** posting content that is inappropriate or non-appropriate for the educational environment, such as obscene or offensive content, is unethical.
- g) **Non-participation or disrespect towards peers and teachers:*** non-participative behavior or disrespect towards other participants in online courses, such as frequent absences or rude interactions, may be considered unethical.

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*h) Misuse of technology:* misuse of technology, such as hacking or distribution of illegal software, is against digital ethics.

*i) Violation of the rules of the platform or the institution:* failure to comply with the rules and policies of the platform or the online education institution may lead to ethical deviations.

- 59.** Deviations from the norms of ethics in digital communication can have serious consequences, including academic or disciplinary sanctions. It is important that all participants in digital communication processes are aware of these ethical norms and respect them to ensure a fair and professional learning environment.
- 60.** The sanctioning of deviations from the norms of ethics is carried out according to the provisions of the Labor Code of the Republic of Moldova and the Internal Regulations of the TUM.

## **XII. FINAL PROVISIONS**

- 61.** This code represents a set of rules, to which all those involved in the field of digital communication freely consent, aware that the promotion of moral values is a component of social responsibility and, at the same time, ensures a positive perception of society, with beneficial effects including on teaching-learning activity.
- 62.** The rules established in this code are complementary in relation to the rules established at the national level in the field of digital communication.
- 63.** This code enters into force on the date of approval by the TUM Senate.