

Local Ethics Committee of the University of Sustainability Vienna – Charlotte Fresenius Privatuniversität

§ 1. Establishment and Composition

- (1) An Ethics Committee shall be established at the University of Sustainability Vienna whenever a new request for ethical approval is submitted.
- (2) One member with teaching qualifications shall be appointed from each Faculty of the University of Sustainability Vienna. At the moment of establishment, there are two: “Fachbereich BWL” and “Fachbereich Psychologie und Wirtschaftspsychologie”. Thus, the ethics committee will be formed with two members. If the University of Sustainability Vienna extends to include more Faculties, the number of members can be adjusted.
- (3) The two members will be appointed in a flexible manner, thus for each ethical approval, the two members who have the least conflict of interest and the most expertise shall volunteer to process the request for ethical approval. If no volunteers can be found, the Senate will appoint the two members.
- (4) If the two members do not agree on the specific submitted ethical approval, a third member shall be appointed to help with the decision.
- (5) If necessary, an internal or external member with a specific expertise (e.g., legal expert) can also be appointed to advise on the ethical approval.
- (6) Any Ethics Committee member with a conflict of interest, especially if involved in a project under review, shall abstain from the proceedings. Another volunteer shall act in their place.
- (7) The Ethical Committee's denial of ethics approval should have no impact on application or promotion processes and should not be used as a basis for any other consequences, especially those related to employment.
- (8) The creation of the Ethical Committee and the ethics review process at the University of Sustainability Vienna is intended to emphasize the significance of ethically responsible research and uphold scientific integrity at the University of Sustainability Vienna.

§ 2. Responsibilities of the Ethics Committee

- (1) The Ethics Committee provides opinions on the following research projects:
 1. Research involving humans: Studies that may impact the physical or psychological integrity, right to privacy, other personal rights, or significant interests of participants.

2. Research involving animals: Studies involving animals beyond mere observation or medical care. This is particularly relevant for research involving animal manipulation, euthanasia for organ or tissue collection, or the creation and use of genetically modified animals.

(2) In its opinions, the Ethics Committee shall assess whether the rights, safety, and well-being of participants or compliance with animal welfare laws are adequately protected.

(3) The Ethics Committee and its members are independent in the performance of their duties and are not bound by instructions. They are responsible only to their conscience.

§ 3. Initiating the Review

(1) The Ethics Committee shall act only upon a written, justified application from University of Sustainability Vienna members who are responsible for conducting a research project as part of their official duties. The application must specify the need for Ethics Committee review (e.g., funding agency or publisher requirement).

(2) To maintain a manageable number of reviews, the Ethics Committee generally does not review Bachelor's or Master's theses or capstone projects. Instead, the responsibility for ensuring compliance with ethical standards rests with the respective supervisor.

(3) For doctoral research projects, supervisors, the academic office, or the researcher may request an Ethics Committee review. This request can be made during the preparation of the doctoral agreement and must be justified.

§ 4. Required Documentation

(1) Applications must include a research plan and project documentation detailing the study's objectives, and methods. For studies involving humans, possible risks to participants must be outlined. Conflicts of interest must be disclosed. The application must include provisions for suspending or terminating the project early, compensation for participants, and protection of personal data. The Ethics Committee may request additional information.

§ 5. Opinions

(1) The Ethics Committee shall issue an opinion evaluating the project. The majority of the members must agree for the opinion to be valid, and any objections must be specified and justified.

(2) If the Committee has concerns that could lead to a negative opinion, the applicant shall be

notified and given an opportunity to respond in writing or in person. If the concerns cannot be resolved, the applicant may revise the project or withdraw the application.

(3) The opinion shall be sent to the applicant(s).

(4) The subject matter of the proceedings and the opinions of the Ethics Committee must be treated confidentially. The members of the committee are obliged to maintain confidentiality. The same applies to any experts consulted. Individual votes are treated confidentially.

§ 6. Resubmission

(1) The Ethics Committee must review any approved project again if:

1. Deviations from the research plan or submitted documents could impact the evaluation or
2. Unexpected adverse effects on participants or animals arise.

(2) The Ethics Committee may require the necessary documents for its opinion. Resubmission does not exempt compliance with legal obligations.