

Charter of Rights and Responsibilities of Students at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano

INTRODUCTION

The university is a community of people studying, teaching and researching, supported by technicians and administrative staff. Students' rights are the backbone of our university.

The charter which is now to hand forms the basis of how the university community works together. It is essential that students' rights and duties are actively applied by all concerned.

We would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all students, professors and university staff who helped draw up this charter.



Prof. Paolo Lugli
Rector



Prof. Ulrike Tappeiner
President

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PREAMBLE

This Charter presents in clear and concise terms the rights and responsibilities of students at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. The document outlines the methods available for filing complaints and the specific procedures for conflict resolution.

Art. 1 Definition of “Students”

Con il termine studenti si intendono nel presente documento tutti gli studenti iscritti alla Libera Università di Bolzano, compresi coloro che partecipano ai programmi di scambio.

Art. 2 Addressees

Ogni membro della comunità universitaria è tenuto ad attenersi alla presente Carta: essa si applica a persone singole, organi e uffici della Libera Università di Bolzano, in particolar modo nel caso di azioni e decisioni che riguardano direttamente o indirettamente gli studenti.

Art. 3 Right to Education

According to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, every student has the right to education and to have access to vocational training and lifelong learning. The right to education entails the right to access all courses on offer without discrimination and the freedom to adapt one's study in an individual manner. Furthermore, it guarantees that students can complete their study programme according to the current regulations for their degree course. To ensure that the university can guarantee the right to education, students must make a judicious and focused use of university staff, facilities and resources. Specific consideration is given to disabled students.

Art. 4 Right to Information and Transparency

Students have the right to receive clear and accurate information, in a timely manner, concerning their degree course. Information provided to students by university offices and teaching facilities will state the sender precisely (with the correct name and not anonymously such as with the mere indication of an office, role, etc.) and indicate the source of the information. Likewise, students must make sure that they regularly access this type of information. The university must ensure that the person responsible for a particular issue is easily identifiable, both to students and to teaching or administrative staff, by designating a Head responsible for every administrative procedure. This is to avoid that students have to refer to more than one office or facility.

Art. 5 Multilingualism

Students identify with multilingualism and undertake to improve their language skills constantly, according to the current regulations. For this, they will be assisted and advised by the Language Centre and by the University. The university community respects individual language learning processes and the different language skills of its members.

Art. 6 Democratic Rights and Responsibilities

In accordance with the Statute in force, students can appoint representatives with voting rights within the university committees. The Free University of Bozen-Bolzano is generally committed to encourage the widest student contribution to the decision-making processes that concern them, especially for those processes that involve change and innovation. Students undertake to use all democratic means of collaboration and involvement in the interest of the community and not for mere personal gain.

Art. 7 Rights and Responsibilities of Student Representatives

Student representatives participate actively in the bodies and committees of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano by upholding and safeguarding the interests of the whole student community within the various discussions and decisions in the committees. They have the right to receive all the useful information necessary to carry out their activities. Furthermore, they undertake to treat such information confidentially. The continuity between the succeeding generations of student representatives is guaranteed by the timely handing-over of a mandate to the newly elected by the outgoing representatives.

Art. 8 Teaching and Course Offer

Students have the right to a professionally structured education and teaching system. This requires the coordinated planning of courses on offer, taking into account both the specific students catered for (for example the size of the student group) and the different teaching conditions (for ex. the agreements between a lecturer and the person in charge of the exercise sessions, the lecture content's complexity, the exam procedure). Students have the right to receive timely, clear and precise information about teaching objectives, teaching methods and exam criteria. The teaching facilities and other university facilities of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano ensure that the information present in the study regulations, in the study programmes, in the regulations and in the syllabi are consistent with each other, also in linguistic terms.

Students have the right to choose among a vast variety of teaching methods (face-to-face lectures, exercise sessions, seminars, workshops, simulations, internships, field trips, tutorials, etc.) defined according to clear criteria. With regard to teaching evaluation, students have the right to express their opinions and observations, unconditionally, on the teaching offered for every single course in its every form and phase (progress and execution of the course, of the exercise sessions and of the assessment exam, teaching support received etc.). The student has the duty to draw up these evaluations in the manner and within the deadlines that will be requested in turn by the University committees. Each student has the right to maintain anonymity in the evaluation process. It is therefore the responsibility of the University to take adequate measures to protect the personal information related to the evaluation process.

Students, on the other hand, will adopt a positive attitude towards studying. They undertake to attend lectures according to the existing rules and to conform to the related contents using the means they deem most appropriate. Furthermore, they undertake to deliver documents and work on time and to make the most of all the resources available to them.

Art. 9 Personal Study Plans

For an optimum planning of their study activities, students have the right to expect that all deadlines relating to their study plan are observed. For this reason, all timetables, syllabi and exam dates must be disclosed no later than the beginning of the academic year.

Teaching facilities and other university facilities will inform students of any variations in the teaching subjects, the exams and other teaching courses in an accurate, complete and punctual manner and will ensure that overlapping is avoided. Students have the responsibility to abide by the specified deadlines. Furthermore, they must point out possible planning errors, should these occur, to the appropriate authority, which is usually the administrative office of the relevant teaching facility.

Art. 10 Personal and Respectful Support

All students have the right to be treated respectfully, to be taken seriously both as an individual and as a student and to be heard on matters relating to their studies. They have the right to expect timely answers to written or oral requests. As a general rule, a preliminary response to written requests will be delivered within 3 working days. Students have the right to be actively supported by lecturers and administrative staff. Specifically, they have a right to sufficient time allocated

to office hours for consulting with each lecturer and to receive targeted support by their personal thesis supervisor. Students have the responsibility to be considerate and respectful towards all members of the University community. They undertake to make the most of the various available support services and to avoid any excessive use of office or staff time at the expense of the time that could be spent in assisting others.

Art. 11 Fair Examinations and Assessment

Students have the right to fair exam conditions that abide by the required criteria. Furthermore, students have the right to transparent and duly observed assessment criteria. Further information regarding this issue is included in the General University Study Regulations and in the single exam regulations, available on the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano's website. Personal beliefs and ways of life cannot influence in any way student assessment.

All students must adhere to exam regulations in force in the individual teaching facilities. Specifically, they undertake to sit exams by drawing on their personal knowledge and experience and using only explicitly permitted resources. Students may not in any way influence examiners to try to obtain better results. Students have the right to view their written examination papers. Access to documents is permitted, subject to current provisions, in the least bureaucratic manner possible. Students have the right to know the result of written exam papers, as well as the details regarding the assessment and correction criteria. Any reasoned objections regarding written examinations may be presented in writing to the examining board within 15 days of exam results being available. The Rector has supervisory power over student careers; he can cancel exam results on legal grounds within the terms provided for by law.

Art. 12 Learning Resources and University Facilities

Students have the right to be adequately informed and to be advised about the learning resources and university facilities that exist in the three sites of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. This is especially true for the use of the Library and the ICT facilities. Students can use Library services and can make suggestions to improve the services offered or for the purchase of library resources.

Students are offered introductory courses on the use of ICT facilities and the HelpDesk service. The University undertakes to avoid non study-related e-mails being delivered to students. In turn, students undertake to avoid using their e-mail accounts inappropriately. Students agree to abide by the user regulations for the Library and ICT service and to use the university premises and equipment properly and only for academic reasons. Students also have the responsibility to use their personal Student Card exclusively for the purposes for which it is intended.

Art. 13 General Complaints Procedure

Students have the responsibility to contact the appropriate authorities within the university. These, in turn, are required, within the scope of their duties, to carry out their work professionally and to offer efficient services. When problems arise, these must be addressed directly with the person or service involved, whenever this is possible. If an acceptable resolution cannot be reached, students may then contact:

- for administrative issues, the Head of the relevant university facility, specifically the teaching facility management office. Afterwards the Head responsible for the area, or, as a last resort, the University Managing Director's Office;
- for teaching issues, the professor concerned or the coordinator for the degree course and, as a last resort, the Dean.

If one of the above-mentioned people is directly involved in the conflict or if the issue concerns more than one teaching facility or all of the student body, students may address the Rector. Both the Rector and the students have the right, if in doubt, to consult the Ethics Committee. According to the Statute, competence for disciplinary measures lies with the Rector.

In their appeal, students may ask for the support of a student representative:

- for problems concerning the degree course or the teaching facility, students should consult the student representatives of the Degree-course Council or of the Faculty Council respectively. If there are no student representatives within the Degree-course Council, students should consult the Faculty Council representatives.
- For problems that are not clearly linked to a degree course or to a teaching facility, or if the problems concern more than one teaching facility or the entire student body, the student representatives of the central bodies should be contacted:
 - a) University Council student representatives when the issues concern the whole university (for ex. tuition fee regulations, internal regulations, facilities, general guidelines);
 - b) student representatives within the Senate when the issues concern academic matters (for ex. General University Study Regulations, academic calendar);
 - c) student representatives within the Equal-Opportunities Committee when the issues concern equal opportunities matters.

Art. 14 Ethics Committee

The structure and purpose of the Ethics Committee are regulated by the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano's Code of Ethics. The Ethics Committee upholds the principles of the Code of Ethics and suggests improvements to the provisions, institutions and processes.

Any future changes to the present Charter will be introduced with the students' consent.

