



DECODE *Sustainability*

*European Deans Council for
Development*

COUNCIL POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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POLICIES & PROCEDURES OF THE EUROPEAN DEANS COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (DECODE Deans Council)

The document features policies that apply to all the Council activities. It highlights central rules and procedures and is not only relevant to the Council Members but also the applicants for the Council membership.

Article 1 - Appeal Policy

1. Application

Decisions that can be appealed are:

- *Denial of eligibility in Council Member application process*
- *Revocation of Council membership*
- *Election of the Council Leadership*

2. Procedure

2. 1. A Council member or applicant of the Council membership must state their appeal in writing addressed to the Council Leadership within 30 days after the notification of the respective decision.

The appeal should consist of:

- a. name the council member or applicant*
- b. the decision to be appealed*
- c. evidence upon which the appeal is based*
- d. date and signature of the Council member or applicant who wishes the appeal*

The appeal needs to be sent via email to info@decode-council.org

2. 2. The Executive Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the appeal within 14 days via email. The response will also detail if the appeal fulfils all requirements (“a” to “d”). Should all requirements be met, the procedure will continue with the next step. Should the Council member or applicant fail to satisfy one or multiple requirements, it shall address the issue within 7 days of the receipt of the Executive Secretary response.

2. 3. The Council Chair will assign an Appeal Panel with at least three members that will investigate the appeal. Members of the Appeal Panel shall be Full Members of the Council who have no relationship to the appellant of appellant’s affiliation (see the Council’s Conflict of Interest Policy) and did not participate in the decision being

appealed. The Executive Secretary will inform the appellant within 30 days of the acknowledgement of the appeal about the names and affiliations of the three appointed Appeal Panel members.

2. 4. Should the appellant bring forward reasons for conflict of interest of an appointed Council member, the appellant may request a new Appeal Panel member. In case the appellant successfully puts forward conflicts of interest and new potential panel members are provided, a new 30-day selection period starts on the day of the receipt of the new list.

2. 5. Once the Appeal Panel is appointed, its members select one member as its Chair. The Chair of the Appeal Panel will be the central point of contact for the appellant.

2. 6. The Appeal Panel Chair, in consultation with the appellant and the members of the Appeal Panel, will set a date for the appeal hearing at least 30 days before the hearing. The hearing shall be scheduled within three months of the Appeal Panel appointment and shall be set up as a video conference. Either party can request the recording and transcription of the hearing.

2. 7. The Executive Secretary will provide each Appeal Panel member and all participants from the appellant with copies of the request for the appeal as well as reports and other materials that are related to the decision being appealed, at least 14 days before the hearing. Detailed information on the hearing procedure will be sent to all parties together with the provision of the documentation.

2. 8. In the decision review, the Appeal Panel shall only consider facts that existed prior to and at the time of the decision. The decision to sustain or reverse the decision is subject to the judgement of the Appeal Panel. The Appeal Panel, however, shall sustain the decision if the appellant is not able to provide evidence that the decision was violating written Council procedures or was arbitrary and in substantial disregard of material facts. The Appeal Panel's decision shall be based on voting of its members. If a majority of the Appeal Panel members votes for reserving the decision, the decision will be reversed. Otherwise, the original decision will stand. The decision of the Appeal Panel shall be considered as final.

2. 9. Within 30 days after the hearing, the Appeal Panel Chair shall provide the Executive Secretary with a written statement highlighting the decision as well as the grounds the decision is based on.

2. 10. The Executive Secretary will inform the appellant as well as the Council Chair via email about the Appeal Panel's decision with the panel's written statement being provided with the email.

Article 2 - Complaint Policy

1. Application

Complaints can be handed in by any individual and are thus not limited to those being directly involved in the Council procedures.

2. Procedure

2.1. The complainant prepares a written complaint that

- a. describes the complaint in detail,*
- b. provides the evidence upon which the complaint is based,*
- c. clearly identifies the complainant (at least full name, addresses, affiliation),*
- d. provides contact details of the complainant (email, phone and post address), and*
- e. is dated and signed by the complainant.*
- f. if the complaint targets another Council member or applicant, the complainant also needs to:*
- g. clearly identify the individual the complaint is referring to,*
- h. provide permission to share the complaint with the individual targeted, and*
- i. identify the relationship between the complainant and targeted individual.*

The document needs to be sent as PDF via email to info@decode-council.org.

2. 2. The Executive Secretary will acknowledge receipt of the complaint within 30 days via email. The response will detail if the complaint fulfils all requirements (“a” to “e” respectively “a” to “h”). Please note that the Executive Secretary will not respond to complaints that are not submitted in written format and neither to anonymous complaints.

2. 2. Within 30 days after the acknowledgement of the receipt of the complaint, the Executive Secretary will inform the complainant of the Council Chair’s decision on whether or not the complaint falls within the purview of the Council. If the complaint does not fall within the purview of the Council, the complaint will be disregarded. If the complaint falls within the Council’s purview, the Executive Secretary will inform the complainant about the next steps that the Council will undertake to further investigate the complaint.

2. 3. *The Council Chair will take appropriate measures to address the complaint. For example, if the complaint targets a current applicant or a Council member, the Council might request an official response from the Council Leadership to respond to the complaint.*

2. 4. *Should the Council decide that the complaint has been addressed satisfactorily and that no violation of the Council procedure, standards and policies has occurred, the complaint will be closed. Otherwise, an ad-hoc committee will be set up to investigate the issue further until it is resolved and the complaint can be closed.*

2. 5. *The Executive Secretary will notify the complainant of the results within 30 days after the complaint has been closed.*

Article 3 - Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Application

This Conflict of Interest Policy provides a reference point for council members or applicants that may want to:

- a. appeal a decision in accordance with the Council's Appeal Policy*
- b. challenge the appointment of the Appeal Panel*

In the exceptional case that a Council member or applicant identifies a conflict of interest with the Council Chair or vice-Chair it shall notify the Executive Secretary via email before applying for eligibility. In case the actual or potential conflict of interest is acknowledged, the respective individual(s) will be replaced for this specific situation/ procedure.

2. Potential Conflicts

Conflicts of interest may include but are not limited to circumstances such as:

- *Becoming a member of an appeal committee:*
 - An immediate family member (spouses, siblings, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, domestic partners) or personal or professional relation to the appellant*
 - Employed or affiliated with the same institution of the appellant*
 - having been engaged with central people in the appellant's institution*
 - own financial interest or financial interest of an immediate family member in the appellant's institution*

3. Procedure

Following the below presented procedure, a Council member or applicant can challenge the selection of Council representatives/ committees by outlining actual or potential conflicts of interest that may bias the individuals' decisions.

3. 1. To challenge the nomination of a committee or appeal panel, the issuer needs to send a written notice within 30 days after the respective decision is made. The notice needs to:

- a. name the committee or panel member(s) to be challenged*
- b. provides evidence upon which the challenge is based (this can include but is not limited to conflicts of interest outlined in the Council's Conflict of Interest Policy)*
- c. be dated and signed by the legal representative of the applicant institution.*

The document needs to be sent as PDF via email to info@decode-council.org.

3. 2. The Executive Secretary will acknowledge the receipt of the challenge within 14 days via email. The response will detail if the complaint fulfils all requirements ("a" to "c").

3. 3. The challenge will be forwarded by the Executive Secretary to the Chair of the Council.

3. 4. Within 30 days of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the challenge by the Executive Secretary, the challenge will be reviewed by the Council Leadership and the result will be communicated to the issuer of the conflict. The decision made by the Council Leadership shall be considered as final.

3. 5. In case of the challenge being accepted, the Chair of the Council is required to appoint another member to replace the individual that has successfully been challenged. In case of the challenge being rejected, the respective procedure continues as planned.

Article 4 - Copyright and Confidentiality Policy

1. Application

This policy details copyright, as well as confidentiality treatment, between the Council members, applicants and the DECODE Sustainability Project Consortium. The key representative involved in the Council application procedures are:

- The Council Leadership (Chair and Vice-Chairs)*

- *The Representative of the DECODE Sustainability Project i.e. Executive Secretary*

2. Copyright

The Council considers all documented information that is submitted as part of a Council application and appeal/ complaint procedures as the intellectual property of the individual sharing this information, if not specified otherwise in the document.

3. Confidentiality

The council members are bound to respect the confidentiality of any information that they may come into contact with and under no circumstances should such information be divulged or passed to any person or organisation in any form unless a permission specified in the document or a separate written permission to share with specific individuals or organisations is granted.

Where Council members misuse confidential information, e.g. access information outside of their official responsibilities, disclose their password to someone else or use someone else's password to gain access to the Council platform, they could face disciplinary action that could lead to dismissal.

Article 5 - Data Protection Policy

1. Application

This policy details protection with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

2. Data Protection

Regarding ethics of data storing, the Council follows the principle of “data minimization” guideline given by Erasmus+ Knowledge Alliances team at the Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The Council will only ask/generate necessary data that is directly related to the activities undertaken by the Council.

As the Council is part of the DECODE Sustainability project, the data protection policy of the project applies to the Council. Detailed information of the processing of personal data is available on the DECODE website https://decode-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Information-on-Data-Processing_DECODE-project.pdf.

During the funding period of the DECODE Sustainability project, the data created for the Council activities will be stored in the DECODE Project one-point sharing tool, namely Microsoft Team, and will be kept up to a maximum of five (5) years after the end of the project to fulfil the audit purposes and public interests.

Article 6- Logo and Promotional Materials Usage Policy

1. Application

This policy details the usage of the logo and visual identity used in the Council.

2. Usage rules

The Council is a part of the DECODE Sustainability project that is funded by the European Commission. As long as the funding of the project runs, all deliverables or products made for and by the Council needs to follow the following guidelines:

- *Making use of the Visual Identity developed for the DECODE Sustainability project (the materials will be made available in the Council platform or obtained through the Executive Secretary)*
- *Including a written acknowledgement that deliverables/ products are part of the project that has been funded with support from the European Commission (disclaimer)*
- *Including the European Union emblem and complying with the European Union policies and logo usage*

Some additional rules for using the logo and visual identity of the DECODE Sustainability are applied. The logo and visual identity of the DECODE Sustainability:

- *can only be for deliverables/products created in and for the Council related activities, promotion and dissemination by all Council members*
- *are not to be used for personal/ commercial purposes*

Other stakeholders are required to request the usage of the logo or visual identity in printed and electronic materials by contacting the Executive Secretary via email at info@decode-council.org. The request should contain the following information:

- *Information on the individual/ organisation requesting permission to use the logo/visual identity*
- *Description of the intended usage, including information on the respective target audience*
- *Sample material (e.g. flyer design or website screenshot)*
- *Information on the expected circulation of the material*



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Author:

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