

Actions of prevention, detection, and remediation of ethical breaches at Université Paris-Saclay

Breaches of ethics at the university: do they happen?

Certainly.

The activities of universities have real risk areas when it comes to ethical breaches.

For this reason, we must commit to a strict regulatory framework, that which is laid out by the SAPIN II law, particularly integrating the fight against corruption.

The prevention and detection of breaches of ethics constitute a topic of general interest, and so, within the university, we must all take ownership of this.

As the president of Université Paris-Saclay, I am fully committed to upholding a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to matters of anti-corruption.

This manifests itself in a culture of integrity which rests, in particular, on the actions we've adopted for the prevention and the detection of risks of ethical breaches.

The tools we're putting in place will allow everyone to develop good habits and reflexes when it comes to this topic.

What policies are being put in place at Université Paris-Saclay when it comes to the prevention of ethical breaches?

The entire community needs to have a good awareness of the risks of ethical breaches.

Broadly identifying and communicating about different types of breaches is fundamental in order to explain what they include, whether it's a matter of corruption, of favoritism, or illegal conflict of interest.

Providing everyone with information and the keys to decode ethical breaches is also crucial in order to prevent infractions.

Training decision-makers and the staff who are most exposed allows them to be conscious of both the necessary vigilance that they must exercise while performing their duties,

As well as the behaviours they should adopt when facing a situation of risk.

Prevention also allows us to reaffirm that the university is a public institution where the collective of public agents has rights and responsibilities as they are performing their duties.

What tools are tangibly involved in this?

Unanimously approved by the administrative council of Université Paris-Saclay, the code of conduct provides a basic foundation covering the ethical rules which apply to breaches.

It defines the behaviours that should be encouraged or discouraged in terms of specific and realistic situations related to our work in teaching and research.

In any case of doubt or uncertainty, any agent has the option of seeking the advice of the ethics advisor who is also the whistleblower advisor, for those who wish to bring attention to matters of corruption.

Finally, the university makes use of a training and awareness plan for its personnel, in order to inform them about which situations involve the risk of ethical breaches, broadly, and for each specific job, in order to prevent those risks to the greatest possible extent.

The university's agents can, for example, can take training on the themes of public purchases, the accumulation of activities, or the validation of research.

In terms of detection, what tools are in place at Université Paris-Saclay?

Indeed, beyond prevention, and to make real progress, we need to detect and control the risks of ethical breaches.

To this end, we use 2 main levers of action.

The first lever we're putting into place is a system for controlling the risks of ethical breaches, based on a mapping of all possible risks in the context of the university's processes or actions including risks of an ethical nature.

This approach allows us to identify possible risks, and classify them according to their severity and frequency.

From there, targeted efforts can be made using customized control actions that can evolve over time.

The management of risks, including those related to ethics, is based on a collective approach in which we are all actors.

The second lever that we use is to make sure that all identified cases are subject to systematic investigation by the ethics / whistleblower advisor, through our internal system for collecting and processing reports.

We thus aim to give everyone the opportunity to speak up on actual or potential breach of ethics situations such that each declaration can be the subject of an investigation which will have a systematic follow-up.

Beyond the formal aspects of these processes, this allows for a dynamic of continuous improvement of all practices contributing to training and research.

Is the university taking any actions of remediation?

Yes, the university firmly applies the provided legal framework whenever there is a breach of ethics, as well as the disciplinary plan.

The university systematically reports to disciplinary authorities who, after investigation, impose penalties proportional to the fault committed.

In parallel to the disciplinary procedure, the university reports to the Public Prosecutor on criminal offenses committed by its personnel, and of course lodges a complaint.

In conclusion, the university takes a proactive approach to control risks relating to ethical violations.

There are various tools that we use, and I am counting on you and on your commitment to making it a collective goal.