

Good practice of leadership at the University of Tartu

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Background to the good practice of leadership

Several good practices and agreements have been prepared and made in the university to support the implementation of the mission of the University of Tartu and the development of its organisation. The [good practice of doctoral studies](#), [teaching](#) and [learning](#) have been completed and the [good practice of research work](#) is being prepared. In addition, the [guidelines for equal treatment](#) have been compiled. However, the above-mentioned good practices and guidelines do not describe an important function in the university, namely leadership and management; yet the development of leadership and managerial skills is also important for the university ([UT Strategic plan](#) cl. 9.1.4). Hereby the good practice of leadership is added.

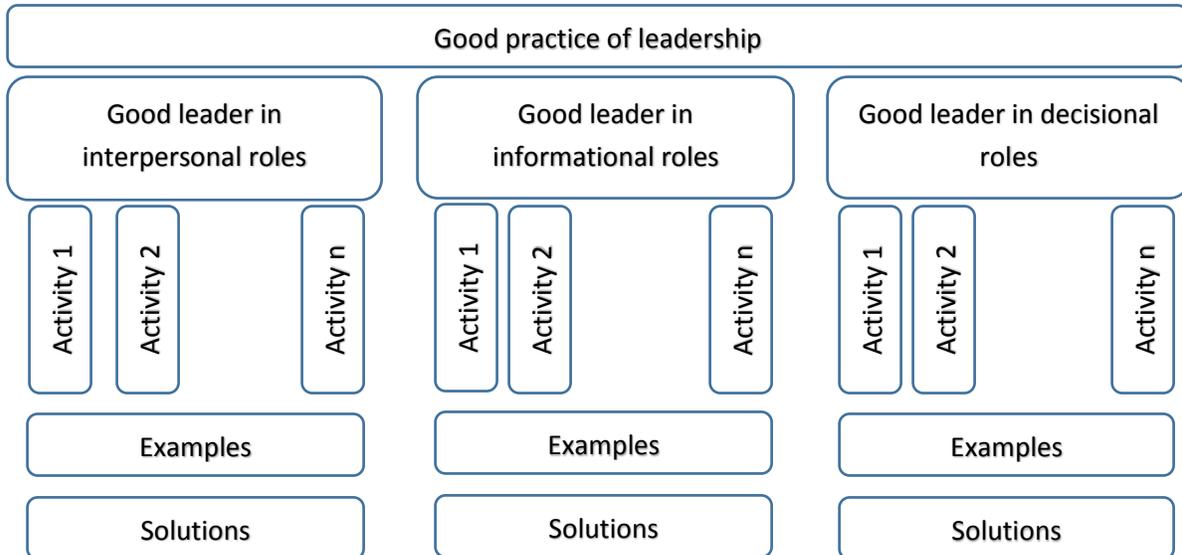
The good practice of leadership aims to enhance awareness about the challenges that managers face and to support managers in their work by explaining the content of different roles and the related choices. The further aim is to develop a uniform understanding of good leadership, as well as harmonise and develop the quality of leadership in the University of Tartu.

The good practice of leadership follows the managerial roles theory by Henry Mintzberg (1975¹), who argues that people behave similarly in certain situations. The model identifies ten roles based on managers' activities, as follows:

- interpersonal roles: figurehead, leader, liaisons;
- informational roles: monitor, disseminator, spokesperson;
- decisional roles: entrepreneur, disturbance handler, resource allocator, negotiator.

¹Mintzberg (1975). *The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact*. *Harvard Business Review*, 53, 49–61.

All the above roles are relevant also in the governance of an academic organisation, and recommendations to the manager have been worked out based on these roles, taking into consideration the specifics of the University of Tartu. The structure of the good practice of leadership is multi-layered, see the figure.



Preparation process of the good practice of leadership

The compilation of the good practice of leadership started in February 2016 with forming the coordinating team, mapping the current situation and specifying the terms of reference in the course of several discussions. As the next step, the methodology of preparing the good practice of leadership was composed and a comprehensive study was conducted, and on that basis the first version of the good practice of leadership was completed. In these sections of work, the workgroup of the Chair of Management of the School of Economics played an important part.² UT Centre for Ethics has actively contributed to the successful outcome, offering support and advice in different stages of the process. The process of preparing the good practice of leadership was coordinated by the Human Resources Office.

To identify leadership and management principles that are important for the university, mini-case studies were compiled based on managerial roles. Ideas on how to behave appropriately in similar situations were sifted out during focus group interviews. Focus group interviews were minuted and recorded and in the course of a later analysis, principles were worked out, reflecting the ideal of leadership in the University of Tartu. Invitation to participate in the discussion groups was sent via the university's internal communication channels or personally - all UT employees were offered the opportunity to participate. From 19 September to 19 October 2016, fifteen focus group interviews took place (incl. one pilot group to test the

²Members of the workgroup: Maret Ahonen, Krista Jaakson, Anne Reino and Maaja Vadi.

suitability of the method), duration 1.5–2 hours. Employees of different faculties and different levels, incl. international teaching staff members, participated in focus groups. Also the representatives of the Student Council shared their views. All in all, 97 people participated in the discussion groups, including 51 women and 46 men. The working draft of the good practice was available for comments and suggestions on the intranet and it was amended based on feedback. The text has been introduced to the councils of all faculties and, at a separate seminar, to heads of support units. The senate of the university approved the good practice of leadership at their session on 3 March 2017. The senate considered it important that the principles in the good practice should be reviewed at least once in every five years.

The good practice of leadership includes several examples. However, there could be even more examples and employees may offer their own examples. Everyone is also welcome to comment on and supplement the solutions provided in the examples! Please share your ideas with Senior Specialist for Professional Development Raivo Valk (raivo.valk@ut.ee, 737 5141). We are grateful to all who have already contributed or are yet to contribute to the development of the good practice of leadership!

Specifics of managerial work at the university and good practice

When an employee becomes a manager, they need to understand that expectations to them will be different than those in their former position, and their activity or inactivity is inevitably in a greater focus. It does not matter whether the person is a full-time manager or as an extra task, temporarily or permanently, appointed or elected by colleagues, on the unit, institute or faculty level – other people’s expectations to the manager remain the same – the criteria of good leadership are mostly the same. Although leadership may be just one of the many roles of an academic staff member and at that, not even the most important for the managers themselves, this role has a great impact on the colleagues and the university. This is why the university offers support in developing leadership and managerial skills (coaching, mentorship, leadership training courses etc.) and it is the manager’s responsibility to use these opportunities. Contribution made as a manager is taken into account and recognised by the university upon performance appraisal.

There are people who perform the leader’s/manager’s role excellently due to their personal characteristics, experience or intuition. However, even experienced leaders face situations in which there are no good and absolutely correct choices of behaviour, and such situations are especially frequent in an academic organisation. In the management of an academic organisation, the administrative and the academic hierarchy clash: a lecturer may be the immediate superior of a professor, and a head of unit who has no PhD may lead colleagues who are world-level experts in their field of study. In an academic organisation, managers also have to find a balance between their different roles, to face conflicts of obligations and often make a choice between personal, professional values and the [organisation’s core values](#). The hierarchy of obligations is an agreement between the manager and colleagues, and the manager and the

university. The good practice of leadership should be viewed as a part of such an agreement. The good practice of leadership is not a regulatory document but rather an instruction describing the ideal situation and developing the organisational culture more broadly: its aim is to harmonise the understanding among the university's staff of what an excellent manager does and what he/she leaves undone. There are definitely situations in which it is impossible to observe all principles; the manager considers the specific situation and people and at that, is genuine and does not lose his/her humanness. The good practice acknowledges and appreciates the manager's role in the university.

1. Good leader and employees / interpersonal roles

1.1. The good leader creates a team who is mutually trusting and oriented to performing the university's objectives: no leader can be efficient alone.

- The good leader creates and maintains trust in the team. He/she builds the team, considering the procedure for filling vacant positions and the suitability of people who cooperate directly with one another. If there is no unity, cooperation and trust about goals in the team closest to the manager, all colleagues will suffer as a result.
- The good leader organises the work and processes so that team members can apply their potential in the best possible way.

***Example:** Due to the significantly decreased number of students and reduced budget, it is not possible to offer a full-time job to an associate professor in the unit who has received good feedback. The downward trend in the number of students is expected to continue. You have asked the associate professor to participate in your research project but the person has refused, saying that his/her calling is teaching. The associate professor works with a fixed-term employment contract, which is valid for two more years. Therefore, in the case of dismissal, the salary for the whole period until the expiry of the employment agreement should be paid to the associate professor.*

***What to do?** Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

1. You accept the associate professor's wish not to participate in the research project and pay him/her salary according to the employment contract from research funds, but then start to delegate smaller research-administrative tasks to him/her.

2. You offer the associate professor participation in the research project as the only opportunity to continue the employment relationship, giving hope that in a few years he/she can commit to full-time teaching again.

3. You reduce the associate professor's actual teaching workload, paying him/her salary according to previous rates, but at the same time you keep looking for a possibility to terminate the employment relationship with him/her.

4. You maintain the associate professor's earlier teaching workload by rearranging work in the unit, and ask the associate professor to communicate such changes to the colleagues concerned.

5. None of the above. Research plays an important role in the associate professor's position. Therefore, if the colleague wants to commit mainly to teaching, he/she should consider the lecturer's job. As a manager, you should have a bigger picture and a longer-term plan: you have to view work in the unit as a whole, and forecast possible employee turnover. If the associate professor's teaching workload cannot be maintained at the former level by rearranging work in the unit, you have to suggest reducing workload and pay, provided such change is not temporary. You should avoid paying salary from financial accounts that do not reflect the actual work.

- The good leader agrees on the use of working time and does not presume that employees should be available for work outside working hours.

Example: *It is Friday, end of the workday. A journalist calls you and says that an article will be published on Monday, and your contribution is needed. In order to put together the information for the journalist, you need to get it from your colleagues. It would take them an estimated couple of hours to assemble the information, but it would take you much more time.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

1. *You send your colleagues a request to send the necessary information to you by Saturday evening, explaining that you would not give them such a task if it were not so urgent, but it is a forced situation.*

2. *You decline to give the information to the journalist, citing end of the working week as an excuse.*

3. *You do not want to force the situation on your colleagues for the weekend. Knowing, however, that what the journalist publishes may affect the university's reputation, you decide to put the information together yourself.*

4. *You delegate the task to a colleague who you know is conscientious and, unlike others, does not have family responsibilities.*

5. None of the above. If it is really an urgent and important reputation issue, ask your colleagues to put the information together collectively the same evening. However, you have to understand that colleagues may perceive it as an indisputable order, therefore talk to them immediately and describe the situation. If the issue is not so urgent, try to reach an agreement with the journalist and for the sake of the quality of the article, postpone it to the next week.

1.2. The good leader knows his/her colleagues and notices them both in their success and problems.

- The good leader knows the employees' duties and their compliance with the provisions of the employment contract, and intervenes in the case of discord.
- He/she notices the employee's condition and takes it into consideration in planning extra tasks.

Example: A capable employee has joined your unit, but he/she works part-time as a teacher at school. The new employee is responsible for a few subject courses, has assumed administrative tasks and participates in some applied research projects. Recently you have noticed signs of exhaustion in the employee, who says he/she also works during weekends, but in your opinion his/her work quality is still on the same level as before. Now you are offered a large-scale and profitable project, for which this colleague's profile would suit perfectly.

What to do? Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.

1. You offer the project to the employee. No doubt, he/she will decline the offer if it does not fit into his/her schedule.

2. You decide to give the opportunity to your doctoral student, who would be able to prove him/herself and gain experience.

3. You make a proposal to the employee to give up working at school and start work full time. You are able to offer full-time work for him/her for one year only.

4. You are worried about the actual workload of the employee and decide to give up the project, because you do not have enough people to complete the project.

5. You use elements of all the aforementioned solutions, but you might start with no. 3. As a manager, you most certainly have to be informed of

employees' workload. It is not always possible, because employees may have obligations outside their main job, but in this case, a trusting relationship and regular appraisal interviews with employees can help. It is important to keep in mind that the fragmentation of work assignments itself creates a higher stress level. If possible, give similar assignments to employees. In the case of extra work, discuss which of the current tasks could be omitted. In a situation similar to the described one, the long-term interests of the employee and your unit and the university should be placed in the foreground. Consider giving up the project only in case there are no employees or doctoral students at all to implement it.

- The good leader offers support when the employee is having a difficult time and recognises for good results. The collective primarily means people and only thereafter, employees.

1.3. The good leader treats employees fairly, appreciating each one's individuality.

- The good leader turns his/her attention to the whole collective, including both academic and support staff, colleagues with permanent and temporary contract (e.g. visiting professors and postdoctoral researchers).
- He/she conducts development interviews in which beside past activities and academic competence also the employee's future and integrated development is important.
- He/she takes into consideration the employees' temporary or permanent [special needs](#) and explains the need for special treatment to other employees.

Example: *One of the employees in your unit mostly works from home due to personal reasons and is rarely seen at the workplace. Other colleagues have recently started to complain about it and at a recent work meeting, a few employees raised the issue again. They feel that employee does not contribute to the performance of duties equally with others.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–3 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 4.*

1. You answer that you have thought so yourself and do not know exactly, who works how much. To get an overview, you decide to apply compulsory measurement of working hours in the entire unit.

2. You gather all employees and ask each to explain what they think of the contribution of the person working from home.

3. You invite the person working from home to meet you to hear his/her opinion of the situation. You explain the situation in the collective and do not allow the person to work from home in future.

4. None of the above. You tell your colleagues that you are responsible for organising work in the unit and explain them the duties and contribution of the person who works from home. You take into use IT solutions so that the home-working colleague could participate in meetings, administrative work etc. equally with others. The more you use remote working, the more precisely the anticipated result of the work must be agreed, work performance monitored and colleagues informed of it.

1.4. The good leader is honest and polite in communication, upholding the parties' dignity even in complicated situations.

- The good leader talks to the employee in an unprejudiced and direct manner, if he/she has heard problems with the employee's work results or motivation.
- He/she prefers to speak eye-to-eye, if possible, and avoids (electronically) mediated communication in sensitive or significant matters.
- He/she perceives his/her responsibility but also knows the limits of his/her competence. If necessary, the manager consults with experts of other specialities.

1.5. The good leader provides for positive work atmosphere.

- The good leader organises work in such a way that employees can get to know each other, and creates possibilities and traditions for direct communication.
- He/she is visible; he/she personally attends important events or uses other opportunities to emphasise the importance of the event.

Example: *One of the international staff members in your unit published an article in a reputable science journal and its results have been widely acknowledged. A journalist calls you and invites you to come to a TV show to comment on the topic. However, you know that you are not too competent in this topic and besides, you have teaching duties on that day.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–3 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 4.*

1. *You tell the journalist that the author of the article will come to the TV show and ask the television company to find an interpreter for the interview.*

2. As you have no time to acquaint yourself with the topic and to deal with organisational matters, you contact the university's communication office and ask them to communicate with the TV channel and find the best speaker for the programme.

3. You send the international staff member's supervisee to the TV programme – a doctoral student who speaks Estonian and who is a good and very confident speaker, and definitely familiar with the supervisor's research.

4. None of the above. As a manager, you need to be aware of your representational function. The author of the article undoubtedly deserves to be personally acknowledged, but with your presence you can emphasise your unit's and the university's role in the research and the exceptional nature of the achievement. At the same time, it is important to give relevant comments on TV and as you do not feel fully competent, also the author of the research should be involved in the TV interview. Consider the possibility of rearranging your teaching duties and participating in the TV show. Also take the international staff member with you and, if necessary, ask for simultaneous interpreting. In this case both the author and your unit are represented. If you cannot rearrange your teaching duties, find alternative solutions (teleconference, video address, etc.). It is important to prepare well for the presentation and agree about the roles, so that the university and your unit would be represented in the best possible way. If necessary, consult the specialists of Marketing and Communication Office.

- The good leader keeps communication channels open in critical situations – non-reaction is a behaviour that employees do not expect from a manager.

Example: You are at a reputable international science conference in a foreign country, where you have to chair a session the next day. Then you get a text message from a colleague from your unit that a workplace accident has happened in your laboratory, and as a result, at least one laboratory assistant has been taken to the hospital with serious personal injury. Participation in the conference is important for you and your unit, because you plan to make contacts there that are necessary for forming a consortium for an H2020 project application. Conference participants include renowned research groups, whose involvement in your project would certainly give extra points during evaluation.

What to do? Read the first two variants and consider the weaknesses of either solution and think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 3.

1. *As you cannot change anything while being away and the future of the laboratory and its employees are connected with the success of the planned project, you decide not to react to the message. You concentrate on the session, switch off your phone and ignore e-mails.*
2. *You decide to give up chairing the conference session and return at the first opportunity. An accident in the laboratory means that the whole work process and safety measures need to be reviewed as soon as possible.*
3. *Neither one nor the other. First, as a manager you have to be available and open for communication. Call the injured employee and ask whether you or another member of the research group could do something for him/her. Be empathetic and caring to the victim and his/her next of kin, but keep in mind that the situation concerns the whole team. This is why you should also direct your message to other members of your team. Acquaint yourself with what happened, try to gather information about the cause of the accident to be ready to defend your and your laboratory's reputation. Stay informed of the university's bylaws and know how to act in the case of emergencies. If necessary, contact the university's support units for relevant support and advice (Marketing and Communication Office, legal counsels, Human Resources Office, etc.).*

2. Good leader and information / informational roles

2.1. The good leader appreciates and promotes colleagues' active interest in what is going on in the university and in the unit, creating such a system of information flow that necessary information gets to and moves on from him/her.

- The good leader shares information in a timely manner and respects the agreed deadlines: if it is not possible, he/she gives reasons.
- He/she is open for dialogue and ensures that information received from employees is forwarded to relevant units or bodies in order to improve the operations of the university.
- He/she expresses honestly his/her opinions and draws attention to the possibilities for developing the university, serving as a model in giving inputs for the development of the university: making suggestions, participating in surveys, etc. If he/she is not satisfied with certain decisions or development, he/she first talks about it with his/her immediate superior and also encourages his/her employees to use the same pattern.

Example: As a new manager who recently started work, you review the university's work satisfaction survey results in your subordinate units and notice that the work atmosphere indicator in one department has been falling year by year. This is an influential unit, with excellent scientific results and with a lot of postdoctoral and visiting researchers. The head of the unit was granted a research award last year.

What to do? Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.

1. As the research results are excellent, you do nothing.
2. As the methodology of the survey is questionable in many respects, there are not sufficient grounds to intervene.
3. You invite the head of the problem unit to talk to you and demand an improvement in the work atmosphere indicator next year.
4. As the unit is a really influential one, you talk to its employees in confidence to understand the actual situation.
5. None of the above. Try to find out what the situation is about, starting with the head of the department: how does he/she see the situation and how does he/she explain the decline in the result. Express your sincere concern. Still, you might also ask the employees' opinion, but do not conceal it from the head of the department. When you have identified the reason, try to work out solutions with him/her, maybe administrative intervention will suffice, e.g. amendment of job descriptions or changing the room layout. If the problem really lies in the methodology of the survey, discuss how it can be improved in the unit and send your proposals to Human Resources Office.

2.2. The good leader in cooperation with colleagues sets explicit goals and takes care that the goals are consistent and known by people concerned.

- The good leader encourages colleagues to contribute to the university's objectives, supporting an enterprising spirit and innovative initiatives that are related with the objectives.
- He/she has clearly expressed expectations to results but accepts different ways of achieving them and does not force his/her preferences.
- He/she is flexible and at the same time consistent. He/she is aware that an employee's constantly lower-than-expected performance is not acceptable as that would be a sign of the manager's own indolence or weakness.

2.3. The good leader involves employees sparingly: there are weighty matters in which their involvement is necessary, and there are issues in which involvement is not reasonable.

- The good leader favours colleagues to be frank in expressing their opinions and enables them to participate in the decision-making process.

***Example:** A major application for funding, which also concerns your unit, is being prepared. You are asked to give your proposals within a few days and the deadline cannot be postponed. You have a few ideas but have not discussed them within your unit.*

***What to do?** Read variants 1–3 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 4.*

1. You find that as the head of the unit, you are responsible anyway. Therefore, you submit your proposals and inform the employees afterwards.

2. You form a workgroup of people who are present to generate ideas, prepare the application and write the proposals.

3. You decide not to participate in the application process and complain about the tight deadline.

4. None of the above. Send your ideas together with the description of the situation to employees, giving them a chance to supplement it. However, you cannot rely on their contribution; you have to assume responsibility for the result. In your team there are probably people who will help in such a situation.

- If people have contributed their time to making a decision, the good leader gives them feedback about the situation or result and does everything in his/her power to ensure that the collective input would reach the expected output.
- He/she listens to colleagues and promotes dialogue and partnership.

2.4. The good leader plans and delegates tasks and duties with resources and rights.

- The good leader plans the need for resources, incl. human resources according to the development goals of the university and the unit.
- He/she gives tasks with reasonable deadlines.
- He/she organises work in such a way as to eliminate the waste of resources (time, information and material resources) and avoids giving tasks that are unnecessary from the aspect of the university's development.

2.5. The good leader is open to communication both in the university and outside.

- The good leader does not build a barrier between him/herself and the employees – the good leader is available for the employees.
- He/she supports communication and cooperation in the unit, and across units and faculties.
- He/she communicates with the press and other external interest groups, involving, if necessary, the respective support unit of the university (Marketing and Communication Office), and perceiving his/her responsibility in building the image of the university.

Example: *It is Friday, end of the workday. A journalist calls you and says that an article will be published on Monday, and your contribution is needed. In order to put together the information for the journalist, you need to get it from your colleagues. It would take them an estimated couple of hours to assemble the information, but it would take you much more time.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

1. *You send your colleagues a request to send the necessary information to you by Saturday evening, explaining that you would not give them such a task if it were not so urgent, but it is a forced situation.*
2. *You decline to give the information to the journalist, referring to the end of the working week.*
3. *You do not want to force the situation on your colleagues for the weekend. Knowing, however, that what the journalist publishes may affect the reputation of the university, you decide to put the information together yourself.*
4. *You delegate the task to a colleague who you know is conscientious and who, differently from others, does not have family responsibilities.*
5. *None of the above. If it is really an urgent and important reputation issue, give your colleagues a chance to contribute in the same evening and put the information together collectively. If the issue is not so urgent, try to come to an agreement with the journalist and, for the sake of the quality of the article, postpone it to the next week. Doing so, you might even strengthen the image of the university. In either case, inform the Marketing and Communication Office.*

3. Good leader and organisation / decisional roles

3.1. The good leader uses formal and informal authority in the interests of the university.

- The good leader does not allow personal relationships, professional favourites etc. to influence him/her, but always follows the objectives of the whole university.
- He/she is oriented to cooperation with other managers and his/her immediate superior: he/she does not rival with them or apply for benefits to his/her unit on account of others, if it is not in the interests of the whole university. Internal competition is acceptable if it stays within the agreed rules.

Example: *You and your team are preparing a tender for procurement. You have had several long discussions with the employees of your unit and reached the final stage in preparing the proposal. The submission deadline is the day after tomorrow. Then, at the faculty's council session you happen to talk to the head of another institute and quite accidentally learn that they are also preparing a proposal for the same procurement.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

- 1. To maintain good relationships with the other unit, you decide not to submit a proposal this time.*
- 2. As you have done much preparatory work already and your team is very competent, you submit the proposal under a non-university legal entity.*
- 3. You go to a signatory and use your persuasion skills to make the person prefer the proposal of your team.*
- 4. You try to agree with the other unit that your unit will submit the proposal, but promise to share a part of the project work with the other unit.*
- 5. None of the above, but reaching agreement with the other unit is inevitable. Instead of sharing the income and work, i.e. compromise, you should keep in mind the customer's interest and the best possible quality. The best competences of the units should be put together for making the offer and if you detect duplicated activities, try to stop them at once.*

- The good leader declares his/her interests and avoids making decisions if there is a conflict of interest, and seeks for a solution in situations in which he/she becomes aware of a colleague's possible conflict of interest. The good leader's decisions and activities not only are, but also appear ethically impeccable.

Example: Non-university companies have been invited to submit proposals within the university's cooperation project and unexpectedly, a company associated with a person who is closely related with you has made their proposal. For assessment of proposals a committee has been formed, with you as one of the members.

What to do? Read variants 1–3 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 4.

1. No problem, there are specific criteria for evaluation of proposals.
2. You remove yourself from the committee for the time of discussing this specific proposal due to conflict of interest.
3. You remove yourself from the committee, but talk to the chair of the committee in private, expressing your opinion on the proposals.
4. None of the above. Although you may actually be objective in evaluating all the proposals, others may still doubt your impartiality. Inform the chair of the committee immediately of the conflict of interest and remove yourself from the discussion of proposals both officially and unofficially. If you are the chair of the committee, ask your immediate superior to appoint a new chair.

3.2. The leader's activity is future-oriented.

- The good leader agrees with employees about the unit's contribution to implementing the university's mission, about principles and long-term goals. On these bases, individual cases are solved.

Example: Two successful young researchers from your department want support at the end of the year to go together to an important conference. The travel costs are high and other financial accounts cover only a part of the expenses. The budget is tight. You had planned to use the small budget remainder to pay the customary year-end bonus to employees.

What to do? Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.

1. You make a compromise: you allow one employee to go to the conference and reduce the year-end bonus by that sum.
2. You allow young researchers to go to the conference, but ask them not to spread the information. You refer to the tight budget situation as the reason for not paying the bonus.

3. *You let the researchers decide what is more important: their conference or the employees of the whole department.*

4. *You do not want to single-handedly decide the use of the unit's budget remainder and put the matter to a vote.*

5. *None of the above. First, as a manager you should seriously consider replacing payment of bonus to all staff with recognition of outstanding work results (incl. by non-academic staff). The principles should be previously discussed in with the staff and agreed about. Participation in an important conference must indeed be supported, but it should be agreed beforehand, e.g. in the annual work plan. Such agreements are the best ground for justifying the distribution of money to staff members. Refer to the agreements at every opportunity, to underline the importance of agreements. In addition, encourage employees to find additional resources to finance the travel.*

- If necessary, the good leader makes personally difficult decisions, if this supports the long-term development of the unit and the university. In the case of conflicts of values, the good leader formulates the situation and creates opportunities for collegial discussion on the values, not fearing to cast the final decision.
- He/she takes time to maintain his/her mental and physical wellbeing and to support both self-development and colleagues' development, conducting regular performance and development appraisal interviews and providing time and resources necessary for development.

3.3. For making decisions, the good leader collects relevant information both in and out of the university.

- The good leader communicates with different parties and if necessary, gathers supplementary information.
- Decision-making meetings chaired by the good leader are supplied with relevant materials, and participants are allowed enough time to get familiar with them.
- He/she chairs meetings in a way that favours participants to voice their opinions, discussion, and informed decisions.

Example: *There are two candidates for a position: one person has been working for a long time in the same job and another person, who you have invited to take part in the election, from outside the university. Experts give equally positive evaluations to both candidates and do not give a clear basis to prefer either candidate, but in your opinion, the external candidate suits*

better in view of the strategic goals of the unit. You chair the meeting of the decision-making body, because this is the task of the manager.

What to do? *Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

1. You decide to be as neutral as possible at the meeting and just give a formal introduction. You say that as all the documents have been made available to the council, there is no need to waste time on introducing the candidates, and express confidence that the council will make the best choice.

2. At the meeting you clearly show your preference and explain to the council that the external candidate would bring about necessary changes in the unit and, actually, in the whole institute.

3. You meet all council members in private before the meeting and convince them to prefer the external candidate in the name of the unit's development.

4. You try to convince your colleague to withdraw his/her candidacy and offer him/her a chance to contribute to the institute's work in another way, working part-time. You tell the colleague that you highly appreciate his/her contribution so far, but he/she should dismiss his/her personal interests for the sake of the future of the institute.

5. None of the above. One way or another, as a leader and manager, you have greater influence on the decision-making process. Be aware of it and therefore try to be neutral while chairing the meeting, so that participants could express their opinions. However, your opinion is also important and you are expected to express it. If possible, state your opinion after other members, but certainly before making the decision.

3.4. The good leader is responsible for his/her own decisions and decisions made by decision-making bodies that he/she chairs.

- The good leader's decisions are based on evidence, knowledge and values and he/she introduces and reasons all decisions in the light of these.
- He/she does not ignore decisions made in the university, but carries them out even if he/she personally holds a dissenting opinion.

Example: *The faculty council to which you belong made a decision at today's session, which you regard as fundamentally wrong. You voted against it. Knowing the people and the pattern of work in your institute, you are well aware that it is very difficult to implement the decision. At tomorrow's*

meeting, you as the head of the institute need to give an overview of the council resolution and how to implement it in the institute.

What to do? *Read the first two variants and consider the weaknesses of either solution and think what you would do differently. Then look at the third variant.*

1. At the meeting in the institute you criticise the faculty council's resolution and suggest it should be observed to a minimum extent.

2. You ignore the decision because you are sure it will be changed later.

3. Neither of the above. Provided you have presented your arguments before the decision was made and also presented them at the decision-making meeting, discuss the situation once more with your immediate superior. If only your unit sees the decision as problematic and no exceptions can be made, inform your employees of the decision and implement it as a representative of the university's management.

- The manager dares to admit that the decision is a failure and initiates its amendment. Admitting one's mistake is the characteristic of a mature leader.

3.5. The good leader solves any misunderstandings that may spoil good working atmosphere.

- He/she is solution-oriented, but also trusts the competence of other managers and does not intervene in their area of responsibility.

Example: *There has been a conflict between colleagues of two different work units for a long time already, probably resulting from personal relationships. The conflict seriously disturbs other colleagues and through other employees, the information has now reached you. The heads of the respective work units are informed of the conflict but have not taken any measures.*

What to do? *Read variants 1–4 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 5.*

1. You invite the conflicting parties to you and say that as grownups they should solve their problem and apologise to other colleagues for their unprofessional behaviour.

2. You suggest the colleague who informed you of the conflict to discuss the matter with others in an informal setting and find a common solution.

3. You introduce the guidelines of equal treatment to all colleagues and recommend that they should ask help from the Human Resources Office, if necessary.

4. As the problem concerns different units, you invite the heads of the units to you and order them to solve the problem and inform them that as the conflicting parties are employees of their units, you are not going to deal with this matter.

5. None of the above, but you might start with no. 4: talk to the immediate superiors of the parties and get acquainted with the situation. As a manager, you cannot ignore the situation and it is obviously important for the unit to solve it. At the same time, you cannot solve all people's problems. If necessary, offer your help to the heads of the units or ask assistance from the university's support units. Do not underestimate the importance of the problem – it concerns the working environment! Help develop the immediate superiors' self-confidence and responsibility in solving such issues.

- If the good leader cannot manage the problems on his/her own, he/she involves specialists or counsellors.
- He/she keeps people who are related with the problem informed, notifying them of the course of the solution.

Example: Yesterday you had a meeting in your unit, where the next year's activities were discussed. The next morning one of the employees of the unit posts a letter to the mailing list, attacking a new colleague and generally criticising leadership in the unit. The person reproaches the new colleague for poor preparation of the presentation, which is why the meeting lasted longer than planned. This is not the first time for the person to criticise, but this time the words were particularly insulting for the people concerned. At the same time, you know that older colleagues are already used to the person's outspoken manner of speaking.

What to do? Read variants 1–5 and consider the weaknesses of each solution. Think what you would do differently. After that, read variant 6.

1. You have had your fill and decide to find a way to end the employment relationship with the employee who sent the letter.

2. Knowing the criticiser and based on earlier experience you decide not to respond, believing that the situation will calm down by itself. The new colleague needs to harden in the academic environment and learn to stand up for him/herself.

3. *You write an open reply in which you answer to the criticism on leadership and recommend that all employees familiarise themselves with netiquette.*
4. *You invite the criticiser to talk to you and make him/her write a public apology to the mailing list.*
5. *You invite the new colleague to you and explain that the older colleague is sharp-tongued and the attacks should not be taken personally.*
6. *None of the above. Knowing that all people want to work in a positive atmosphere, you have to have courage to intervene – by ignoring the problem you may communicate the message that such situation is acceptable. The described situation definitely demands intervention if it is a repeated and disturbing pattern of behaviour, which may also qualify as [workplace bullying](#). You can talk to the parties concerned and, if necessary, involve specialists and counsellors. However, that is not all: also the employees included in the mailing list must be assured that the problem is being dealt with.*