



Values: discuss, reflect upon, live

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The Ethics Platform – founded in 2011 – is the motor and driving force for the systematic, participatory and constructive discussion of ethical issues at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences Vienna (BOKU). Our institution's topics cover many activities interacting with the Earth system: Geology as well as Water Management, Forestry and Wood Science Agriculture, Food Chemistry and Biotechnology, Natural Resources Management and Ecological Engineering, Landscape Design and Landscape Planning, Environment and Bio-Resources Management. Every topic has its own ethical, social and cultural implications.

The aim of the ethics platform is to generally sensitize and generate awareness for the understanding of responsible living at the University. This involves good mutual interaction within the whole BOKU community, with teaching and research being done against the backdrop of BOKU's social responsibility as a "University of Life".

The BOKU Ethics Charter, which lays the foundation for acting responsibly at BOKU, is the consensual product of a thorough bottom-up consultation process. The basic ethical principles, operating values and objectives compiled in the five chapters of the Ethics Charter provide an ethical foundation and supplement the existing guidelines of BOKU. The objectives are formulated for cooperation within the BOKU community, including teaching and research.

Further activities of the Ethics Platform are

- * further development of the basic ethical principles at BOKU,
- * information about and discussion about basic ethical questions as well as BOKU-related topics,
- * promotion of the strengthening of ethical awareness in teaching,
- * supporting applicants with any ethical questions arising in their research proposals, upon request,
- * initiation, coordination of and/or participation in research projects on ethics-related topics (for example GOAL),
- * networking with comparable initiatives at other Research Institutions for an exchange of ideas,
- * cooperation with the UNESCO Bioethics Chair Vienna.

We offer events, discussions and lectures, organize further education for teachers and write reports (advisory opinions) and recommendations. Our activities concern various topics, for instance freedom of and responsibility in research, bio-economics, genome editing or Dual Use.

BOKU-Cinema, a movie series followed by panel discussions, is promoted by the Ethics Platform and Students Union BOKU. It takes on questions and challenges that ensue from current research. Carefully selected films are shown, after which a panel of internal (BOKU) and external experts discuss the relevant issues.

The Ethics Platform is made up of representatives from the Senate and Rectorate, the Departments, Institutes and Research Groups, the Students Union as well as the Staff Councils for scientific and non-scientific personnel at BOKU. The members meet several times per semester. In addition, smaller working groups are engaged in addressing selected topics as they arise.

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