Chapter 4

University Values

1.   Introduction

The university is a privileged place where knowledge, skills, and consciousness are formed. Its mission is not only to instruct, but also to educate, awaken critical thinking, and forge the moral personality of students.

Thus, university values constitute the foundation of academic life: they guide behaviors, inspire scientific research, and structure relationships among members of the university community (teachers, students, staff).

These values represent the moral compass of the modern university. They guarantee the credibility of higher education institutions, their integrity, and their contribution to social, economic, and cultural progress.

2.   Definition of the Concept of Value

Values are ideals, beliefs, or principles to which a society or individual adheres. They define what is considered good, just, noble, or desirable. They guide behaviors, attitudes, and decisions.

In the social sciences, values serve to:
- Explain individual and collective behaviors
- Understand societal changes
- Identify human motivations

Thus, values are the basis of social cohesion. They constitute the moral cement that unites individuals around common principles.

2.1 The Role of Values in the University

The university, as an educational and scientific institution, rests on a set of fundamental values that define its mission:

- Train competent and responsible citizens
- Promote scientific research and truth
- Develop critical thinking and intellectual freedom
- Contribute to the sustainable development of society

These values guide university governance, pedagogical practices, research, and human relations.

The common values of higher education are:

- The pursuit of truth and scientific rigor
- Freedom of thought and expression
- The responsibility to share and disseminate knowledge
- Respect for pluralism and diversity of opinions
- Listening and reasoned judgment of divergent viewpoints

- Consideration of ethics in research and academic practice

These principles ensure the moral, scientific, and social quality of the university.

3.   Values for the University

The university values of ethics and professional conduct that concern the entire university community are subdivided into several categories as follows:

3.1. Social values

As state-created institutions, Algerian universities are fundamentally social entities. They are committed to the nation's development and must follow societal changes while promoting the core values on which every human society is built.

Social values include:

- **Education:** Generally, education is the formation and development of the human being; specifically, the development of the human mind.

Detailed Examples:

- A professor organizing extra support sessions for low-performing students before exams without asking for any compensation.
- The university opening a foreign-language center to enhance students' skills and improve their professional opportunities.
- Providing digital libraries that allow students to access millions of scientific books.
- Offering workshops such as *"How to Write a Graduation Thesis"* or *"Research Methodology Skills"* to help students develop their academic abilities.

- **Culture:** Human development is fully ensured only when acquired knowledge contributes to cultural development.

Detailed Examples:

- Organizing a cultural week that includes theater performances, poetry readings, music shows, and visual arts exhibitions prepared by students.
- Holding intellectual seminars on national, philosophical, or historical topics.
- Encouraging students to write scientific or artistic articles to be published in the university magazine.
- Creating clubs such as the film club, reading club, philosophy club…

- **Multiculturalism:** The university must be open to other cultures, respecting their depth, transcendence, and values.

Detailed Examples:

- The participation of international students in the university and organizing an *"International Cultures Day"*, where each student presents a traditional dish and songs from their country.
- Including lectures on Amazigh, Arab, and African history to reinforce the understanding of Algeria's diverse identity.

o   Hosting academic delegations from other countries and organizing joint projects.

- **Pluralism:** Humans are both multiple and individual in beliefs, opinions, tendencies, and mentalities.

Detailed Examples:

o   Allowing the creation of various student clubs representing different viewpoints: a scientific club, an environmental club, a cultural club, a religious club…

o   Holding debates among students on social and political issues in a respectful academic environment.

o   Allowing students to express their opinions freely without fear of punishment.

- **Work:** Work has undeniable social value. Universities should make work valued and rewarding.

Detailed Examples:

o   Involving students in training workshops inside the university (laboratories, libraries, electronics workshops…).

o   Organizing *"Best Innovation Project"* competitions and encouraging students to create start-ups.

o   Awarding grades for practical and innovative projects, not only for memorization.

- **Technological development:** Research related to technological development is encouraged, considering social impact.

Detailed Examples:

o   Creating laboratories to develop robots, drones, and mobile applications.

o   Encouraging students to participate in competitions such as *AI Hackathons*.

o   Developing a digital system for managing student files instead of using paper documents.

- **Well-being:** Ensuring the moral and intellectual well-being of community members.

Detailed Examples:

o   Providing a clinic or psychological support office on campus for students experiencing stress or mental pressure.

o   Organizing sports days such as handball, football, or running events.

o   Providing relaxation spaces such as gardens and quiet libraries.

3.2. Community values

Members of the university community aim to participate in the development and promotion of the main values that form the basis of any community.

The community values are:

- **Loyalty:** Members demonstrate loyalty, meaning they are entirely faithful to their commitments to the university community.

Detailed examples:

o   A professor leaves all his personal tasks to attend the defense of a student he supervised.

- An employee makes sure to open the service on time despite difficult circumstances.
- A student adheres to the university charter and does not cheat in exams

• **Solidarity:** Solidarity is expressed through a strong awareness of a community of interests that entails the moral obligation to assist members of the university community.

Detailed examples:

- Organizing a donation campaign to help a student who lost a parent or is going through difficult times.
- Students providing notes and recording lectures for a classmate who is sick for a long period.
- A professor supporting students when they experience psychological pressure or personal difficulties.

• **Dialogue:** Called upon to exercise their spirit of community solidarity daily, members engage in dialogue especially when placed in a context of controversial or opposing positions.

Detailed examples:

- Holding a meeting with the administration to address transportation or cafeteria problems.
- Opening discussions between professors and students during tutorials (TD).
- Organizing disciplinary councils that prioritize dialogue before punishment.

• **Commitment:** Commitment is an attitude of a person who, becoming aware of their belonging to the community, renounces a position of mere spectator and becomes an actor, a partner for the very future of the community.

Detailed examples:

- Students participating in cleaning laboratories and preparing classrooms before a conference.
- Students joining clubs or committees that organize events and activities.
- Professors taking part in scientific committees and department councils instead of limiting themselves to teaching only.

• **Mutual Aid:** Mutual aid consists of providing assistance to one or another member of the community for the purpose of better achieving community objectives.

Detailed examples:

- A group of students helping a classmate prepare difficult laboratory experiments.
- A professor guiding a new colleague on how to use the online learning platform.
- Students sharing rare references or expensive books.
- **Collaboration:** Encouraging teamwork and collective efforts within the community.

Detailed examples:

- Completing a graduation project among three students who clearly divide the tasks.
- Cooperation between two laboratories from different fields to produce joint research.
- Cooperation between the administration and student representatives to improve study conditions.

3.3. Professional Values

The general mission of university entities includes individual and collective development and human advancement. In accordance with their educational mission, these university entities must therefore promote the main values that form the basis of any professional education. The professional values are:

✓ **Integrity and Honesty:** The quest for probity and honesty means refusing corruption in all its forms. This quest must begin with oneself before being extended to others. The development of ethics and professional conduct must reflect exemplary practices.

Detailed examples:

- o A professor refuses to alter student grades
- o A student reports errors in research data.
- o Staff handles funds without personal gain.

✓ **Academic Freedom:** University teaching and research activities cannot be conceived without academic freedom, which is their foundation. Academic freedom guarantees, with respect for others and with complete professional conscience, the expression of critical opinions without risk of censorship or constraint.

Detailed examples:

- o Researchers publish findings on controversial topics.
- o Teachers organize seminars for diverse opinions.
- o Students express critical opinions in assignments.

✓ **Responsibility and Competence:** The notions of responsibility and competence are complementary. They develop through democratic and ethical management of the university institution. This ensures a good balance between the need for efficient administration and that of encouraging the participation of members of the university community by involving all university stakeholders in the decision-making process. However, scientific matters remain the exclusive domain of teacher-researchers.

Detailed examples:

- o Department head ensures effective meetings.
- o Researcher verifies data before publication.
- o Students submit assignments on time.

✓ **Mutual Respect:** Respect for others is based on self-respect. All members of the university community must refrain from any form of symbolic, physical or verbal violence. They must be treated with respect and fairness and commit to behaving in the same way, regardless of the hierarchical level of partners.

Detailed examples:

- o Students listen carefully during debates.
- o Faculty treat colleagues equally.
- o Staff handles complaints politely.

✓ **Requirement for Scientific Truth, Objectivity and Critical Thinking:** The quest for and possibility of questioning the knowledge that the University transmits and produces are based on the fundamental principles of seeking scientific truth and critical thinking. The requirement for scientific truth demands competence, critical observation of facts, experimentation, comparison of viewpoints, relevance of sources and intellectual rigor. Scientific research must be based on academic integrity.

Detailed examples:

- o Students analyze multiple sources.
- o Researchers repeat experiments for accuracy.
- o Faculty encourage theory questioning.

✓ **Equity:** Objectivity and impartiality are essential requirements during evaluations, promotions, recruitments and appointments.

Detailed examples:

- o Recruitment based on qualifications.
- o Students graded using same rubric.
- o Scholarships awarded on merit.

✓ **Respect for University Franchises:** All stakeholders in the university community contribute, through all their behaviors, to enhancing university freedoms in such a way that their specificity and immunity are guaranteed. They refrain from promoting or encouraging situations and practices that may undermine the principles, freedoms and rights of the university.

Detailed examples:

- o Staff avoids actions undermining freedom.
- o Faculty uphold policies independently.
- o Students respect governance rules.

✓ **Assiduity:** Exercising one's job responsibilities to the best of one's ability necessarily implies assiduity.

Detailed examples:

- o Teachers attend all lectures.
- o Students attend lab sessions regularly.
- o Staff completes tasks on schedule.

✓ **Intellectual Property:** University entities are called upon to fight against all forms of fraud, such as plagiarism, deliberate fabrication or falsification of data, unauthorized reproduction, usurpation of author status, piracy of theses or projects, etc.

Detailed examples:

- o Students cite references correctly
- o Researchers protect patents.
- o Faculty prevent plagiarism.

✓ **Probity:** One's function is exercised with honesty, justice and integrity, that is, with absolute probity.

Detailed examples:

- o Administrators manage budgets transparently
- o Professors grade objectively.
- o Staff acts honestly.

✓ **Transparency:** Transparency implies making information accessible to third parties, including members of one's organization. Thus, the production, collection, use and transfer of data are subject to transparent procedures. They must satisfy respect for the person, the interests of university entities and those of the community in general.

Detailed examples:

- o University publishes clear grading criteria.
- o Departments communicate decisions openly.
- o Research funding procedures documented.

✓ **Continuity:** Continuity requires ensuring that, during the transfer of power, everything necessary for the exercise of said power is accessible.

Detailed examples:

- o New heads receive full reports.
- o Projects have handover plans.
- o Staff maintain records for smooth transition.

✓ **Efficiency:** Efficiency is a value that ensures optimal performance while maintaining minimal use of resources.

Detailed examples:

- o Labs minimize resource use.
- o Staff completes tasks quickly without quality loss.
- o Departments manage time and resources effectively.

✓ **Diligence:** Diligence ensures that one is prompt in executing one's work. However, the promptness is such that the work is done with attentive care, thoroughness and application.

Detailed examples:

- o Students check assignments carefully.
- o Faculty review lecture materials thoroughly.
- o Staff follows procedures attentively.

✓ **Compliance:** Members ensure that their activities comply with laws, regulations, policies and procedures in force.

Detailed examples:

- o Students follow university rules.
- o Faculty comply with research ethics.
- o Staff applies procedures correctly.

- ✓ **Disinterestedness:** Disinterestedness is a value that ensures that, in exercising one's duties, one detaches oneself from any personal interest.

Detailed examples:

- o Professors grade without bias.
- o Administrators make policy-based decisions.
- o Students contribute fairly in projects.

- ✓ **Confidentiality:** Maintaining a high level of confidentiality by protecting the integrity and security of university information systems, including personal files of students, employees and teaching staff, and administrative, educational and scientific documents.

Detailed examples:

- o Student records kept secure.
- o Research data protected.
- o Staff avoids sharing sensitive information.

- ✓ **Accountability:** Accountability is the possibility of considering a person, from a material and ethical point of view, as responsible for their actions.

Detailed examples:

- o Researchers take responsibility for errors.
- o Staff reports mistakes promptly.
- o Students accept consequences for missed deadlines.

- ✓ **Freedom of Teaching and Research:** It is constitutive of academic freedom. It is the necessary condition for the search for truth. It also presupposes independence in managing relations with professional circles and partners.

Detailed examples:

- o Faculty design curriculum independently.
- o Researchers choose study topics autonomously.
- o Teachers encourage class debate.

4. Conclusion

University values form the ethical foundation of higher education, encompassing social, community, and professional principles that guide all academic stakeholders. Social values promote human development through education, culture, and innovation; community values strengthen cohesion through solidarity and dialogue; professional values ensure academic integrity and freedom. Together, these values establish a moral compass for universities, enabling them to fulfill their mission of training responsible citizens and contributing to societal progress. By embodying these values daily, universities transform into civilizing institutions capable of producing balanced, engaged individuals committed to social development.