

Protocol for Revoking a Membership

1. Preamble

The Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy aims to establish a fair and transparent process for dealing with situations that may warrant revocation of membership. This document outlines the procedure for revoking membership of the Vienna Doctoral School of Philosophy (*Members* here include VDP doctoral students and faculty, supervisory or non-supervisory). Modifications of this document must be approved by the Steering Committee in an official meeting.

2. Grounds for Revoking a Membership

The Director, or in their absence the Deputy Director, shall decide whether there are possible grounds for revoking a membership. Revocation of membership may be considered in the following circumstances:

1. Serious and/or repeated breaches of the Code of Good Practice:
https://vd-philosophy.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_vds_philosophy/Code_of_Good_Practice_for_Doctoral_Schools.4.4.23.pdf
2. Serious and/or repeated violations of the University of Vienna Code of Conduct: https://vd-philosophy.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_vds_philosophy/Code_of_Conduct_english.pdf

Commentary: Relevant breaches and violations of the Code of Good Practice/Code of Conduct include cases like the following: Members who engage in unethical, fraudulent or inappropriate conduct that brings the VDP into disrepute or threatens its members may have their membership revoked. Unethical or inappropriate behaviour is understood here in the context of academic practices or interactions between members of the VDP. It includes denial of epistemic authority on the basis of gender, race, disability, physical appearance, cultural or academic background; intimidation, harassment, abuse, discrimination; breach of confidentiality, i.e.

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unauthorised disclosure of sensitive information; and other inappropriate behaviors as listed in both the code of good practice and code of conduct.

3. Process for Revoking a Membership

The VDP Steering Committee decides on revocation of membership, according to the following specifications of the process for revoking a membership.

Membership may be revoked at any time for just cause and after due process has been followed, i.e. the decision to revoke membership is normally taken if a series of de-escalation measures with the purpose of conflict mediation between VDP members has been proven unsuccessful. The revocation process and decision will take place at the Steering Committee meeting.

3.1. De-escalation Measures

De-escalation measures may be initiated after a VDP member has reported to one of the contact points that he/she/they has been the victim of behavior that violate the Code of Good Practice/Code of Conduct, as for instance: discriminatory offensive behaviour, severe cases of nepotism, sexual harassment, bullying or mobbing.

The point of contact will inform the complainant of the possible de-escalation measures to be taken or procedures to be initiated and will ask for consent to report the case to the VDP director. If the complainant consents, the point of contact will report the case to the VDP Director, or in absence Deputy Director, or Coordinator. The VDP director will determine the merits of the complaint; and, if necessary, whether there are possible grounds for revocation of VDP membership. The VDP director may then initiate a series of de-escalation measures:

1. **Warning or counseling:** The first step often involves a formal or informal warning or counseling meeting with the VDP member against whom a complaint is made. This is an opportunity for the VDP director to communicate concerns, discuss possible consequences, and offer guidance on how to improve the situation. The director will arrange the meeting. This meeting can be organised with the Threat Management Officer:

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[https://www.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/weitere-](https://www.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/weitere-informationen/bedrohungsmanagement/)

[informationen/bedrohungsmanagement/](https://www.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/weitere-informationen/bedrohungsmanagement/). In addition, the VDP member is entitled to bring a person of his/her/their trust (e.g. the supervisor) to the meeting.

2. Probation: If the problem persists or escalates, an individual may be placed on probation. During this period, the individual will be required to comply with certain rules. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action. This step must be done in consultation with the Steering Committee.
3. Disciplinary Actions: De-escalation disciplinary action may be taken for behavioural issues or breaches of our Codes. These may include written warnings, temporary suspension of access to VDP events or funding. This step must be done in consultation with the Steering Committee.
4. The VDP director may, in exceptional circumstances, bypass the escalation process and ask the Steering Committee to consider revocation of membership. The VDP Director, or in case of absence the Deputy Director, is responsible for defining exceptional circumstances.

3.2. Revoking a Membership:

The process for revoking membership shall be as follows:

1. Formal request: The request for revoking membership must be announced in the agenda of the Steering Committee meeting by the person who acts as the petitioner, who will be either the VDP director or the deputy director.
2. Investigation and Report: The petitioner requesting the revocation of membership shall provide a report that gathers relevant information and evidence at the steering committee meeting. Steering Committee members may ask questions after the presentation.
3. Deliberation and Decision: After deliberation, a decision of revocation of membership will be taken by the members of the Steering Committee,

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provided that a quorum is present (half of the members of the SC; here and henceforth, the rounding rule is: *round half up.*) Membership is revoked if it is supported by at least two thirds of the votes present. The petitioner does not have the right to vote and is not counted in the quorum.

3.3. Consequences:

The consequences for revoking membership are as follows:

1. Exclusion from participation in or organization of any VDP activities
2. Exclusion from access to VDP funding
3. Exclusion from the VDP's academic resources (such as VDP moodle, webpage profile, mailing list)
4. Exclusion from academic guidance by the VDP as an institution
5. Prohibition on the use of doctoral school affiliation

Exclusion from the VDP does not mean exclusion from the Doctoral Programme in Philosophy, which is a matter of the DSPL⁴³. Crucially, the body responsible for decisions at this level is the Rectorate. Only the relationship between the VDP member and the VDP is affected by the revocation of membership. The revocation does not preclude the University from taking further action, e.g. of a disciplinary or labor law nature, should this be deemed possible and appropriate.

Guidance on how to report misconduct at this instance can be obtained either from the officer of the threat management:

<https://www.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/weitere-informationen/bedrohungsmanagement/>

or from AK Gleich:

<https://gleichbehandlung.univie.ac.at/en/>.