Statutes of Institute of Genomics

Based on clauses 15 (2) 8) and 26 of the Statutes of the University of Tartu, and pursuant to the Human Genes Research Act, I hereby approve the Statutes of Institute of Genomics.

I. General provisions

1. Institute of Genomics (‘institution’) is an institution in the structure of the University of Tartu (‘university’), operating on the basis of its statutes, the Human Genes Research Act, the University of Tartu Act, the Universities Act and other legislation.

2. The institution is the legal successor of the Estonian Biocentre and the University of Tartu Estonian Genome Centre, formed on the basis of the Estonian Genome Centre Foundation.

3. The main task of the institution is

   3.1. to conduct genomics-based, transdisciplinary fundamental and applied research and carry out teaching activities;
   3.2. to perform the duties of the controller of the biobank pursuant to the Human Genes Research Act.

4. To perform its main tasks, the institution:

   4.1. conducts fundamental and applied research and organises development work;
   4.2. cooperates with other institutions and persons and international organisations, who conduct gene research and related transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research in Estonia and abroad;
   4.3. participates in Estonian and international research and development programmes, carries out scientific and technological cooperation with domestic and international partners;
   4.4. participates in teaching students of all levels of higher education within the scope of its competence, according to teaching needs and research directions;
   4.5. makes suggestions to relevant decision-making bodies of the university about the organisation of teaching and studies in genomics and related fields;
   4.6. participates in conducting teaching and studies and supervising graduate students at the university;
   4.7. is a practical training base for students;
   4.8. performs other tasks that contribute to the performance of the main task of the institution.
5. As controller of the Estonian Biobank, the institution collects data on the health of the Estonian population and genetic information concerning the Estonian population, promotes genetic research and applies the results of genetic research to improve public health. To this end, the institution
5.1. organises the taking of tissue samples of the biobank;
5.2. organises the preparing of descriptions of the state of health and genealogies of the biobank’s gene donors;
5.3. organises the collecting, storing and destroying of the tissue samples of the biobank’s gene donors;
5.4. collects, codes, stores, decodes, issues and destroys data on the state of health and genetic data of the biobank’s gene donors;
5.5. collects, codes, stores, decodes and destroys data, which can be regarded as genealogical information;
5.6. ensures that databases are maintained and processed in accordance with data protection requirements pursuant to the Human Genes Research Act, Public Information Act and other legislation;
5.7. organises genetic counselling for members of the public and the gene donors of the Estonian Biobank;
5.8. organises the quality control of data collection;
5.9. organises conferences and seminars; promotes research achievements and informs the public about its activities;
5.10. performs other tasks which contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the university as the controller of the Estonian Biobank.

6. The name of the institution in English is Institute of Genomics, University of Tartu.

7. The institution comprises the following work organisation units
7.1. Estonian Genome Centre,
7.11. Estonian Biobank Innovation Centre, [effective as of 8 November 2019]
7.2. Estonian Biocentre,
7.3. Core Facility,
7.4. Estonian Biobank.

8. The Estonian Biobank and the Estonian Biocentre have their own insignia in accordance with the procedure established by the university.

II. Governance

9. The institution is run by the director, who is elected for a term of five years by the senate in an open competition pursuant to the procedure established by the rector. A person who applies for the position of the director of institution must hold a doctoral degree or an equivalent qualification in the field of activity of the institution and have management experience in a research institution. A fixed-term employment contract is made with the director of institution. During absence, the director is substituted by one of the vice directors on the proposal of the director on the basis of the directive of the rector.

10. The director of institution:
10.1. represents the university within the scope of authority granted by the rector;
10.2. is responsible for the general status and development of the institution and manages the work of the institution by ensuring the lawful and expedient use of money and other assets;
10.3. directs the development of the institution’s strategic plan;
10.4. submits the draft budget of the institution to the council of the institution for approval;
10.5. manages the activities of the institution;
10.6. appoints the specific persons who perform coding or decoding of the database of the Estonian Biobank, who have access to the consent of gene donors, to the collection of tissue samples and descriptions of DNA, to the descriptions of state of health and to genealogies, and who issue coded or uncoded tissue samples, descriptions of DNA and descriptions of state of health;
10.7. establishes the prices of paid services provided by the institution;
10.8. hires three vice directors who manage the Estonian Genome Centre, Estonian Biobank Innovation Centre and Estonian Biocentre, and determines their duties; [effective as of 8 November 2019]
10.9. appoints the heads of the Core Facility and the Estonian Biobank, who manage work in their units;
10.10. approves the appointment of the heads of internal work organisation units of the Estonian Genome Centre, Estonian Biobank Innovation Centre and Estonian Biocentre on the proposal of the respective vice director; [effective as of 8 November 2019]
10.11. performs other duties that are necessary for carrying out the statutory tasks and ensuring the successful operation of the institution.

11. The director of institution is entitled to sign, on behalf of the university, within the limits of the budget of the institution and for the purpose of performing the statutory tasks of the institution, taking into consideration the bylaws of the university:

11.1. contracts for the supply of services to provide services to natural persons; 
[effective as of 15 June 2018]
11.2. [repealed as of 15 June 2018]
11.3. contracts for providing laboratory services;
11.4. [repealed as of 15 June 2018]
11.5. contracts for use to take into use movable property;
11.6. cooperation agreements on issues regarding the activities of the institution, incl. the Estonian Biobank, excl. agreements made in the framework of projects funded by the European Union institutions;
11.7. agreements with data collectors of the Estonian Biobank.
11.8. contracts for the grant of rights to use the data and biological material of the Estonian Biobank;
11.9. personal data confidentiality agreements made in the course of scientific research;
11.10. licence agreements to take into use intellectual property that is protected by copyright; 
[effective as of 15 June 2018]
11.11. grant agreements with the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, the Council of the Gambling Tax, local governments and associations of local governments; and to sign applications and other documents, incl. reports and requests for payment, submitted in connection with these agreements. [effective as of 15 June 2018]

111. The right of the director of institution to enter on behalf of the university into contracts for purchasing movables and ordering services that are necessary for the institution is provided in the Procurement Rules. [effective as of 15 June 2018]

12. The institution has a council, the composition of which is approved by the rector on the proposal of the director of institution. The council chair is the director of institution.

13. The council comprises the director and vice directors of the institution as ex officio members, five representatives of employees and three research staff members of related specialisations on the proposal of the director of institution.
14. Employees of the institution elect representatives from among themselves to the council by a secret vote every three years in May. The director of the institution announces the elections and the deadline for submission of candidates at least two weeks before the elections. Candidates may be submitted by employees of the institution. Each voter has two votes. The election results are approved in the form of a ranking list. If multiple candidates receive an equal number of votes, their ranking is determined by drawing lots.

15. The mandate of the elected representatives starts as of the beginning of July. The mandate of the employees’ representatives runs until new representatives take office. If a council member is unable to participate in the work of the council, the rector, on the proposal of the director of the institution, may appoint the next person in the ranking list to substitute for the withdrawn council member until the withdrawn member returns, but no longer than until the next elections.

16. Council meetings are convened by the chair as needed, but at least four times a year. The council chair will also call a council meeting at the request of at least 1/3 of the council members. The council has a quorum if more than half of the council members are present at the meeting. The decision is deemed adopted if more than half of the members present at the meeting have voted for it. A decision of the electronic meeting is adopted, if more than half of the council members have voted for it.

17. The council
   17.1. adopts the strategic plan of the institution, which is consistent with the strategic plan of the university;
   17.2. approves the research and development directions, research topics, and the research and development report of the institution;
   17.3. elects the ordinary research staff, excluding research professors, of the institution pursuant to the procedure provided in the university’s bylaws;
   17.4. analyses the organisation of research and teaching or studies in areas overlapping with and adjacent to genomics research at the university, and makes suggestions to the dean of the respective faculty and/or the senate on the organisation of research and teaching or studies;
   17.5. may submit to the senate outstanding research and researchers for awards, for election as a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences, and make corresponding recommendations;
   17.6. approves the institution’s budget allocations in accordance with the university’s budget approved by the council of the university, and the budget implementation report of the institution;
   17.7. forms an opinion on candidates to the position of research professors;
   17.8. hears the activity report and the research overview of the institution’s work organisation units;
   17.9. establishes the rules of procedure of the council;
   17.10. approves the composition of the international advisory board of the institution;
   17.11. on the proposal of the director of institution or other council members, discusses other matters related to the institution, and forms an opinion on these matters;
   17.12. performs other tasks imposed on the council by legislation and bylaws.

18. The processing of tissue samples, descriptions of DNA, descriptions of state of health, genealogies, genetic data and data enabling the identification of gene donors is evaluated by the Ethics Committee. The Ethics Committee proceeds in its activities from generally accepted ethical standards and international conventions.
19. Members of the Ethics Committee are appointed and the statutes of the Ethics Committee are approved by the rector. Members of the Ethics Committee must be renowned experts in their field, who possess the knowledge and impeccable reputation needed to perform the duties of a member of the Ethics Committee.

20. The institution has an international advisory board comprising up to five members, who are top scientists and specialists; the composition of the advisory board is approved by the council on the proposal of the director; the advisory board meets once a year to evaluate the activities and the strategic plan of the institution, and advises the director and the council of the institution on the choice of research and development directions and makes recommendations on other matters.

III. Assets and financing

21. The university council approves the budget of the institution as a part of the university’s budget at the time of adopting the university’s budget.

22. The assets of the institution are the property of the university.

23. The activities of the institution are funded from state budget allocations, allocations for the implementation of targeted projects, funds received for provision of paid services related to main activities, from donations and other resources.

24. The institution has the right to provide paid services arising from its main activities; the money gained from the provision of such services is used for financing the statutory activities of the institution.

IV. Reporting and supervision

25. The director of institution reports to the senate, the rector and the vice rector for research.

26. The activities of the institution are supervised pursuant to the law and the procedure established by the university.

V. Amendment of statutes

27. The statutes and amendments to the statutes of the institution are approved by the rector.

VI. Implementing provisions

28. Until 31 May 2018, the director of the University of Tartu Estonian Genome Centre performs the functions of the director of the Institute of Genomics. The election of the director of institution takes place in April 2018 at the latest. The term of office of the elected director runs until 31 December 2020, because pursuant to senate resolution no. 47 of 29 September 2017, a new institute will be established within the Faculty of Science and Technology on the basis of the institution as of 1 January 2021.

29. From 1 January 2018 to 31 January 2018, the council of the University of Tartu Estonian Genome Centre performs the functions of the council of the Institute of Genomics. The election of staff representatives to the council of the institution takes place in January 2018 pursuant to the procedure provided in the statutes, including the following specific terms. The academic staff members of the Estonian Genome Centre and Estonian Biocentre elect two representatives of their departments, and the employees of the Estonian Biobank and Core Facility jointly elect one representative to the council. Each voter has one vote. The election results are approved in the form of separate ranking lists for the Estonian Genome Centre and Estonian Biocentre, and
a joint ranking list for the Estonian Biobank and Core Facility. The mandate of the elected representatives starts on 1 February 2018 and is in force until 31 December 2020.

30. The Statutes of the University of Tartu Estonian Genome Centre, approved by the rector’s decree no. 26 of 30 December 2013, and amended by decrees no. 14 of 14 August 2015 and no. 64 of 10 December 2015, are hereby revoked.

31. The statutes take effect on 1 January 2018.