

Code of Conduct Policy

December 2016

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct Policy applies to all employees of the University and is intended to provide guidance on expectations and standards in relation to working within the University. As well as understanding the terms of this policy, employees should also make themselves familiar with the terms of their contract of employment particularly the paragraphs referring to Exclusivity of Service and Confidentiality.
- 1.2 The University is justifiably proud of the quality and commitment of its employees and expects the highest standards of conduct from them. All employees are expected to promote and protect the interests of the University in day to day business. This policy aims to reflect the values of the University and outlines key principles about the way employees should carry out their responsibilities.
- 1.3 If an employee's working standards and/or behaviour do not comply with the requirements outlined within this policy the University will consider whether the employee's conduct warrants the application of the University's Disciplinary Procedure, Dignity at Work Policy or Equality at Work Policy

2. Standards of Work and Behaviour

- 2.1 No matter what type of work employees undertake, it is a requirement of employment that University regulations, systems and procedures are adhered to. In many instances these are designed to prevent fraud and corruption and to protect employees themselves from suspicion of malpractice.
- 2.2 All employees have a duty to use the funds and resources entrusted to them in a responsible and lawful manner and should ensure that the University receives value for money in all transactions.
- 2.3 Employees are ambassadors of the University and their behaviour both internally and externally can have a direct impact on the University's reputation. Behaviour that is likely to bring the University into disrepute or adversely affect the work or well-being of colleagues or students will not be tolerated.

3. Personal Relationships

- 3.1 The University values and relies upon the professional integrity of relationships between employees and in the employee/student relationship. In order that University business is conducted in a professional manner it is necessary to distinguish between, and take account of, personal relationships which overlap with professional ones.
- 3.2 Standards relating to personal relationships are to ensure that employees do not commit acts of impropriety, bias, abuse of authority or conflict of interest and do not lay themselves open to allegations that they have done so.
- 3.3 In the context of this document, a **personal** relationship is defined as:
 - immediate family relationships

- a business/commercial/financial relationship or
- a sexual/romantic/intimate relationship

4. Relationships between employees and students

- 4.1 The University believes that the professional relationship between an employee and a student is vital to a student's educational development and affirms that the teaching relationship is based on trust, confidence and dependency. In this context a professional relationship is defined as one where there is an assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching or pastoral role or a role providing administrative or technical support. Students are entitled to equality of treatment and it is important that a personal relationship between an employee and a student is not perceived by others to prejudice that equality of treatment.
- 4.2 Employees are strongly discouraged from entering into a sexual/romantic/intimate relationship with a student for whom they have a responsibility for assessing, supervising, tutoring, teaching, for pastoral care or for whom they are required to provide administrative or technical support. In addition employees are not permitted to enter into a sexual/romantic/intimate relationship with a student under the age of 18 or a vulnerable adult in line with the University's obligations under the Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.3 Any employee who enters into a sexual/romantic/intimate relationship with a student should disclose this to their Director/Dean/Line Manager. This applies to relationships with all students not just those under the age of 18.
- 4.4 Furthermore, employees should not enter into a business, commercial or financial relationship with a student which could compromise, or could be perceived to compromise, the objectivity and professional standing of the teaching relationship.
- 4.5 Staff may seek guidance on the implementation of this Code, on a confidential basis, from the Head of Human Resources, their HR Partner, the Head of Student Services or their trade union representative.

5. Relationships between employees

- 5.1 Although the existence of a personal relationship between employees does not constitute a bar to the employment or promotion of either party, employees should declare to their line manager any personal relationships which may give rise to a real or perceived conflict of interest, trust or breach of confidentiality.
- 5.2 Employees in a personal relationship should not work together in any circumstance whereby a conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage may be perceived to be gained from the overlap of a personal and professional relationship. In any such circumstances, the relationship must be declared in confidence, to their Dean/Director. The manager to whom the information is disclosed may make alternative management arrangements and confirm them in writing to the individuals concerned. If it is considered unavoidable to inform other employees about the relationship in order to explain a change in management arrangements, this will be discussed with the individuals concerned, before it is disclosed.

6. Declaration of personal relationships where they overlap with professional roles

- 6.1 Employees who are uncertain about whether they should take action regarding a personal relationship are invited to seek guidance in confidence, from the Head of Human Resources, their HR Partner or their trade union representative.
- 6.2 A case whereby any personal relationship as defined within this code, is not declared and results in an unfair advantage or disadvantage to either of the parties to the relationship (be they an employee or a student), will be considered a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.
- 6.3 In line with the University's recruitment procedure, existing employees who are selected to attend an interview panel are asked to declare whether they have a conflict of interest with any of the interviewees. Failure to declare a conflict of interest in this regard will be considered a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action.

7. Dignity at Work

- 7.1 The University will not tolerate harassment or bullying at work. The University's Dignity at Work Policy is a statement of current policy and the University's ongoing commitment to aim to provide and to promote a working environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity, where no-one feels threatened or intimidated and where everyone can do their work free from harassment and/or bullying.
- 7.2 If an employee experiences or witnesses harassment or bullying at work the University advises that the employee seeks guidance from the Dignity at Work Policy or their relevant Human Resources Partner.

8. Bribery Act 2010

- 8.1 The University is committed to complying with the Bribery Act 2010 in its business activities both in the UK and overseas and has conducted a Risk Assessment in relation to its core activities.
- 8.2 In the following paragraphs of this section where a reference is made to employees it will also include temporary workers, consultants, agents, contractors, suppliers and subsidiaries of the University, based both within and outside of the UK.
- 8.3 In line with the Act, employees of the University must not offer, promise, give, request, agree to receive, or accept any bribes:
- in the course of their employment;
 - when conducting University business; or
 - when representing the University in any capacity.
- 8.4 A bribe is defined as a financial payment or other form of reward or advantage that is intended to influence an individual, company or public body to perform their functions improperly. Improper performance includes:
- not acting in good faith;
 - not acting impartially; and

- not acting in accordance with a position of trust.

- 8.5 It is also an offence for employees to bribe a foreign public official in order to obtain or retain business or an advantage in the conduct of business.
- 8.6 Employees are required to take particular care to ensure that all University records are accurately maintained in relation to any contracts, business activities, including financial invoices and all payment transactions with clients, suppliers and public officials. Furthermore, employees should ensure that where a third party is involved in representing the University, the third party also has an adequate Bribery Policy / procedures in place to prevent bribery.
- 8.7 Due diligence should be undertaken by employees and associated persons prior to entering into any contract, arrangement or relationship with a potential supplier of services, agent, consultant or representative. Where the type of contract, arrangement or relationship is outside of the University's core activities, a separate Risk Assessment should be conducted and recorded. In all circumstances, the University's Purchasing Policy should be followed.
- 8.8 Employees should be aware that an offence is committed even where the bribe has not been given; an offer or promise is sufficient for liability to arise.
- 8.9 Any employee who commits an offence under the Bribery Act may be subject to a legal penalty, that could include an unlimited fine or up to 10 years imprisonment, as well as action under the University's Disciplinary Policy.
- 8.10 Employees should report any suspicious conduct that they believe may constitute bribery following the procedures laid out in the University's Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy and Procedure.
- 8.11 Corporate entertainment, gifts, hospitality and promotional expenditure are not included in the scope of the Bribery Act and are considered in section 9 below.

9.0 Acceptance of Gifts or Hospitality

- 9.1 Employees are not permitted to accept gifts or any rewards for the carrying out of their duties or for the showing of favour, or disfavour to any student, supplier or other person associated with the University.
- 9.2 Likewise hospitality should only be accepted where the employee is representing the University in a corporate rather than personal capacity.
- 9.3 The University's Gifts and Hospitality Policy outlines the standards and procedure relating to the acceptance of gifts or hospitality. Employees, therefore, should refer to this policy if they are unsure as to whether or not they are able to accept an offer of a gift or hospitality.

10. Financial Interests

- 10.1 Employees must declare in writing to the Principal and Vice Chancellor any financial or non-financial interests, which could bring about conflict with the University's interests. It is a further requirement that employees declare any financial interest that they or their spouse or partner may have in an existing or proposed contract with the University.

11. Responsibilities of Employees Involved in Tendering Processes

- 11.1 Employees involved in tendering processes and contracts must, at all times, act in a professional and open manner in their dealings with contractors and suppliers of services. Fairness and impartiality must be exercised on all occasions with due regard being given to ensuring the University receives value for money. Employees who are privy to confidential information on tenders or costs for contractors should not disclose information to any unauthorised party or organisation. No special favour should be shown to former employees or relatives thereof, in awarding contracts to businesses run by them.

12. Reporting of Bad Practice, Misconduct, Suspicion of Fraud or Corruption

- 12.1 The University is committed to the elimination of fraud and corruption and is determined to protect itself from such unlawful activities whether they are attempted by internal or external parties or individuals.
- 12.2 Employees are expected, without fear of recrimination, to bring to the attention of their line manager any instances of bad practice or misconduct that may bring the University into disrepute. Further to this employees must report to their line manager any suspicion of fraud, corruption or malpractice. In some instances it may be more appropriate to report any concerns to the Principal.
- 12.3 If an employee wishes to bring any issues in this regard to the University's attention they should follow the procedure outlined in the University's Whistleblowing (Public Interest Disclosure) Policy and Procedure.

13. Summary

- 13.1 This Code is not designed to cover every eventuality. Its purpose is to outline the standards expected of employees; it does not replace statutory or contractual requirements. It also confirms that the University will deal with any instances of misconduct or fraudulent behaviour. If any employee is uncertain of the conduct expected of them they should consult their line manager or the Head of Human Resources/HR Partner.
- 13.2 Employees should note that failure to follow and adhere to the standards set out in this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal. Full details can be found within the University's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 13.3 If employees have any concerns related to matters outlined in this policy they should follow the guidance here within but may also wish to refer to the University's Grievance Procedure.