

Code of Conduct Policy

1 Purpose

To provide a framework for University Members to identify and resolve issues concerning the ethical conduct of individuals at the University.

2 Scope

This Policy, the Code of Conduct ('the Code') applies to:

- all professional and academic Employees of the University whether full-time or fractional, continuing, fixed-term, or casual
- members of the University Council and University Committees
- visiting and adjunct academics
- volunteers who contribute to University activities or who act on behalf of the University.

In addition, individuals who are granted access to University facilities or who are engaged in providing services to the University, such as contractors and consultants, are also expected to comply with applicable provisions of the Code.

In places where the Code is applicable to all of the above members of the University community, the general term 'University Member(s)' is used.

Exclusions:

This Policy does not apply to Students. Students are referred to the Student General Conduct Policy and the Student General Misconduct Procedure. Complaints are managed in accordance with the Student Grievance Resolution Procedure.

3 Policy Statement

The University's Code aims to foster and maintain public trust and confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the University by expecting that University Members will:

- maintain appropriate standards of conduct
- develop those skills necessary for the efficient performance of their duties

- maintain fairness in Decision making
- maintain and enhance the reputation of the University
- adhere to appropriate ethical standards.

The personal and professional behaviour of University Members should conform to the standards that reasonably could be expected of persons in such positions. This includes:

- a commitment by Employees to professional standards in teaching, research, administration and community involvement
- a commitment to the ethics principles and values for public officials, as defined in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- the promotion of the rights of Employees and Students within the University, consistent with the *Human Rights Act 2019*
- conduct which is professional and which has regard to the University's interests and policies
- conduct which will not compromise either their position or the University's position
- a commitment that the University will be regarded as the focal point of the professional life of Employees
- a commitment that academic Employees will be available to ensure that the academic needs of Students are met
- a commitment to encouraging the appropriate reporting of wrongdoing
- the promotion of an environment that supports the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

The Code operates in conjunction with common and statute law and does not exclude or replace the rights and obligations of any individual under common and statute law. At any time, an Employee can lodge a Complaint with an external agency as appropriate.

4 Principles

In all professional actions, and in all dealings with University Members, Students and the community, individuals will be guided by the University's core values, University plans, policies and other documents in the Policy Library, the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*, and the public good.

The obligations contained in the Code are derived from the four fundamental ethical principles as set out in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. These principles are:

- commitment to the system of government

- integrity and impartiality
- promoting the public good
- accountability and transparency.

All individuals covered under the Code have obligations that directly relate to these principles. The obligations contained in this Policy define the standards of conduct required by all individuals.

4.1 Commitment to the system of government

This ethical principle assumes a system of government based on the rule of law and accountability.

4.1.1 Compliance with the law

All University Members have an obligation to uphold the system of government, observe the State and Commonwealth laws and to comply with the University Act, Policies and Procedures. In addition, they have an obligation when travelling abroad to respect and abide by the customs and laws of the host country.

4.2 Integrity and impartiality

This ethical principle recognises that University Members are placed in a position of trust and are expected to be honest, fair and impartial when carrying out their duties to maintain public confidence in the University, act in good faith and show respect towards all persons.

4.2.1 Respect for persons

The conduct of University Members in their dealings with others including Employees of the University, Students, external organisations and members of the community is covered within the integrity and impartiality ethical principle. The University of Southern Queensland supports the principles of procedural fairness and values social justice, equal opportunity and the provision of a safe and supportive working environment, and as such all University Members are required to treat others fairly, honestly and responsively, and with proper regard for their rights and obligations.

University Members are required to:

- promote a high standard of respect for all Students, Employees and the general community;
- treat other Employees and Students with courtesy and fairness;
- be responsive and prompt in dealing with other Employees, Students and the general community;
- when supervising Employees, create a fair and just working environment;

- observe procedural fairness when engaged in Decision making;
- not engage in discriminatory conduct on grounds such as gender, sex, race, disability, cultural background, religion, age or political conviction;
- not engage in behaviour which may reasonably be perceived as Workplace Bullying and Harassment, intimidation or Harassment;
- have respect for cultural differences; ~~and~~
- respect the privacy of others in the collection, use and access of Personal Information whilst performing University duties or activities. ~~;~~
- not engage in or support another person to engage in Speech that is subject to any restriction Imposed by Law; and
- not engage in or support another person to engage in Hate Speech.

4.2.2 Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

University Members must avoid situations in which their private interests, whether Pecuniary, personal or otherwise, might reasonably be thought to create a potential, perceived or actual Conflict of Interest with their duties to the University. There is an expectation that individuals must identify, declare and manage perceived, potential or actual Conflicts of Interest.

Any matter that could directly or indirectly compromise the performance of duties, or conflict with the University's interests must be immediately declared to the Employee's Supervisor or other senior Employee in the first instance and steps taken to resolve the conflict situation.

Where an Employee is unsure about the potential for a conflict, they should discuss the situation with their Supervisor or other senior Employee as appropriate. Further advice should be sought from the Director, ~~Integrity and Professional Conduct.~~ (Workplace Relations). Where doubt exists, the Conflict of Interest must be declared. Where there is a clear case of conflict, the individual must withdraw from the situation giving rise to the conflict.

Situations that may generate a Conflict of Interest can arise out of:

- personal/sexual relationships with Students
- personal/sexual relationships with other Employees
- personal/sexual relationships with persons with whom the University is dealing, for example contractors or tenderers
- personal financial interests in matters which involve the University
- outside employment that may compromise the integrity of the University
- use of confidential Information obtained in the course of University duties

- external activities and public comment, i.e. nominating for and contesting political elections.

Where a University Member has a concern regarding a perceived, potential or actual Conflict of Interest involving other members of the University community, this should be reported to their Supervisor, where appropriate. An Employee may also report their Conflict of Interest concerns through the Public Interest Disclosure Policy, or to the Director, ~~Integrity and Professional Conduct.~~ (Workplace Relations).

The Conflict of Interest Procedure provides further detailed Information on identifying, declaring and managing a Conflict of Interest.

4.2.3 Academic freedom

The obligations under 4.1 of this Policy are not intended to detract from the concepts of intellectual and academic freedom and the rights of free speech. It is recognised and acknowledged that guarantees of intellectual and academic freedom are essential to the proper functioning of University culture. These rights are linked to the responsibilities of University Members and Students to support the role of the University as a place of independent learning and thought where ideas may be put forward and opinions expressed freely. Academic freedom, however, carries with it the duty of University Members to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for and dissemination of knowledge and truth. This section should be read in conjunction with Section 4.2.7 Public Comment

4.2.4 Personal relationships

Employees must declare to the University, any situation which may require them to supervise, teach and/or Assess a Student with whom they currently or previously have had a personal, commercial, familial or other significant relationship. Where a relationship has created, or has the potential to create, a conflict, the Employee must immediately terminate any supervisory or Assessment role and make alternative arrangements for the supervision/Assessment of the Student's work. The Conflict of Interest Procedure provides further Information.

Employees must also declare to the University any personal relationships with a current or prospective Employee which may give rise to a perceived, potential or actual Conflict of Interest. Examples of a Conflict of Interest may include:

- influencing the recruitment, selection, appointment or promotion of Employees
- impinging on employment related Decisions where one Employee is in a supervisory relationship to another.

Employees who become involved in a situation where a personal relationship is a source of perceived, potential or actual Conflict of Interest must declare this to their Supervisor in the first instance and withdraw from the situation giving rise to the conflict.

4.2.5 Privacy and confidentiality

University Members must respect the privacy of others and ensure that Personal Information is accessed and used only for University purposes and not disclosed except where authorised by legislation. Employees who have access to such Information have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of such Information, irrespective of the storage medium. Any actual or suspected misuse of private Information must be reported to a Supervisor or other appropriate person.

4.2.6 External activities and engagement with the community

University Members may be members of political parties, professional or other interests or charitable groups, and honest, fair and respectful engagement with the wider community is encouraged provided that the involvement does not conflict with their duties.

University Members must ensure that they disclose and manage any potential Conflicts of Interest that may arise as a result of any duties owed to other organisations, e.g. as a member of a board of directors of another organisation.

4.2.7 Public comment

Public comment by University Members in their capacity as private citizens is permitted provided that any such comment makes it clear that the view expressed is their own and not necessarily the view of the University. Where public comments are offered by academic or research Employees it is expected that such comment will normally lie within their field of expertise. Public comment on any University management issue must be made by the Vice-Chancellor or a person authorised by the Vice-Chancellor. Comment on matters concerning the University Council must be made only by the Chancellor or the Vice-Chancellor.

4.2.8 Receipt of benefits

University Members should discourage the receipt of any Gifts and/or Benefits in connection with their employment or position except where this may arise in an official capacity. In this case, all such Gifts and/or Benefits must be disclosed in accordance with the Gifts and Benefits Procedure.

University Members must disclose to the University any financial interest they may have in any organisation from which the University proposes to obtain services or equipment or enter into any contract which would result in a financial transaction.

University Members must ensure that where contracts are proposed through their area of expertise with external organisations, that any close personal relationship between an Employee and an officer of that organisation must be disclosed.

4.2.9 Research conduct

Employees undertaking or assisting research should do so in a manner consistent with intellectual honesty and the public interest. Research should be designed to enhance

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Complying with the law and observing Policy and Procedure is a condition of working and/or studying at the University. A hard copy of this electronic document is uncontrolled and may not be current as the University regularly reviews and updates its Policies and Policy Instruments. The latest controlled version can be found in the University's [Policy and Procedure Library](#).

knowledge in the particular field of scholarship, it should employ sound methodology, and the accuracy and integrity of data should be safeguarded. Harm to experimental subjects must be avoided, and the ethical principle of voluntary Informed Consent to research participation by human subjects must be respected. The ideas, Information or intellectual contribution of others must be acknowledged appropriately and the intellectual property of others respected.

4.2.10 Outside work

Employees are permitted to engage in outside work, paid or unpaid, in accordance with the Outside Work Procedure. Employees must ensure that applicable approvals are sought and obtained. Outside work must not be undertaken which may cause a Conflict of Interest with University duties.

4.3 Promoting the public good

This ethical principle recognises that University Members have an obligation to deliver programs and services of the highest quality to advance the good of the University community. It requires University Members to exercise proper care and attention in performing their duties, to carry out their duties to the best of their ability and to ensure that University resources are used economically and efficiently. This includes the following:

4.3.1 Carrying out of duties and standards of performance

All University Members will, where reasonably practicable:

- carry out official Decisions and policies faithfully and impartially
- carry out official directions and policies in a faithful and impartial manner
- seek high standards in teaching, research, community service, administration and governance
- create a safe work environment
- adhere to professional codes of conduct where applicable
- report fraudulent or Corrupt Conduct appropriately
- act within the limits of their delegated authority
- take reasonable steps to protect confidential Information
- take reasonable steps to ensure compliance with the University's Intellectual Property Policy and subordinate Procedures
- give due credit to the contributions of Employees and Students
- Assess all Students' work fairly and objectively
- maintain their professional skills and keep up to date in their area of expertise

- ensure they are informed of University policies and guidelines
- value and seek to achieve excellence in service delivery to the University community.

4.4 Accountability and transparency

This principle requires University Members to exercise proper diligence, care and attention in their work with a commitment to managing resources in an effective and accountable way and operating within a framework of mutual obligation and shared responsibility.

4.4.1 Duty of care

Proper care and attention should be exercised when undertaking activities, in particular where others will rely on the advice or Information offered.

Employees have a duty to take reasonable care and to avoid causing harm to others and must follow safe working practices and actively promote safe working conditions. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that activities within their areas are undertaken with due diligence for health and safety of Employees, Students and others.

Any Employee who threatens, harasses or abuses a family or household member at, or from, the workplace may be subject to disciplinary action. If an Employee is observed or suspected of perpetrating Family and Domestic Violence from the workplace, Supervisors have a responsibility to enact appropriate action.

4.4.2 University resources

University Members have a responsibility to ensure that University resources are used efficiently and effectively and for legitimate purposes and waste should be avoided.

Email and internet activity by Employees must be conducted in a professional manner for legitimate University business and with due regard and respect for other persons. It is recognised that Employees occasionally may need to use University resources for private purposes, e.g. making the occasional telephone call. Employees must ensure such use is kept to a minimum.

Employees must comply with the Financial Management Practice Manual on financial and asset management.

Equipment and materials should be treated with care and secured against theft.

Employees must at all times act within the limits of their delegated authority.

4.4.3 Alcohol/drug abuse

University Members must ensure that personal use of alcohol or other drugs does not affect the performance of their duties or the safety and well-being of others and must comply with all provisions and requirements of the University's Enterprise Agreement.

4.5 Non-compliance with this Code

The Code regulates the behaviour of University Members and also forms part of each Employee's employment conditions.

Where a University member is aware of or suspects a breach of this Code, they must immediately report the breach in accordance with University Policy Instruments. The University Member is able to withdraw the Complaint. However, the University may be required to investigate as required by legislation.

Failure to comply with the Code's provisions will be managed and dealt with under the relevant University Policy Instruments and employment contracts as applicable. A failure to comply with this Code may result in disciplinary action.

Individuals other than Employees who do not comply with this Code may have their association with the University terminated, or have their right or access to the University services, facilities or infrastructure revoked.

Some breaches may also have consequences for individuals under criminal or civil jurisdictions.

The University may take action against a person(s) making a frivolous or vexatious Complaint. Any Employee found to have made such a Complaint may be subject to the University's disciplinary Procedures according to the provisions of their relevant employment contract.

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Policy Information

Accountable Officer	Vice-Chancellor
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer
Policy Type	Governance Policy

Policy Suite	Employee Health and Wellbeing Procedure Gifts and Benefits Procedure Modern Slavery Prevention Procedure
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	4/12/2025
Effective Date	4/12/2025
Review Date	3/4/2024
Relevant Legislation	<u>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991</u> <u>Corporations Act 2001</u> <u>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</u> <u>Criminal Code (Qld)</u> <u>Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)</u> <u>Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000</u> <u>Higher Education Support Act 2003</u> <u>Human Rights Act 2019</u> <u>Information Privacy Act 2009</u> <u>Integrity Act 2009</u> <u>Public Governance, Performance and Accountability (Consequential and Transitional Provisions) Act 2014</u> <u>Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010</u> <u>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</u> <u>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</u> <u>Right to Information Act 2009</u> <u>Enterprise Agreement</u>
Policy Exceptions	<u>Policy Exceptions Register</u>

Related Policies	Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy Acceptable use of ICT Resources Policy Council Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure Employee Complaints Policy Employee Diversity and Inclusion Policy Fraud and Corruption Management Policy Intellectual Property Policy Media Engagement Policy National Security Policy Public Interest Disclosure Policy Research Code of Conduct Policy Social Media Policy Student General Conduct Policy Student Grievance Resolution Policy Work Health and Safety Policy
Related Procedures	Children on Campus Procedure Commercialisation of Intellectual Property Procedure Conflict of Interest Procedure Employee Complaints (Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Sex Discrimination) Procedure Employee Complaints Procedure Employee Family and Domestic Violence Support Procedure Intellectual Property Procedure Media Engagement Procedure National Security Procedure

	Outside Work Procedure Sanctions and Export Controls Procedure Smoke-Free Procedure Social Media Procedure Student General Misconduct Procedure Student Grievance Resolution Procedure Working with Children Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Charter of University Governance Committees of Council Conflict of Interest Website Employee Complaints Form Your Call Website and Your Call Report Form Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Financial Management Practice Manual
Definitions	Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary Antisemitism Assess Assessment Complaint Conflict of Interest Corrupt Conduct Decision Delegate (noun) Employee Enterprise Agreement

	Family and Domestic Violence Gift and/or Benefit Harassment Information Media Non-Pecuniary Interest Pecuniary Interest Personal Information Policy Policy Instrument Procedure Racism <u>Speech</u> Student University University Members Workplace Bullying and Harassment
	Definitions that relate to this policy only
	<u>Hate Speech</u> <u>Hate Speech is expression in Speech that is in breach of the <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)</i>, the <i>Criminal Code (Qld)</i>, the <i>Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Cth)</i> or the <i>Criminal Code Act 1995 (Cth)</i> or that amounts to Antisemitism.</u> <u>Imposed by Law</u> <u>In relation to restrictions or burdens or conditions on a freedom, includes, without limitations, restrictions, burdens or conditions imposed by statute law, the common law, the law of defamation, duties of confidentiality, restrictions deriving</u>

	<u>from intellectual property law and restrictions imposed by contract.</u> Official Duties Job requirements as stated in an Employee's position description, duty statement or contract of employment. Supervisor Any person responsible for leading the activities or others. In the context of this Policy, a Supervisor includes Employees at any classification level or title who have responsibilities for leading, managing or supervising work teams and/or individual Employees. University Responsibilities University Responsibilities include administrative obligations derived from: • <i>Financial Accountability Act 2009</i> • <i>Financial and Performance Management Standard 2019</i> • <i>University of Southern Queensland Financial Management Practice Manual</i> • <i>Right to Information Act 2009</i> • <i>Crime and Corruption Act 2001</i> • <i>Judicial Review Act 1991</i> • <i>Libraries Act 1988</i> • <i>University of Southern Queensland Act 1998</i> • <i>Queensland Procurement Policy</i>, and • Individual's contract of employment. They also include ethics obligations derived from: • <i>Public Sector Ethics Act 1994</i> Performance obligations are derived from instructions for the task in hand.
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