

# CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

## SUMMARY

This policy sets out the University's expectations of employees during their employment with the organisation. It is intended, alongside existing policies and procedures, to promote and maintain the highest standards of behaviour and conduct expected within the organisation.

The HR Team are here to support you. When you have read this document and associated relevant documents, which can be found on the final page, please do not hesitate to contact your local HR Business Partner for support and further advice.

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## **1.0 PURPOSE & SCOPE**

- 1.1 This policy applies to all those employed by The University of Law (the University), and any other applicable company. References to 'the University's people' in this policy should be read as anyone employed by any of these entities.

## **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 The University aims to provide a working environment which will allow employees to fulfil their personal potential. We are committed to the creation and maintenance of a supportive and inclusive environment, where employees are encouraged to form mutually rewarding relationships.
- 2.2 The University has legitimate concerns about conduct insofar as it can affect the good order, good running, good standing, and/or reputation of the organisation, and insofar as any breach of conduct can affect the work performance of its employees.
- 2.3 This policy covers all areas where an employee's conduct raises questions about conflict of interest, trust and/or confidentiality which may occur. Such conflicts may arise in relation to the following areas:
- Line management and supervision of employees, including career progression and learning and development
  - Management of organisational funds and other resources
  - Management of confidential information
  - Access to confidential information
  - Relationships with students
  - Safeguarding of students who are under 18 or vulnerable adults
  - Recruitment of employees
  - Unacceptable behaviours exhibited to colleagues, clients, students or individuals who come into contact with the organisation
  - Contractual matters including employment.
- 2.4 This list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive.
- 2.5 This policy should be read alongside the Role and Responsibilities document appropriate for the staff members' career level.

## **3.0 STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOUR**

- 3.1 All employees are required to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Conduct policy and should act in accordance with the principles set out in it.
- 3.2 All employees have a duty:
- To act professionally and reasonably and according to the law
  - To recognise ethical standards governing the legal and educational profession
  - To conduct themselves with integrity, impartiality and honesty, they should not deceive or knowingly mislead any stakeholder who comes into contact with the organisation
  - To respect all contributions, value diversity and celebrate success
  - To effectively and responsibly share information
  - To put the welfare of the student first, paying particular attention to the safeguarding of students under 18 or vulnerable adults

- To value learning and development
  - To focus on solutions, achieve goals and encourage innovation
- 3.3 The conduct referred to above applies to all modes of communication including verbal, electronic, written and body language. Purposeful lack of communication is considered to be just as unacceptable.
- 3.4 Employees who deal with the public should do so sympathetically, efficiently, promptly and without bias or maladministration. Employees should offer the public the highest standards of conduct and service.

#### **4.0 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

4.1 It is expected that all employees will:

- Comply with the University's policies and procedures
- Put the interests of the organisation above the organisation's individual, local or departmental interests
- Avoid any behaviour that is likely to bring the organisation into disrepute
- Take responsibility for the timely delivery of tasks within their remit, their own personal and professional development, their own (and others) health and safety
- Take responsibility for their own performance
- Communicate ideas and make positive suggestions for improvements to line managers
- Declare an interest to the HR Team if they are involved in the appointment of a prospective employee who is a relative or friend
- Declare an interest to a senior manager if they know on a personal basis any student studying at the University, in line with the Personal Relationships between Staff and Students Policy
- Maintain a strictly professional relationship only with current students
- Immediately declare any police investigation taking place into them and also declare any caution, conviction or similar that is received during their employment.

4.2 In working with colleagues, it is expected that employees will:

- Be polite and courteous at all times and seek to satisfy the needs of internal and external customers
- Comply with all aspects of the Equal Opportunities group of policies in giving particular regard to other people's requirements and in refraining from offensive language or behaviour.

4.3 It is also expected that all employees will, wherever possible:

- Attend meetings punctually and contribute constructively and positively to them
- Meet deadlines, whenever possible, and negotiate new deadlines if there are legitimate reasons why they cannot be met
- Reply to all forms of communication promptly, even if only to acknowledge and give a date for a full response
- Operate a clear (i.e. secure) desk/screen policy
- Comply with the University's data security procedures and IT policies
- Ensure that all premises and property are appropriately secured and protected at all times

- Ensure the proper, economical, effective and efficient use of resources
- Respect confidentiality and the right to dignity and privacy, particularly when dealing with sensitive matters
- Be supportive of colleagues and help them to learn and develop new skills
- Acknowledge and value the role of all colleagues
- Work with others to achieve a fast and effective resolution to any conflict arising between employees
- Present a professional and appropriate appearance as befits the reputation of the University.

## **5.0 CONFIDENTIALITY/ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

- 5.1 Employees have a general duty of confidentiality to the organisation. You are therefore required to protect work and work related information held in confidence.
- 5.2 Employees must not divulge any confidential information belonging to the organisation (except in the proper performance of their duties) to any person, or other company or organisation during or following termination of their employment.
- 5.3 Employees should be aware of their obligations regarding protection of data, guidance around which can be found within the IT group of policies.

## **6.0 REGISTRATION OF INTEREST**

- 6.1 The University requires all Board members, Directors and staff (permanent and temporary) to register any interests they have which may give rise to a conflict of interest or perception of a conflict of interest in the role which they perform.
- 6.2 Individuals are required to declare any professional, commercial, academic or other interest that may conflict or could be perceived to conflict with the interests of the organisation.
- 6.3 Individuals should refer to the Outside Working Policy and the associated Outside Working Application form for further information or speak to their manager.

## **7.0 HOSPITALITY REGISTER**

- 7.1 The University has a duty to ensure fairness and honesty in its relationships with its suppliers, contractors and service users. Whilst simple and basic hospitality can and should be viewed as a common courtesy, more formal or extensive hospitality may be suspected of influencing proper business relationships, and needs therefore to be open to scrutiny and audit.
- 7.2 The Organisation is required to maintain a Hospitality Register to record hospitality received by Directors, non-Executive Directors and employees, as detailed in the Financial Regulations.

## **8.0 HEALTH & SAFETY AND SECURITY**

- 8.1 All employees of the organisation have responsibilities under the Health and Safety Policy and the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 8.2 All employees must ensure that they take care of their own safety and that of their colleagues and any visitors to the organisation. Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility.
- 8.3 If any employee has any queries they should refer to the Health and Safety Policy or contact the relevant centre-specific Health and Safety Representative(s).

## **9.0 SUBSTANCE USE/MISUSE**

- 9.1 Employees shall not attend work whilst under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or other substances. For full details employees should refer to the Alcohol and Drugs Policy or contact the HR Team.

## **10.0 ATTENDANCE**

- 10.1 Employees of the organisation are contracted to work a set number of hours per week. If they are unable to attend work the correct procedure must be followed concerning arrangements for holiday, sickness or other authorised leave. If they have any queries they should refer to the Annual Leave Policy, Sickness Absence Policy, and Working Arrangements Policy or contact the HR Team.

## **11.0 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE WORKPLACE**

- 11.1 Within the organisation, employees will have a variety of mutually rewarding relationships, which will not have a detrimental effect upon colleagues or the good running of the organisation. Whilst most social and personal relationships are entirely beneficial in that they promote good working relationships, there are occasions when personal relationships develop between employees.
- 11.2 The organisation accepts that workplace relationships, beyond the purely professional, may occur and would not wish to discriminate against employees for that reason. Employees have a right to respect for their private lives and the organisation could not have a blanket restriction on workplace relationships.
- 11.3 If an employee has a personal relationship, which they feel could impact on the business of the organisation, we would encourage them to be open and honest about this with their respective manager in the first instance, and also with a member of the HR team. Please refer to the Personal Relationships within the University Policy for further guidance.

## **12.0 PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS**

- 12.1 The University regards relationships between employees and students as an important professional issue. Personal relationships raise serious questions of conflict of interest, trust, confidence and dependency in working relations and of equal treatment of all students in teaching, learning, selection, and assessment. For the protection of all employees and students, the boundaries and moral obligations of the professional role of employees must be fully recognised and respected. Staff are not permitted to commence relationships (whether platonic or otherwise) with current students.
- 12.2 Staff are required to declare existing relationships with a student prior to commencement on a course, or as soon as it is known.
- 12.3 Please refer to the Personal Relationships between Staff and Students Policy for further guidance.

## **13.0 PUBLIC INTEREST DISCLOSURE/VOICING CONCERN**

- 13.1 Employees should be aware of the provision of the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998) which protects individuals who make certain disclosures of information in the public interest. If they have any queries they should refer to the Voicing Concern Policy or contact the HR Team or appropriate senior member of staff.
- 13.2 If an employee believes that they are being required to act in a way which:
- Is illegal, improper, or unethical
  - Is in breach of a professional code
  - May involve possible maladministration, fraud or misuse of public funds; or
  - Is otherwise inconsistent with this code.

They should either raise the matter with their manager or with an appropriate senior member of staff entrusted with the duty of investigating staff concerns about illegal, improper or unethical behaviour. Employees should also draw attention to cases where:

- They believe there is evidence of irregular or improper behaviour elsewhere in the organisation, but where they have not been personally involved
- There is evidence of criminal or unlawful activity by others
- They are required to act in a way which, for them, raises a fundamental issue of conscience.

#### **14.0 AFTER LEAVING EMPLOYMENT**

- 14.1 Employees are required to continue to observe the duty of confidentiality (see paragraph 5 above) after they have left the employment of the University and should be aware of and abide by any rules on the acceptance of business appointments after resignation or retirement.

#### **15.0 SUMMARY AND ASSOCIATED POLICIES**

If you have any queries or concerns about the way this policy is being implemented, please contact your local HR Business Partner. If you would like to discuss this document further or are interested in understanding or learning more about this area you should contact your local HR Business Partner.

In all communications, please state the title, version number and release date of the policy you are referring to.

We hope you will find the following associated policies useful:

- Dress Code Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Alcohol & Drugs Policy
- Annual Leave Policy
- Sickness Absence Policy
- Working Arrangements Policy
- Personal Relationships within the University Policy
- Personal Relationships with Students Policy
- Outside Working Policy
- Voicing Concern Policy
- Disciplinary Policy
- Safeguarding/Prevent Policy

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## CONTROL DOCUMENT INFORMATION

### Version history:

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### Sign off history:

Version	Approved by	Date
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