



STRANMILLIS UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
A College of Queen's University Belfast

Staff Code of Conduct

Version No:	Reason for Update	Date of Update	Updated By
1	New Revised Policy	March 2017	HR Manager
2	Approved	October 2017	HR Manager
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1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this Code is to set out the standards of behaviour that the College expects of its employees. The Code incorporates 'The Seven Principles of Public Life', listed in Appendix 1, the framework within which employees of the College are expected to conduct themselves in the performance of their duties and the University College values which underpin everything that the College does (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 Breach of the Code or the policies and regulations referenced may result in disciplinary action being taken. The procedures to be followed in cases of alleged misconduct are set out in the College's Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.3 The Accounting Officer (the University College Principal) has overall responsibility for propriety in a broad sense, including conduct and discipline.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This Code of Conduct forms part of the contractual relationship between the University College and its employees.
- 2.2 This code of Conduct applies to all College staff irrespective of position or role, and includes agency/casual staff, interns and any persons at the College who are here on a voluntary basis.

3. Principles

- 3.1 Employees are expected to act professionally and honestly, with integrity and respect for others and due regard to the impact of their conduct and behaviour on the University College, Governors, colleagues, students, external partners/clients, and the environment.
- 3.2 All employees must conduct themselves in a manner that at all times promotes a positive image of the College.

4. General Conduct

- 4.1 All employees:
 - a) are expected to comply with reasonable management instructions
 - b) are required to comply with any statutory or contractual obligations with regard to their employment
 - c) must not wilfully neglect their work
 - d) are expected to act honestly in recording their working time and time off
 - e) are required to adhere to the employment policies of the University College, including:
 - Communication
 - Equality Opportunities
 - Health and Safety
 - IT Acceptable Use
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

- Register of Interests
 - Social Media
 - Anti- Fraud and Bribery
 - Data Protection
 - Information Asset Management
 - Procurement Policy and Procedures Manual
 - Management of Absence Policy
 - Dignity at Work and Study Policy
- f) are required to observe and comply with the Financial Regulations and all other operational and academic policies and regulations of the College
- g) are required to comply with the duty of confidentiality.

5. Use of Resources

- 5.1 Employees of the University College should endeavour to ensure the proper, economical, effective and efficient use of resources.
- 5.2 The University College will not unreasonably prevent employees from using College facilities for personal use provided that authorisation has been obtained from the appropriate line manager, that the use does not interfere or conflict with the work of the College and that any costs will be met by the employee. Unauthorised use of University College property, including scrap materials, is not permitted and may lead to disciplinary action under the University College Disciplinary Procedures.
- 5.3 Staff are responsible for the safe custody of all University College property within their charge. Should property be lost or damaged through negligence or carelessness, they may be subject to disciplinary action under the University College Disciplinary Procedures. If a member of staff loses or damages University College property it must be reported to the line manager without delay.
- 5.4 On resignation or retirement from the University College all property belonging to the University College must be returned the University College.

6 Access to Confidential Information

- 6.1 Although the University College attempts to conduct its business in an open fashion there will be times when employees, through their position at the College, will be in receipt of confidential information, either about an individual(s) or in connection with the College's commercial/academic activities. Employees must keep such matters confidential and respect the proper channels of communication for such information. Staff must comply with the University College Data Protection Policy, Information Asset Management Policy and the Freedom of Information Policy.

7. Conduct Outside of Work

- 7.1 The University College does not seek to dictate how employees conduct themselves in their personal lives. However, there may be occasion when conduct of employees outside of the workplace has the potential to impact on the College. Any conduct which brings the College's reputation into disrepute for example, will be investigated and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedures. Employees must report, as soon as possible, to the Human Resources Department if they have been arrested, charged or convicted by a court of any criminal offence (except a traffic offence with a private vehicle for which the penalty has not included imprisonment or disqualification from driving. This exception does not apply to

those whose job involves driving College vehicles. In such cases driving offences must be notified to the Human Resources Department).

- 7.2 Equally, alleged actions in breach of this Code whilst attending work place social events, using social networking sites or socialising whilst on College property will be investigated and dealt with under the Disciplinary Procedures.

8. Conflict of Interest and Private Work

- 8.1 The highest standards of behaviour are expected in all areas of University College life, especially where employees are in positions to make decisions which may have significant impact on others. In all such cases it is important that decisions are taken in a fair and balanced way that could stand up to external scrutiny.
- 8.2 All members of staff involved in the purchase of goods or services, or who provide advice, or make judgements on behalf of the University College, should ensure that they act impartially in accordance with the principles of public life.
- 8.3 Conflicts of interest should be declared so that employees are not involved in College decisions where their actions could be seen as biased. Staff must abide by the College Register of Interests Policy in relation to private interests and possible conflict with their University College duties. Any member of staff who has a material interest, either directly or through a partner, spouse or close relative (e.g. brother, sister, children etc.), in any University College matter has a duty to declare that interest and ensure that appropriate action is taken to resolve it.
- 8.4 Employees wishing to undertake private work must seek permission from the University College Senior Management Team, by submitting a request in writing via the Human Resources Department, before entering into an obligation to undertake the work. (However by way of exception this does not apply to academic staff undertaking external examining, acting as an assessor or moderator, the production of scholarly works such as books, articles and papers). Private work must not, in the view of the College, conflict with the interests of the College or impact upon the image of the College. The College will decide (within 5 working days or whatever other period maybe agreed as being reasonable in all the circumstances) if that work will interfere with the performance of professional responsibilities or compete or conflict with the interests of the College. In either case the College may at its sole discretion require the member of staff not to undertake the work. However permission to undertake private work will not be unreasonably withheld. An employee who is dissatisfied with the outcome may appeal the decision by writing to the Human Resources Department within 5 working days of being advised of the decision. The appeal will be considered by the representatives of the Governing Body.
- 8.5 Employees should not misuse their University College position or information acquired in their University College duties to further their private interests or those of others.
- 8.7 Employees should not receive gifts or benefits of any kind from any third party that might reasonably be seen to compromise their personal judgment and integrity and must abide by the University College Gifts and Hospitality Policy.

9. Conduct during Sickness Absence

- 9.1 In all cases where sickness and injury necessitate taking time off work it is expected that employees will do their utmost to facilitate a speedy return to fitness and to work.
- 9.2 Staff absent due to sickness or injury should not participate in any sports, hobbies, social or other activities which are inconsistent with their illness or injury. However, it is

acknowledged that there are some instances where such activities may be considered therapeutic.

- 9.3 Staff absent due to sickness or injury should not undertake any other employment whether paid or unpaid.
- 9.4 Staff absent due to sickness or injury should not go on holiday without informing their line manager and producing a statement from their doctor or Occupational Health confirming that the holiday would be beneficial to or would not delay recovery.

10. Contact with the Media

- 10.1 Employees must not make any statements to the media which may or may not involve the disclosure of official information, (as defined within the Information Asset Management policy), without prior approval of the Senior Management Team. This does not apply to publications relating to academic research. The University College encourages the publication of and the dissemination of results of high quality research, the principles of which are outlined in the Research Information Management and Security Policy and the University College's Code of Ethics in Research.

11 Conduct in Research

- 11.1 The University College requires all its academic staff to maintain high standards of academic conduct and all staff engaged in research to be aware of and to comply with its Code of Ethics in Research. The University College regards academic fraud which includes plagiarism and fabricating or falsifying research results as a serious disciplinary matter which will be dealt with in accordance with the University College Regulations Governing the Allegation and Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

12. Harassment and Bullying

- 12.1 The College is committed to enabling everyone to participate in the College community without fear of harassment, bullying or intimidation. Consequently, everyone is responsible for ensuring that their behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional, does not constitute harassment or bullying. The College will, where appropriate, take action under the University College Dignity at Work and Study Policy and/or Disciplinary Procedures against behaviour which shows a lack of respect for others or which leads to people feeling uncomfortable or threatened.

13. Relationships with other members of staff, students and other clients and customers of the University College

- 13.1 The University College does not concern itself with the private lives of its staff unless they affect its effective operation or its reputation. Members of staff who are relatives or who have a close personal relationship should not normally have a supervisory, assessing or authorising relationship with each other. Employees must declare a personal relationship with another employee, a student, or a client or customer of the University College which could potentially give rise to a conflict of interest.

14 Child Protection and Safeguarding

- 14.1 All staff must act in accordance with the University College Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the College's procedures. The policy sets out responsibilities in relation to child protection and safeguarding children and young people, including the action to be taken to enable cases of suspected or actual maltreatment to be properly considered and pursued. Deliberate failure to comply so may result in disciplinary action.

14. Gross Misconduct

- 14.1 Gross misconduct is misconduct so serious that it is regarded as a fundamental breach of the employment contract that entitles the College to dismiss an employee without notice.

It is conduct that destroys the trust and confidence that the College has in the employee concerned. Such acts include, but are not limited to:

- a Theft from the College or colleagues
- b Fraud and/or the deliberate falsification of work, including academic fraud
- c Physical violence and/or serious verbal assault/abuse/intimidation
- d Deliberate damage to property
- e Serious bullying or harassment
- f Serious breach of the College's equality, diversity and human rights policies
- g Bringing the College's reputation into serious disrepute
- h Incapacity whilst at work brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs
- i Serious negligence or insubordination which causes or could cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury to people or property.
- j Serious infringement of health and safety rules
- k Serious breach of confidentiality (subject to the Public Interest (Disclosure) Act 1998).
- l Accessing and/or distributing pornographic emails or websites or the circulation of offensive material
- m Obscene or indecent behaviour or sexual misconduct

15. Raising matters of concern

- 15.1 Individuals have a right and a duty to raise any matters of concern which they may have about the conduct of others. The procedures for doing so are set out in the University College Whistleblowing Policy and the Anti-Fraud and Bribery Policy. No individual who expresses their views in good faith and in line with this guidance will be penalised for doing so.

16 Review

This Code of Conduct, developed in consultation with recognised trade unions and approved by the Governing Body will be reviewed every three years from the date of approval by the Governing Body or as otherwise required due to legislative changes.

APPENDIX 1:

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Appendix 2

University College Values

- **We pursue excellence;**
- **We embrace diversity;**
- **We champion collaboration;**
- **We promote social responsibility;**
- **We practise good governance.**