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Contact Person	Employment Relations Consultant - Human Resources

Introduction

This document defines and clarifies the standards of behaviour expected of University staff members in their relationships within the University community, and between the University and the wider community.

In doing so, this document aims to

- Support and promote relationships, guided by the principles of respect and consideration for the basic human rights of all individuals among the University's staff, students, clients and stakeholders;
- Identify and clarify the boundaries of acceptable behaviour; and
- Bring together implicit expectations and information from a number of University compliance documents, into an easily accessible document.

This document may be particularly useful as a guide for new members of staff (whether paid or unpaid) and for Heads of Department/School (HOD/Ss) in managing their day-to-day activities. Some of the issues in this document are covered by legislation, and are therefore, legal requirements of University staff members. Others are documented in various compliance documents and may be located in the [UC Policy Library \(University Policy Library website\)](#). Some matters are also detailed in individual and collective employment agreements.

Definitions

Campus – includes all University property, including vehicles, field stations, regional campuses and centres and applies to all activities under the general control of the University.

Confidential Information – information, whether in oral or written form, which is not in the public domain and which is reasonably regarded by the University as being confidential. It includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. The University's financial affairs.
- b. Detailed information, evaluative material, arrangements, records, mailing lists, employment or contractual agreements relating to students, staff members, suppliers and third parties.
- c. Confidential business, liabilities, revenues, profits and technical information.
- d. Strategic information.
- e. Computer software and data.
- f. Passwords, pass/swipe cards, pin numbers or any other security information used to access the University's systems, software, premises or any other University facility.
- g. Trade secrets, inventions, the nature and results of research or development activities, formulas, products, procedures, methods and technology or design information.
- h. Personal information about any other person, where disclosure would or may be in breach of the [Privacy Act 1993 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#).
- i. Information about any actual or pending litigation or dispute to which the University may be a party, including any case or complaint involving a current or former staff member.
- j. Business methods and management systems.
- k. Strategic information relating to marketing, advertising, plans or any other aspect of University business.
- l. Know-how not generally known to the public.

Staff or staff member – For the purposes of this policy, the definition of “staff” or “staff member” extends to cover all persons working at, for, or on behalf of, the University (whether paid or unpaid), including but not limited to, contractors, subcontractors and their employees, adjunct appointees, Erskine visitors, consultants, guest lecturers, interns and volunteers.

Tangata whenua – local people, hosts, indigenous people – people born of the whenua, i.e., of the placenta and of the land where the people's ancestors have lived and where their placenta are buried

Workplace – any physical location in which work-related activities are performed under the control of the University.

Scope

The scope of this Code covers all persons working at, for, or on behalf of, the University. This includes, but is not limited to, staff members, contractors, subcontractors and their employees, guest academic staff, adjunct appointees, interns, and volunteers. Paid staff

members have additional responsibilities and are subject to certain processes and procedures identified in this Code.

Policy Statement

1. Responsibilities of the University

1.1 The University is expected to act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith having regard to its responsibilities, the interests of the University, the welfare of students and the promotion of the well-being of staff members. The Vice-Chancellor and staff members with management responsibilities are expected to

- ensure the University is a safe workplace;
- provide an environment conducive to the development and effectiveness of all staff members;
- recognise the need to balance work with external life and commitments;
- comply with all relevant equal opportunity and Health and Safety policies and practices;
- supply the resources necessary to fulfil work obligations;
- demonstrate a commitment to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi and, by working in partnership with tangata whenua, make a significant contribution to regional and national Māori advancement and development aspirations;
- offer opportunities for the enhancement of the abilities of individual employees;
- manage diversity and respect cultural and other differences; and
- comply with any legislative, industrial or administrative requirements.

2. Responsibilities of Staff Members

2.1 Staff members are expected to act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably and in good faith at all times having regard to their responsibilities, the interests of the University and the welfare of colleagues, students and the University community.

2.2 In performing their duties, staff members are expected to

- maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise and/or professional field;
- exercise their best professional and ethical judgement to make decisions without bias and using the information available to them;
- adhere to Health and Safety compliance documents and instructions, in particular, the [Health and Safety Policy \(PDF, 215KB\)](#);

- treat students, members of the public, and other staff members with respect, impartiality, courtesy and sensitivity;
- maintain a cooperative and collaborative approach to working relationships;
- respect and encourage equity and diversity;
- be able to raise and address the often complex professional and ethical issues which may face them in their work;
- perform their duties diligently and conscientiously, and comply with all lawful and reasonable instructions;
- act fairly and reasonably, by carrying out work with integrity and objectivity;
- respect the confidentiality of confidential information entrusted to them in the course of their work for, or on behalf of, the University;
- ensure efficient and effective use of University resources, making improvements wherever possible and reducing waste;
- act within the spirit of the University strategic direction, policies and procedures; and
- ensure that their participation in non-University activities does not conflict significantly with their work for, or on behalf of, the University and is in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 425KB\)](#) and [Intellectual Property Policy \(PDF, 534KB\)](#).

2.3 The traditional and statutory responsibilities of academic staff include acting as the critics and conscience of society. In pursuit of these objectives and in the context of academic freedom, it is accepted that academic staff may sometimes act as critics of prevailing ideas and modes of thought. The University acknowledges and affirms the legitimacy of such activities and, consistent with this Code, will support academic staff engaged in them.

3. Conflicts of Interest

3.1 It is the responsibility of all staff members to declare any potential conflicts between their personal interests and their University duties and responsibilities, to arrange their private affairs as far as reasonably possible to prevent conflicts of interest arising, and to ensure that any conflict of interest that does arise is noted and managed appropriately.

Conflicts of interest may involve financial and non-financial issues, and are assessed in terms of the likelihood that staff members possessing a particular interest could be improperly influenced, or might appear to be improperly influenced, in the performance of their duties. Staff members should refer to the [Conflict of Interest Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 425KB\)](#) for further guidance.

3.2 Unless otherwise authorised in writing, paid staff members are prohibited from

- being involved in a decision to appoint or employ a relative;
- conducting business on behalf of the University with a relative's company;
- owning shares in, or working for, any organisation that has dealings with, or that is in competition with, the University;
- being involved in any public consultation process on behalf of the University where they are personally involved in the same process on behalf of themselves or another entity; and
- influencing or participating, in a decision to award grants or contracts where they are connected to a person or organisation that submitted an application or tender.

3.3 Examples where conflicts of interest could arise also include

- Using University property or resources to develop one's own business or employment interests
- Influencing the appointment, non-appointment, promotion or non-promotion of any individual, or the access by any individual to resources (e.g., conference leave) or other benefits of being a member of the University's staff because of a personal like or dislike.
- Influencing the results of student grades because of a personal like or dislike.
- Work where a staff member acts as a consultant.

Note: this list is not exhaustive.

3.4 Situations may occur where staff members are working with family members or persons with whom they develop close personal relationships. Where such relationships exist between staff members or with prospective staff members there may be situations where there is a potential conflict of interest, such as in supervisory relationships and employment related decisions. In this case, the staff member must follow the notification process discussed below.

3.5 A family/personal relationship between a staff member and student has the potential for, or could be perceived as, compromising the fundamental duties inherent in teaching and learning.

Staff members have a responsibility to students to assess their work fairly, objectively and consistently across the candidature for their particular subject/course. It follows that members of staff should not be involved in supervision or assessment of students with whom they have a family or personal relationship. Where such arrangements are unavoidable, the individual must follow the notification process discussed below.

3.6 In addition, staff members must not take advantage of the intrinsic trust, power and status differential implicit in the teacher to student relationship, and should avoid entering into an intimate personal relationship with a student at the University.

- 3.7 Staff members must promptly inform the person to whom they normally report (e.g., Pro-Vice-Chancellor, HOD/S or Supervisor), verbally and in writing, if any conflict of interest arises or where they are uncertain as to whether a particular situation gives rise to a conflict of interest. The situation can then be managed in a transparent and professional manner. Where a conflict of interest is notified, the Manager/HOD/S will need to determine ways of dealing with the situation (e.g., not assessing a particular student's work or having no involvement in a recruitment process).

4. Outside Engagements and Private Practice

- 4.1 The University encourages all staff members to contribute to society, not only through teaching and research, but also by providing assistance to government, the professions and industry through a range of activities including consulting work, contracting, collaborative research and participation on committees (subject to no conflict or other competing obligation arising, in accordance with the [Conflict of Interest Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 425KB\)](#)).
- 4.2 Subject to the other provisions of this Code and to the [Conflict of Interest Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 425KB\)](#), staff members are free to stand for, or serve in, any office or position on any public or voluntary body. Any staff member who wishes to stand as a candidate for Parliament must comply with the requirements of the [Electoral Act 1993 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#), including, where relevant, those relating to the candidacy and election of state servants.
- 4.3 Staff members employed on a contract of service (employment agreement) should seek approval for outside work performed during normal work hours from their Departmental/School head or unit manager. Provided this does not adversely affect the Department/School, it may be negotiated and written approval given.
- 4.4 Academic staff members should refer to the [Consulting Policy \(PDF, 340KB\) Staff Only](#) and all staff members should refer to the University's [Intellectual Property Policy \(PDF, 534KB\)](#) for further conditions regarding outside work.

5. Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

- 5.1 Staff members must not solicit gifts or benefits of significant value, nor accept gifts or benefits either for themselves or for another person, which might in any way, either directly or indirectly, compromise or influence them in their official capacity. For instance, gifts or hospitality offered as an inducement to purchase are not acceptable.
- 5.2 Gifts of a nominal value (less than \$150 as a guide) used for promotional purposes by the donor may be accepted. Individuals must, however, be satisfied

that they cannot be compromised by the acceptance. Gifts of a nominal value above this amount may be retained at the discretion of the relevant supervisor.

5.3 Gifts of money are not acceptable.

5.4 Staff members should refer to the [Gifts Policy \(PDF, 286KB\)](#) for further guidance.

6. Use and Security of Official Information and Confidential Information

6.1 Staff members must take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of official University documentation and information to which they have access. This includes a requirement to take care to maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of the University's confidential information, which is of the utmost importance. Staff members must hold all confidential information in confidence and use their best endeavours to prevent the disclosure of any confidential information.

6.2 Staff members must not directly or indirectly, at any time during or after their engagement with the University (as long as any information continues to be confidential information),

- use, attempt to use, or cause to be used, any official information or confidential information;
- disclose or communicate any official information or confidential information to any person, company, entity or employee; or
- access or copy any material containing official information or confidential information;

other than with the written consent of the University, or to the extent necessary to carry out their duties, or where the information has been officially approved for release, unless otherwise required by law.

6.3 Staff members must access information, including that on information systems and files, only for the purposes for which authorisation has been given; staff members must not allow any other unauthorised person access. All reasonable precautions must be taken, including password and file protection measures, to prevent unauthorised access or misuse. If there is any uncertainty, staff members should check with the appropriate authority first.

6.4 The University must maintain the confidentiality of confidential information belonging to third parties and use that confidential information only for certain limited purposes. Staff members must hold such confidential information in the strictest confidence. The obligations outlined above apply equally to third party confidential information.

6.5 At any time, the University may request the return of official information or confidential information. If the University makes this request, the staff member/s

concerned must promptly deliver all materials, documents, data or other information to the University without retaining a copy.

- 6.6 Should an occasion arise in which a staff member is unsure of their obligations in respect of official information or confidential information, it is the staff member's responsibility to consult with their reporting manager or Human Resources Advisor.
- 6.7 Staff members should also refer to the [Privacy Policy \(PDF, 613KB\)](#), [Official Information Policy \(PDF, 204KB\)](#) and [Communications and Media Policy \(PDF, 255KB\)](#) in relation to this.

7. Use of Official Facilities and Equipment

- 7.1 Staff members must use all University resources in a careful manner. Unless express permission has been granted, University resources are not to be used for private purposes.
- 7.2 Staff members should refer to the [IT Policy Framework \(PDF, 212KB\)](#) for guidelines on the use of email and the internet.
- 7.3 University resources may not be used to further personal interests, political or religious causes, or for activities that are illegal, involve obscene language or images, or involve the distribution of copyright material.

8. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

- 8.1 Where breaches of this Code occur by staff employed by the University under an employment agreement, matters may be dealt with in accordance with the staff member's employment agreement and the [Employee Disciplinary Policy \(PDF, 211KB\)](#).
- 8.2 Where breaches of this Code occur by staff members that are not employed under an employment agreement, matters may be dealt with as deemed appropriate by the University and in accordance with any applicable written contract or University policies.
- 8.3 Contravention of this Code may involve misconduct or serious misconduct, depending on the seriousness of the breach. If established, misconduct by a staff member employed under an employment agreement will generally lead to a reprimand and a warning.

Serious misconduct by a staff member employed under an employment agreement may lead to summary dismissal, that is, dismissal without notice.

In either case, contractual requirements or processes required by relevant employment law will be followed.

- 8.4 Serious misconduct undermines the relationship between the staff member concerned and the University, and/or threatens the well-being of the University or its staff and students. Serious misconduct includes, but is not confined to, the examples below:
- a. Falsifying any information, records or other documents.
 - b. The use or possession of illegal drugs while on campus or on University business.
 - c. Consuming intoxicating liquor while on campus, work sites construction sites, in work vehicles, or during working hours without permission.
 - d. Attending work under the influence of drugs or intoxicating liquor so that the staff member is, or may be, unable to perform his/her duties satisfactorily or safely.
 - e. Breach of this Code or other compliance documents.
 - f. Conduct that may bring the University's reputation into disrepute.
 - g. Acting in a negligent, reckless or careless manner which could potentially or actually result in injury to another person.
 - h. Damage to the University's plant or property, whether deliberately or through negligence.
 - i. Harassment, bullying or discriminatory behaviour towards any person.
 - j. Using abusive or offensive language or behaviour.
 - k. Removing, taking possession of, or deliberate misuse of, the University's property or another person's personal property without consent.
 - l. Refusal or failure to obey a lawful and reasonable direction.
 - m. Sleeping during working hours.
 - n. Smoking in restricted areas.
 - o. Any breach of obligations that apply in respect of confidential information, including unauthorised access, disclosure, copying or use of confidential information.
 - p. Competing or assisting another person or entity to compete with the University on any matter, without the written consent of the University.
 - q. Failure to comply with any health and safety policies, instructions or guidelines for the workplace.
 - r. Absence from work without good cause or failure without good reason to promptly report an absence.
 - s. Failure to report to a supervisor as soon as possible any accident, near miss or incident that resulted in, or may have resulted in, personal injury, damage, or loss to any person or property.
 - t. Continued lateness or lack of application to assigned tasks.

- u. Failure to work within the requirements of [University regulations and policies \(University Regulations website\)](#) where applicable.
 - v. Repeated failure to perform work to the required standard.
 - w. Accessing pornographic or illegal material on a University computer or any breaches of the [IT Policy Framework \(PDF, 212KB\)](#).
- 8.5 Formal disciplinary action is not taken lightly. The University's experience has been that the majority of staff members perform well, conduct themselves reasonably, and minor problems can be overcome without the need for formal discipline. Initially, problems are dealt with in the expectation that staff members will perform their utmost best once a deficiency is pointed out and that any difficulties can be overcome at the workplace level.

Related Documents and Information

Legislation

- [Electoral Act 1993 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1993 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)

Regulations

- [University regulations and policies \(University Regulations website\)](#)

UC Policy Library

- [Communications and Media Policy \(PDF, 255KB\)](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy, Principles and Guidelines \(PDF, 425KB\)](#)
- [Consulting Policy \(PDF, 340KB\) Staff Only](#)
- [Campus Drugs and Alcohol Policy \(PDF, 242KB\)](#)
- [Drug and Alcohol Testing for Construction Sites: Policy and Procedures \(PDF, 253KB\)](#)
- [Employee Disciplinary Policy \(PDF, 211KB\)](#)
- [Gifts Policy \(PDF, 286KB\)](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy \(PDF, 215KB\)](#)
- [Intellectual Property Policy \(PDF, 534KB\)](#)
- [IT Policy Framework \(PDF, 212KB\)](#)
- [Official Information Policy \(PDF, 204KB\)](#)
- [Privacy Policy \(PDF, 613KB\)](#)

UC Website and Intranet

- [Personal Conduct \(Human Resources Intranet\) \(Staff Only\)](#)
- [Statement of Strategic Intent \(PDF, 28KB\)](#)
- [UC Policy Library \(University Policy Library website\)](#)

If you have any further questions around this policy, please contact your [Human Resources Advisor](#).

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
<i>For document history and versioning prior to 2013 contact ucpolicy@canterbury.ac.nz</i>			
1.00	Conversion of document onto new template	Policy Unit	Sep 2013
1.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed title from Code of Conduct (Staff) to Staff Code of Conduct in line with current naming conventions. • Updated hyperlinks 	Policy Unit	Oct 2013
1.02	Document review date pushed out.	Policy Unit	Feb 2014
1.03	Minor revision and updating of hyperlinks	Policy Unit	Jun 2014
1.04	Unscheduled minor revision by Contact Officer.	Policy Unit	Dec 2014
2.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer.	Policy Unit	May 2015
2.01	Contact Officer title updated.	Policy Unit	Jun 2015
2.02	Hyperlink to Computer Use Policy and Procedures changed to IT Policy Framework.	Policy Unit	Sep 2015
2.03	Unscheduled review by Contact Officer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “staff member” scope extended. • “Scope” section added, paid and unpaid staff terminology included. • Use of “employment agreement” to define a contract of service. • Reference added for <i>Drug and Alcohol Testing for Construction Sites: Policy and Procedures (PDF, 162KG)</i>. • Review date extended to 3 years. • Removal of “study leave” from second bullet point in clause 3.3. 	Executive Director Human Resources	Feb 2017
2.04	Change of CO from <i>HR Advisor: Business Improvement and Policy Portfolio – Human Resources</i> .	Policy Unit	May 2018
2.05	Updated links to <i>Staff Disciplinary Policy</i> renamed <i>Employee Disciplinary Policy</i> .	Policy Unit	April 2019

This document remains in force until it is updated.