

University College Cork

Code of Conduct - Employees

Introduction

University College Cork (“the University”) has developed this Code of Conduct for employees pursuant to the requirements of the HEA Code of Governance [2007]. This Code of Conduct takes account of the implications of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001 as well as the Universities Act 1997.

Intent and scope

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to employees of the University in performing their duties as employees.

Objectives of this Code

The objectives of the Code are

- to set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- to promote and maintain confidence and trust in the employees of the University;
- to prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices;
- to promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of the University;
- to promote compliance with best current governance and management practices in all the activities of the University.

Application of this Code

All employees are required to observe the following fundamental principles whether set out for employees specifically or as expectations set by the University for the conduct of its affairs

General Principles

Integrity

- The University will not allow employees to be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the University. It will put in place appropriate arrangements to give effect to this.
- Where the University finds itself in competition with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services it is expected that employees will behave ethically and honestly.
- The University is committed to conducting its purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with public policy and best business practice and its purchasing regulations reflect this.

- The University is also committed to ensuring that its engagement of consultancy and other services is in compliance with public policy guidelines.
- The University is committed to ensuring that the accounts/reports accurately reflect the operating performance of the University and are not misleading or designed to be misleading.
- The University is committed not to acquire information or business secrets by improper means.
- Employees are not permitted to use University resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the institution or its activities or for the benefit of competitors.
- Employees are not permitted to receive gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions.

Information

- The University is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.
- The University will observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.
- The University will comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. Data Protection legislation, the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2003).
- Employees are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the University. This would constitute material such as:
 - personal information;
 - information received in confidence by the University;
 - any commercially sensitive information;

Obligations

- The University will fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on it by the Universities Act, 1997.
- The University will comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.
- The University requires compliance with measures it has introduced to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with the prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.

Loyalty

- Employees are required to be loyal and committed to the University, with due respect to the tenets of academic freedom, while mindful that the University itself must at all times take into account the interests of its students and providers of funds, including taxpayers.
- Employees of the University acknowledge the duty of all to conform to highest standards of public service ethics.

Fairness

- The University is committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation.
- The University is committed to fairness in all dealings.

Work/External Environment

- The University will ensure that community concerns are fully considered in its activities and operations;
- The University will minimise any detrimental impact of its operations on the environment.
- The University places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its employees and students.

Policy/Procedures

- Employees are required to familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures of the University and to comply with such policies and procedures as may be instituted by the University from time to time.

Responsibility

- The University will circulate this Code of Conduct (and a policy document on disclosure of interests) to all employees for their retention.
- The University will ensure that all employees receive a copy of the Code.
- The University will provide practical guidance and direction as required, through the Office of Corporate and Legal Affairs, on such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations which arise routinely.

Review

- The University will review this Code of Conduct as appropriate.