

CODE OF CONDUCT

1 Introduction

This Code of Conduct is to provide a source of guidance to University employees. Whilst the University expects its employees and staff to comply with this code, it does not confer contractual rights or form part of any contract of employment and may be amended by the University or replaced at any time following appropriate consultation with recognised trade unions.

Breach of this code may be addressed via the University's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

This code will be reviewed by the Human Resources department on a 3-year basis or amended in response to changes in future legislation and/or case law.

2 Ownership

The Human Resources department owns and manages this code on behalf of The University of Northampton.

3 Organisational Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all employees (and workers, as applicable) of The University of Northampton except Senior Post Holders who are covered by separate procedures managed by the Board of Governors. The policy includes any wholly owned subsidiaries, unless an alternative policy exists, subject to any qualifying conditions.

4 Definitions

Senior Post Holders – The Vice-Chancellor, Chief Operating Officer, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and the Clerk to the Board of Governors.

Bullying - Unwanted behaviour that makes someone feel intimidated, degraded,

humiliated or offended. It is not necessarily always obvious or apparent to others. Bullying can be between two individuals or it may involve groups of people. It might be obvious, unconscious, or it might be insidious. It may be persistent or an isolated incident. It can occur in all forms of communication for example written communications, by phone, online, through social media and email, and also face-to-face. Bullying does not normally include:

- Reasonable performance assessment
- Reasonable instructions and advice
- Discipline for cause
- Responding in good faith to a complaint

Harassment - Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct or bullying because of a protected characteristic or 'of a sexual nature', and is against the law. It must also have the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.

Victimisation - This is when an individual is treated unfairly or less favourably because they made or supported a complaint to do with a protected characteristic, or someone thinks they did; made an accusation of a breach of the Equality Act (2010); or doing anything else in connection with the Act. This includes:

- making an allegation of discrimination, and/or
- supporting a complaint of discrimination, and/or
- giving evidence relating to a complaint about discrimination, and/or
- raising a grievance concerning equality or discrimination, and/or
- doing anything else for the purposes of (or in connection with) the Equality Act 2010, such as bringing an employment tribunal claim for discrimination.

Conflict of interest – A situation in which the concerns or aims of two parties are incompatible; where there is a clash between an individual's self-interest and their professional interest; where the situation means that an individual may reasonably be perceived as not able to make a fair and/or unbiased decision.

Close relationships – Can be as a partner, family member or a close friendship.

5 Policy Statement

The purpose of the Code is to define the standards of appropriate behaviour and conduct expected by colleagues in the performance of their duties and when representing the University. It ensures that all colleagues and stakeholders can be sure of what is acceptable and have trust and confidence in our service, integrity and conduct.

A number of principles within this Code are supported by more detailed policies and procedures which should be referred and adhered to.

6 Key Principles

The University is committed to treating individuals fairly, with dignity and respect and thus expects integrity, honesty and fairness to be displayed by colleagues at all times.

You are expected to have regard for the impact of your behaviour on the University, your colleagues, students and our wider community. We encourage you to consider your own actions to protect the key interests of the University.

The matters detailed in the Code are not exhaustive and you should be seen to be exhibiting high standards of conduct and behaviour and avoid bringing the University into disrepute.

The obligations of the Code of Conduct apply in all activities, both physical and virtual, in which you are engaged in the course of your employment including work related functions that take place outside normal working hours.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have read and understood the Code of Conduct and any associated policies and procedures in the course of your work.

It is the responsibility of all line managers to act as an exemplar for the required standards of behaviour, promote understanding of the Code of Conduct and take any appropriate action at the earliest opportunity to deal with any breach of the Code or associated policies.

In addition to this Code of Conduct you should familiarise yourself with the Key Behaviours within the Strategic Plan. These key behaviours provide the framework under which we all

work to achieve our strategic objectives.

You are protected by the University's Whistleblowing Policy and the Union Operating and Facilities Agreement if you raise a concern, either internally or externally, providing it is made in good faith, and in the reasonable belief that the disclosed concern tends to show malpractice.

7 Employee Code of Conduct

Reputation of the University

You must uphold the name and professional image of the University and must not exhibit or engage in activity, whether it be within or external to the University, that may damage the reputation of the University or that of its officers and employees. This includes during discussions with colleagues or partners and via social media platforms,

Standards of Integrity and Honesty

You must maintain a standard of integrity and honesty particularly in relation to disclosure of information, confidentiality, financial regulations, data protection, intellectual property and professional regulatory requirements. In the course of your employment you must avoid placing yourself under any obligations to others that may try inappropriately to influence you in your work. You should not act or make decisions that lead to financial gain or other material benefits for you, your family or friends. You must declare any interests via the Declaration of Interests form and be truthful at all times. See Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy and Procedure.

Equality and Inclusion

In demonstrating the University's commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and compliance with the Equality Act 2010, the University seeks to ensure that the work environment promotes equality of opportunity and is free from discrimination. You are expected to comply with the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Procedure in all aspects of your work and activities, to promote an inclusive work and study place and to challenge behaviours that do not comply.

Respect at work

You are expected to behave and conduct yourself in a way that demonstrates respect to others, their wellbeing, their safety and their time.

You should be mindful of how you communicate with others and should behave in a courteous, polite and respectful manner and consider how the recipient may perceive the content and tone. How you communicate, both verbally and in writing must not instil fear or create upset to colleagues, students and stakeholders.

Aggressive behaviour, physical or verbal, in person or in written communications, will be addressed with reference to the appropriate policy and procedure.

Harassment, Bullying or Victimisation

You have a responsibility to ensure that we are able to maintain an environment free from fear of bullying, harassment or victimisation. You should consider your own actions and try to ensure your behaviour, whether intentional or unintentional does not constitute bullying, harassment or victimisation. The University will take appropriate action for any breach or complaint of bullying, harassment or victimisation. Please see the Equality and Inclusion Policy, Grievance Policy and Procedure, Staff Sexual Harassment, Misconduct and Violence Policy and Procedure and Disciplinary Policy and Procedure for further information.

Adherence to Health and Safety Requirements

You must be aware of your responsibilities under all relevant Health and Safety legislation and University Policy. All activities should be carried out with the highest regard for Health and Safety of fellow staff, students and visitors. You are required to report any breaches of Health and Safety Policy or legislation and may do so in confidence to your line manager or the Safety Office. See Health and Safety Policy for further information.

Relationships with current or potential members of staff, students or stakeholders of the University.

The University is not concerned with the private lives of employees unless relationships cause a conflict of interest or difficulties in the working or study environment.

You must notify your line manager if you have a close relationship with another employee or student that may compromise the integrity or perceived integrity of decision making, assessment, recruitment or promotion of another person. Each case will be considered and action to remove you from the position of authority over another may be taken for example, moving teaching, supervision or line management to another employee.

If you undertake a role where you are supporting students, for example in security, residential life, SAS or academic roles, you must be aware that your position may be seen as one of power. You must be aware of your conduct and how it can be perceived and refrain from engaging in activities of a personal nature including, but not limited to, sexual or romantic conduct, offering or giving favours, and general socialising. Professional boundaries must be observed at all times. If you find yourself on the receiving end of inappropriate or overfamiliar behaviour you should report it to your line manager immediately.

Where concerns are raised about relationships being considered inappropriate, for example preferential treatment being given or received, inappropriate conduct or abuse of power, the University reserves the right to investigate and take appropriate action to maintain standards of integrity and the safety of staff and students.

Standard of Competent Job Performance

You should competently and conscientiously perform the duties outlined in your job description and all reasonable tasks requested by management and the University. You should complete your work to a standard you can be proud of and not compromise quality for expediency.

Other employment

In order to ensure the wellbeing of our employees and compliance with the working Time Regulations, if you undertake additional work outside of the University, whether it is paid or voluntary, you must notify your line manager.

If you are engaged in other work you must ensure that it does not come into conflict with your duties at the University, that you devote your time during University working hours to your University post and that it does not distract you from carrying out your duties with the University.

Consultancy work

If you are seeking to secure personal consultancy work, you must first discuss it with your Dean or Deputy Dean or Director of Professional Services and seek approval. The nature of consultancy work must fit with the University Strategy and values, and encourage close relationships with the community, industry and business.

Duty of Trust and Confidence

In all contracts of employment there is an implied term of mutual trust and confidence therefore you should not act in a way that is likely to destroy or seriously damage the relationship of trust and confidence between you and the University. Such actions may make your employment relationship with the University untenable resulting in a decision to end employment either by you, the University or by mutual agreement. Examples of misconduct or negligence which may result in a loss of trust and confidence can be found in the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.

Adherence to University Regulations, Policies and Procedures

You have a duty to ensure you are fully aware of and comply with all University regulations, policies and procedures. You should refer to the policies and procedures pages (located on the Staff intranet) to access the latest versions.

Training and development in areas such as Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Recruitment and Selection, Bribery, Discipline, and Grievance is provided and should be undertaken in the given timeframes and refreshed at the required intervals.

Adherence to Legislation and Non-University Professional Regulations

You are legally required to comply with all employment legislation and with any regulations defined by any professional body to which you belong.

Misuse of drugs and alcohol

You should be able to undertake your duties to a high level of competence and the use of, or being under the influence of, non-medically prescribed drugs and alcohol are prohibited in the carrying out of those duties. There may be occasions when alcohol is served at a University event and alcohol consumption may be permitted provided that you continue to act in a manner that does not bring the University into disrepute. Further information can be found in the Substance Use and Abuse Policy.

Gambling

Gambling activities must not be conducted on University premises other than fundraising events such as a raffle or sweepstake. All gambling legislation must be complied with and licences obtained where necessary. Lottery syndicates are permitted but its management must not interfere with University business.

Recording of conversations

Recording of conversations using a voice recording device is prohibited unless all parties

agree in advance to be recorded. This includes in person meetings and those undertaken virtually using online meeting platforms. Separate provisions with regards to lecture capture can be found in the Lecture Capture Policy.

Conduct outside of work

The University does not seek to dictate how you conduct yourself outside of work. In some circumstances however behaviour/conduct outside work and not at a work-related event, including activities in person and on social media platforms where your connection to the University is identifiable, could potentially lead to disciplinary investigation if it is considered such behaviour has brought the University into disrepute, for example if an employee committed an act of racism/racist violence.

If you attend University linked events outside of work time for example, leaving parties and social events, you are expected to continue to behave in a manner that does not jeopardise the University's reputation.

Personal appearance

The University does not operate a dress code for employees with the exception of some areas where uniform or protective clothing is required. However, you are expected to dress in a way that is appropriate for the situation in which you are working and present a professional image with regard to attire and personal hygiene.

Use of University Resources

All University resources must be used for the purposes of the University. You should ensure any personal use is limited and reasonable and does not contravene the primary purpose of the University; interfere with, conflict with or take priority over the performance of University duties; waste resources; deny or impair the service to other users; or have a negative impact on the University or other users, and when using social media. Resources include financial, IT equipment, email, internet, telephone and property. Further information can be found in the Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Private telephone calls

You may use University telephone facilities for occasional emergency or essential calls. No personal calls to premium rate numbers or personal international calls are permitted. The University reserves the right to review the usage of company phones, in terms of destination and call length, through telephone bills, and ask you to reimburse any costs for personal usage for calls and texts.

Use of IT equipment

You may use IT equipment for limited personal use, such as internet access and e-mail providing it is during breaks or before and after working hours, does not interfere with University business, does not compromise University business and is for legal usage only. See the Acceptable Use Policy.

Continued use of mobile devices is subject to following the Acceptable Use Policy. You are responsible for ensuring that devices are updated with the latest security software and that you make them available for safety checks such as PAT testing.

Social Media

You are allowed to access social media websites from the University's computers or devices provided that it is for work-related and/or scholarly activity. You must ensure that communications are appropriate and not offensive, and do not bring the University name into disrepute. Access via University devices or your own, for personal usage must take place during breaks or before and after working hours.

You must read and follow the University Social Media Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

Credit Cards

Use of University credit cards for personal expenditure is not permitted and will be considered gross misconduct.

Intellectual Property (IP)

The University shall own all IP in work you produce in the course of your employment with the University unless otherwise agreed in writing.

Such ownership is subject to the exceptions in the Intellectual Property Policy and to the provisions relating to employee inventions in the Patents Act 1977. See Intellectual Property Policy.

Financial Regulations

The University Financial regulations can be found in the Financial Regulations document, and associated guidance, all available on the University intranet. If you have financial or budgetary responsibility you should make yourself aware of the regulations and abide by them. Any further clarification should be sought from the Finance Department

Conflict of interest

You should seek to avoid putting yourself in a position where there is a conflict, whether actual or potential, between your personal interests and your duties in the University. You should not allow any conflict of interest to arise which might interfere, or be perceived to interfere, with the exercise of their independent judgement.

If you have a personal, financial or other beneficial interest in any financial arrangement to which the University is party, or is considering becoming a party, you should disclose the fact via a Declaration of Interests form. The term 'personal' includes situations involving a family member.

Access to confidential information

The University operates in a transparent manner however in the undertaking of duties you may have access to confidential information either about individuals or in connection with the University's operating activities. You must keep such matters confidential. If you have access to student and staff records or have regular access to confidential matters you will be asked to sign an additional confidentiality agreement. See Data Protection Policy.

Data Protection

You are expected to comply with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University Data Protection Act Policy and Procedure. Data protection training is provided by the University. You must undertake the Data protection training as soon as reasonably practical after starting employment at the University and renew in line with the renewal schedule when notified; currently every three years.

Bribery Act

You are expected to comply with the Bribery Act 2010 and with the Anti Bribery, Fraud and Corruption Policy and Procedure. You should be vigilant to ensure that bribery is prevented, detected and reported.

You must undertake the Bribery Act training as soon as reasonably practical after starting employment at the University and renew in line with the renewal schedule when notified, currently every three years.

Money Laundering

You are expected to comply with the legislation surrounding money laundering which is centred on:

- Proceeds of Crime Act (2002) (POCA)
- Money Laundering Regulations (2007)
- Terrorism Act (2002)

The University has an appointed Money Laundering Reporting Officer, currently the Executive Director of Finance, to whom you should report if you suspect that money laundering activity is or has taken place or if you suspect anyone is involved in money laundering activity.

Further information is contained in the Anti-Money Laundering Policy which you should read and understand.

Gifts and Hospitality

The University permits corporate gifts, hospitality and entertainment in accordance with the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure.

Gifts from students should normally not be accepted under section 4.2 of the Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure and specifically in relation to:

- You are, or will be, making a decision in relation to the offeror. This includes students whose work you have not yet marked
- Acceptance jeopardises the reputation of the University/company and/or goes against its values and behaviours as set out in the Strategic Plan
- Acceptance places you under an obligation, or might be seen as placing you under an obligation
- Acceptance creates a conflict between the performance of your duties to the University/company and your personal interests. Acceptance leads to a suspicion that such a conflict is created.'

Further information is also contained in the Bribery Act Policy and should be read prior to any consideration to gifts is given.

8 Associated Documents

Strategic Plan – Transforming Lives, Inspiring Change
 Linking Values, Critical Success Factors and Key Behaviours, Embedding Values
 Supporting Critical Success Factors with Key Behaviours
 Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
 Whistleblowing Policy
 Equality and Inclusion Policy
 Equality and Inclusion Procedure
 Grievance Policy
 Health and Safety legislation and University Policy
 Working Time Regulations 1998
 Substance Use and Abuse Policy
 Acceptable Use Policy
 Social Media Policy
 Gifts and Hospitality Policy and Procedure
 Intellectual Property Policy
 Financial Regulations
 Data Protection Policy
 Bribery Act Policy
 Union Operating and Facilities Agreement

9 Equality Analysis

An Equality Impact Assessment must accompany this document.

10 Version Control

Version Control	Version 1.1	Approval record	
Author:	HR	Approval:	TU Liaison – 28/06/2017 UMT – 04/07/2017 JCNC – 13/07/2017 Governors – 17/07/2017
Date written:	May 2017	Updates:	June 2021

Current status:	Approved	Approved August 2021
Record of Amendments		
Date	Details of Change	Approval
June 2021	Change of focus addressing the policy as 'you' not 'the employee'	August 2021
	Updated definitions to reflect Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	August 2021
	Changes to Key principles to emphasise requirement to consider and be aware of own behaviour	August 2021
	Standards of integrity and honesty expanded	August 2021
	Relationships with students, staff and stakeholder expanded	August 2021
	Conflict of interest expanded, introduction of Declaration of Interest reporting	August 2021
	Minor amends throughout to wording where meaning hasn't changed.	August 2021
	Change to gifts and hospitality to include gifts from students	August 2021