



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

## Polasaí agus Nósanna Imeachta Policies and Procedures

Code	QA415
Title	Code of Conduct for Employees
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Approved By	University Management Team & Governing Authority

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## **1.0 Introduction**

University of Galway is committed to promoting ethical behaviour and values the importance of honesty, fairness and integrity. The University has developed this Code of Conduct for Employees in that context.

University of Galway has developed a distinguished reputation for teaching and research excellence, underpinned by a set of shared values. The University of Galway Strategy 2020-2025 (Shared Vision, Shaped by Values) sets out the values that shape our university. These values are Respect, Excellence, Openness, and Sustainability. The Code of Conduct has been designed to promote these shared values and to provide a framework so that all employees can act in the interests of the University, the public interest, and within the confines of the law.

University of Galway 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, the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, Universities Act 1997 and the Higher Education Authority Act 2022.

## **2.0 Intent and Scope**

The Code of Conduct is an important part of an overall framework within which all employees are expected to work. The purpose of the Code is to provide direction to University of Galway employees in performing their duties in a professional and ethical manner as set down in legislation, including the Ethics in Public Office Acts, 1995 and 2001, the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001 and the Universities Act, 1997, the Higher Education Authority Act 2022, and the Statutes and policies and procedures of the University.

While the conduct of employees is primarily governed by the contract of employment, employees are required to comply with the University Statutes as well as a wide range of policies, which include but are not limited to the following areas:

- Respect and Dignity by Preventing Harassment and Bullying
- Health and Safety
- Grievance
- Dispute and Resolution
- ICT and Data Protection Policies
- Ethics in Research
- Engagement of Employee in Consultancy Work
- Any other policies approved by the University or a relevant competent authority from time to time.

For the purposes of this Code, employees are defined as individuals who are in the employment of the University, whether full-time or part-time and irrespective of whether the University or another legal

entity within the University's group of subsidiaries, is their primary employer. The Code also applies to employees availing of any forms of university leave.

Employees are expected to have read and understood the Code of Conduct and other University Policies and procedures which govern their conduct. The Human Resources Office will ensure that a copy of the code is provided to all employees both new and existing, through the University Website.

### **3.0 Objectives of the Code**

The objectives of the Code are to:

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

### **4.0 General Conduct and Behaviour**

In the performance of their duties employees shall:

(i) Maintain high standards in service delivery by:

- Conscientiously, honestly and impartially serving the University;
- Always acting within the law; &
- Performing their duties with efficiency, diligence and courtesy.

(ii) Maintain the appropriate behaviour at work by:

- Dealing with students and the public with courtesy and respect in a sympathetic, fair and prompt manner; &
- Treating their colleagues with respect.

(iii) Maintain the highest standards of probity by:

- Conducting themselves with honesty, impartiality and integrity;
- Never seeking to use improper influence to affect decisions concerning their official positions;
- Abiding by guidelines in respect of offers of gifts or hospitality
- Avoiding conflicts of interests.

## **5.0 Employee Roles & Responsibilities**

All employees are required to observe the following fundamental principles.

### **5.1 Principle 1 - Integrity**

#### **(i) Conflict of Interest / Exclusivity of Service**

The employee's contract of employment requires the employee to devote his/her full-time attention and abilities to his/her duties during working hours and to act in the best interest of the University at all times. Employees may not without the prior written consent of the University, be in any way, directly or indirectly, actively engaged or concerned in any other business or undertaking where this is, or is likely to be, in conflict with the University's interests. All Employees must ensure compliance with the University of Galway QA 413 Conflict of Interest policy.

Employees must not make any public comment which purports to represent the views of the University, or represent themselves as being spokespersons for the University, unless expressly authorised to do so. Employees must make themselves aware of the requirements of the University Social Media Policy QA617 which applies to all Employees.

Employees who hold certain designated positions for the purposes of the Ethics Acts shall disclose outside employment/business interests in line with the specific requirements as per the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995.

#### **(ii) Gifts**

Employees will avoid giving or receiving gifts or benefits which might affect, or appear to affect, the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions. All Employees must ensure compliance with QA441 Entertainment & Hospitality Policy.

More specifically:

- Employees should not solicit gifts directly or indirectly.
- Any gift other than a modest token of nominal value should be courteously declined and should be reported to the employee's Head of Department. Gifts of nominal value that are generally considered as common business or social courtesies are acceptable as long as they are reasonable in type, frequency and value. If an employee has any doubt as to what constitutes a modest token, he/she should seek the guidance of his/her Head of Department.
- An employee should not, by virtue of his/her official dealing with a supplier, accept on his /her own or family's behalf, any special facility, or discount on a private purchase or service from the supplier.

### **(iii) Hospitality**

Employees will avoid giving or receiving hospitality or preferential treatment which might affect, or appear to affect, the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions.

No objection would normally be taken to the acceptance of what is regarded as routine or customary hospitality, for example, a business lunch or attendance at an event, be it a civic or cultural event. Employees should seek guidance from their Head of School/Unit if in doubt. Certain types of hospitality, for example, travelling abroad or holidays shall not be regarded as routine and should be referred to the Head of School/Unit for guidance.

### **(iv) Verification of Qualifications**

Offers of employment are made on the assumption that the information provided by the candidate on the application and at the interview is correct in every respect. Where this is found not to be the case, the University reserves the right to initiate disciplinary procedures, which may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or take any other action as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. All Employees may be required to provide evidence of academic and or other qualifications at any time.

### **(v) Criminal Conviction**

An employee who is charged or convicted of an indictable criminal offence during their employment with the University must report that fact to the Director of Human Resources. In certain circumstances this could have implications for their employment. Such information will be treated in confidence, insofar as possible, and no record of it will be kept unless the information is considered relevant to the employee's employment. If the disclosure of such information necessitates an investigation it will be conducted in accordance with the principles of fair procedures and natural justice.

### **(vi) Garda Vetting**

Where work undertaken by an employee requires Garda clearance or vetting, the employee will cooperate fully with the vetting process.

### **(vii) Acquiring Goods & Services**

Employees must be committed to conducting purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with public policy and best business practice.

- Employees must be committed to ensuring that any third party service providers are engaged in compliance with public policy guidelines.
- Employees must be committed to ensuring that the accounts/reports accurately reflect the operating performance of the University and are not misleading or designed to be misleading.

- Employees must be committed to having the University compete vigorously and energetically but also ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services.
- Employees are required to avoid the improper use of 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 must be committed to not acquiring information or business secrets by improper means.

#### **(viii) Research**

It is a general expectation of the University that academic Employees will pursue research in their field of expertise. In carrying out their research, all Employees must abide by the highest standards of research ethics, and work in accordance with the terms of the University's specific research policies such as Good Practice in Research, Research Misconduct, Data Protection, Intellectual Property, Procurement, Health and Safety, Environment and University of Galway Research policy.

#### **(ix) Academic Freedom**

The Universities Act 1997 provides under Section 14:

- (1) A university, in performing its functions shall
  - (a) have the right and responsibility to preserve and promote the traditional principles of academic freedom in the conduct of its internal and external affairs, and
  - (b) be entitled to regulate its affairs in accordance with its independent ethos and traditions and the traditional principles of academic freedom, and in doing so it shall have regard to
    - (i) the promotion and preservation of equality of opportunity and access,
    - (ii) the effective and efficient use of resources, and
    - (iii) its obligations as to public accountability,
 and if, in the interpretation of this Act, there is a doubt regarding the meaning of any provision, a construction that would promote that ethos and those traditions and principles shall be preferred to a construction that would not so promote.
- (2) A member of the academic staff of a university shall have the freedom, within the law, in his or her teaching, research and any other activities either in or outside the university, to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions and shall not be disadvantaged, or subject to less favourable treatment by the university, for the exercise of that freedom.

The University recognises and protects the concept and practice of academic freedom as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship within the University. While academic freedom is a right, it carries with it the duty of academics to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for and dissemination of knowledge and truth. Academic freedom is not a defence against breach of University policy, poor behaviour or disrespectful treatment of others and is not to be confused with contractual requirements such as attendance at the University.

## **5.2 Principle 2 - Information**

- Employees are committed to providing access to general information relating to their activities in a way that is open and enhances accountability to the general public.
- Employees are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the University. This would constitute material such as:
  - personal information of any individual;
  - information received in confidence by the University; &
  - any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of the University.
- Employees of the University will observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.
- Employees of the University will comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g., Data Protection legislation, Freedom of Information legislation etc.)
- Employees will observe due confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of University's Committees and Boards and internal meetings.

## **5.3 Principle 3 - Obligations**

- Employees will fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the University by the Universities Act 1997, the Higher Education Authority Act 2022 and all other relevant legislation.
- Employees will comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.
- Employees will comply with measures the University has introduced to prevent fraud (including the University of Galway Fraud Policy QA403) and to ensure compliance with the prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.
- Employees are obliged to attend at work as required and to devote their full attention to their official duties during working hours.
- Employees shall not engage in any other gainful occupation that might impair the performance of their duties, conflict with the interests of the University or be inconsistent

with the discharge of their duties as employees of the University. Permission to engage in outside work, including consultancy or serving on boards etc. must be approved by the Director of HR in the case of Employees other than academic employees. Academic Employees should refer to the University's guidelines on Private Consultancy work. Full-time academic Employees who engage in such work must seek permission within the terms of the guidelines and are required to complete an annual return to the Registrar and Deputy-President.

#### **5.4 Principle 4 - Loyalty**

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

#### **5.5 Principle 5 - Fairness**

- Employees are committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation.
- Employees are committed to fairness in all business dealings.
- Employees value the University's students, suppliers, employees, and customers and treats all its students, suppliers, employees and customers equitably.

#### **5.6 Principle 6 - Work/External Environment**

- Employees place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of the University's employees and students.
- Employees will ensure that community concerns are fully considered in the Employee's activities.
- Employees will seek to reduce any detrimental impact of University operations on the environment. This will be in keeping with the University of Galway value of sustainability.

### **6.0 Sanctions**

This Code applies to all employees of the University. Breaches of the Code may result in the University's Disciplinary procedure being invoked, which may in certain circumstances result in dismissal.



## 7.0 Review

The Employee Code of Conduct will be reviewed every three years.

## 8.0 Related Documentation

This code should be read in conjunction with the following information:

Name	Webpage
Conflict of Interest Policy	<a href="#">FRC.22.A5.11-QA413-Conflict-of-Interests-Policy-2022-02-15---Final.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Equality Diversity & Inclusion policies	<a href="#">Policies &amp; Procedures - University of Galway</a>
Recruitment & Selection Policy	<a href="#">Recruitment--Selection-Policy.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Disciplinary Policy & Procedures	<a href="#">QA112-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a> <a href="#">QA125-Academic-Disciplinary-Procedure.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Health & Safety Policies	<a href="#">Policies &amp; Procedures - University of Galway</a>
Data Protection Policy & Guides	<a href="#">Policies and Procedures - University of Galway</a>
Entertainment & Hospitality Policy.	<a href="#">QA441 Entertainment and Hospitality.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Harassment & Bullying Policy	<a href="#">Harassment-and-Sexual-Harassment-Policy-(10-9-2020)-updated.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a> <a href="#">Employee-Anti-Bullying-Policy-Final.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Ethics in Public Office Act 1995	<a href="#">See Link</a>
University of Galway Strategy	<a href="#">University-of-Galway-Strategic-Plan-2020-2025.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
University Social Media Policy	<a href="#">Social Media Policy - V.4.0 (universityofgalway.ie)</a>
Fraud Policy	<a href="#">QA403-Fraud.pdf (universityofgalway.ie)</a>

## 9.0 Policy

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
University Management Team	Each member of UMT is responsible for ensuring compliance with this Code of Conduct in their respective areas, and responsibility for ensuring that staff are aware of the policies mentioned and possibly to be enforced are cross sectoral.
Head of School / Unit	Ensure that all Employees are aware of the policy
All Employee	Responsible to ensure that they are aware of content of the Code
Director of Human Resources	Responsible for updating the Code in line with the policy, and making the Code available to all staff via the website