



**UNIVERSITY *of* LIMERICK**

**OLLSCOIL LUIMNIGH**

**CODE OF CONDUCT  
FOR  
EMPLOYEES**

*Approved by Governing Authority 27<sup>th</sup> September 2011*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The University of Limerick values integrity, honesty and fairness and strives to integrate these values into its teaching, research and business practices. Adherence to this Code and the Code for Members of the Governing Authority will aid the University in promoting its reputation and commitment to ethical behaviour.
- 1.2 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.

## **2. Intent and Scope**

- 2.1 The University of Limerick has developed this Code of Conduct for Employees. The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to employees of the University of Limerick in performing their duties as employees in an ethical and professional manner and in compliance with the policies and procedures of the University of Limerick and relevant legislation including the Universities Act, 1997.
- 2.2 For the purposes of this Code, employees are defined as all individuals in the paid employment of the University, full and part time, including those in receipt of stipends.

## **3. Policy Approach**

- 3.1 The Governing Authority of the University of Limerick fully subscribes to the “Governance of Irish Universities: A Governance Code of Legislation, Principles, Best Practice and Guidelines”, (HEA/IUA) and has adopted a UL Code of Governance in accordance with the HEA/IUA Code.
- 3.2 Employees of the University are expected to be conversant with this Code of Conduct and the requirements of University policies and procedures governing their conduct. The Human Resources Division will provide training to support this Policy. The Human Resources Division will also provide a copy of this Code to each employee of the University and will endeavour to promote, disseminate and ensure the implementation of this Code to employees.

## **4. Objectives**

- 4.1 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 of Limerick;
  - 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 of Limerick;
  - To promote compliance with best current governance and management practice in all the activities of the University of Limerick.

4.2 These objectives can be achieved through, *inter alia*, adherence to the fundamental principles set out in this Code.

## **5. The requirements of the Code**

5.1 In the performance of their duties employees should endeavour to maintain high standards in service delivery, observe appropriate behaviour and maintain the highest standards of probity.

## **6. Integrity**

6.1 Employees are required to disclose to their line manager outside employment and/or personal business interests they have which may be in conflict with the business of the University of Limerick or may be perceived as such.

6.2 Employees will not engage in any outside employment/business or activity which conflicts with the interests of the University of Limerick.

6.3 Employees will be committed to conducting the purchasing activities of goods/ services in accordance with public policy, best business practice and the University's procurement policies and procedures.

6.4 Employees will be committed to ensuring that the engagement of consultancy and other services is in compliance with public policy guidelines.

6.5 Employees will be committed to ensuring that the accounts/reports of their area of responsibility within the University accurately reflect the operating performance of the University and are not misleading or designed to be misleading.

6.6 Employees are required to avoid the unapproved use of the University of Limerick's resources or time for personal gain or for the benefit of competitors.

6.7 Employees should not acquire information or business secrets by improper means.

## **7. Duty of Care**

7.1 Employees will act responsibly and fairly with the due care, diligence, loyalty and the prudence of a reasonable individual whose duty of care is to the University of Limerick.

## **8. Conduct as Employees**

8.1 Employees will treat each other and all members of the campus community with courtesy and respect.

8.2 Employees will use the resources of the University in a proper, effective and efficient manner and will take proper and reasonable care of University property and will not knowingly use, or permit its use, for unauthorised purposes.

8.3 Employees are required to attend work, perform their duties in a diligent and efficient manner and not absent themselves from duty without proper authorisation.

8.4 Employees will ensure that expenses such as travel and subsistence payments are not unnecessarily incurred either by themselves or by staff reporting to them.

## **9. Gifts and Hospitality**

9.1 All actions of employees in carrying out their official duties will be above suspicion and not give rise to any actual or potential conflict of interest, and their dealings with commercial and other interests will bear the closest possible scrutiny.

9.2 The receipt of gifts and hospitality by employees from external individuals or organisations and from those with whom they have official dealings, will be governed by the highest standards. For the purposes of these provisions, the term “gift” includes any benefit which is given to an employee free of charge or at less than its commercial price.

9.3 The exchange of official gifts (e.g. gifts exchanged with dignitaries and officials) to and from the University is acceptable and in such circumstances, gifts received remain the property of the University. Receipt of business related hospitality that constitutes normal courtesies in business and community relations (e.g. attendance at a community/civic/ cultural function) is acceptable. Employees may only accept personal gifts of a reasonable value.

9.4 Employees will not accept cash, gift cheques or any vouchers that may be exchanged for cash regardless of the amount from external individuals or organisations.

9.5 Employees will not solicit gifts or hospitality for personal gain.

## **10. Acquiring Goods and Services**

10.1 Employees will conduct purchasing activities of goods and services in accordance with University procurement policies and procedures, public policy and best business practice.

10.2 Employees will not solicit contracts with the University of Limerick for the supply of goods or services (other than for employment) either for their own benefit, or for any partnership or company with which they have an involvement in their private capacity, or on behalf of other persons or organisations.

- 10.3 No purchase will be made from, and no sale made to, employees, or any partnership or company with which employees have an involvement in their private capacity, in respect of goods or services, unless prior sanction has been obtained from the line manager in which the transaction arises. The line manager will consult with the Director, Human Resources on such matters.
- 10.4 Employees will comply with University of Limerick detailed procurement (tendering and purchasing) policy and procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for the sanctioning of any relevant expenditure.
- 10.5 Employees will not negotiate or arbitrate on any matter affecting a University of Limerick contract or the purchase from, or sale of goods to the University where, in their private capacities, they are interested either as principals or as shareholders in a company so involved.

## **11. Confidentiality/Use of Information**

- 11.1 Employees will be cognisant of their responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 & 2003 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 and committed to providing access to general information relating to activities of the University in a way that is open and transparent and enhances the University's accountability to the general public. Training will be provided by the Human Resources Division on employees' responsibilities under these Acts.
- 11.2 Employees will comply with all relevant statutory provisions of the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 & 2003 and the Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003.
- 11.3 Employees of the University are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the University of Limerick. This would constitute material such as and in particular:
- personal information;
  - information received in confidence by the University;
  - any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of the University.
- 11.4 Employees will observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.
- 11.5 Employees will respect the confidentiality of information received in the performance of their duties as employees. Additionally, employees will respect the confidentiality of the deliberations of University Boards/ Committees where advised that such confidentiality is required.
- 11.6 Employees will ensure that appropriate care is taken to guarantee the security of sensitive information (in paper or electronic form) whether on or off Campus.
- 11.7 Employees will ensure that confidential records are subject to appropriate access procedures.

11.8 Employees will observe any additional restrictions adopted by the University on the use or dissemination of information (subject to the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 & 2003 or Data Protection Acts, 1988 & 2003 requirements).

## 12. Conflicts of Interest

12.1. Employees have a duty to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of business ethics.

12.2 Employees will furnish to their line manager details relating to business interests including shareholdings, professional relationships etc, which could involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence employees in the performance of their duties. Any interests of employees' families of which they could be expected to be reasonably aware or a person or body connected with employees that involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence employees in the performance of their duties should also be disclosed. For this purpose, persons and bodies connected with employees include:

- a) a spouse, partner, parent, brother, sister, child or step-child;
- b) a body corporate with which an employee is associated;
- c) a person acting as the trustee of any trust, the beneficiaries of which include the employee or the persons at (a) above or the body corporate at (b) above; and
- d) a person acting as a business partner of the employee or of any person or body who, by virtue of (a) – (c) above, is connected with the employee.

12.3 Employees will be considered to have a **real** conflict of interest when they hold a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, of which they are aware and which in the opinion of a reasonably informed and well-advised person, is sufficient to put into question the independence, impartiality and objectiveness that employees are obliged to exercise in the performance of their duties.

12.4 Employees will be aware that they may have a **perceived** conflict of interest when they appear to have, in the opinion of a reasonably informed and well-advised person, a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, that is sufficient to put into question the independence, impartiality and objectiveness that employees are obliged to exercise in the performance of their duties.

12.5 Employees will resolve a conflict of interest in the best interests of the University by declaring their interest to their line manager. In circumstances where employees are unsure as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists, or is material, they should discuss the matter with their line manager who may consult with the Director, Human Resources on the matter.

12.6 Employees serving on University committees or similar bodies must declare any personal interest in the business to be discussed, and if necessary and as required, withdraw from the consideration of such business.

12.7 Employees occupying designated positions of employment [positions in respect of which the maximum salary is not less than the maximum salary of a Principal Officer (Civil Service Grade)] will comply with the requirements of the provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001.

### **13. Loyalty**

13.1 Employees have a responsibility to be loyal to the University of Limerick and to be committed to its activities with due regard to the tenets of academic freedom.

### **14. Fairness**

14.1 This Code of Conduct places an onus on employees to ensure compliance with employment equality and equal status legislation, commitment to fairness in all business dealings, and the valuing and equal treatment of all those with whom the University interacts.

### **15. Responsibility**

15.1 The Director, Human Resources will ensure that this Code of Conduct is circulated to all employees for their understanding and retention.

15.2 The Director, Human Resources will provide practical guidance and direction as required by employees in such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations which may arise from time to time.

### **16. Review of the Code**

16.1 This Code of Conduct will be reviewed as necessary.