



University of Kurdistan-Hewler Code of Ethics and Conduct

1. Policy Declaration

This Code of Ethics and Conduct sets down a number of the University's minimum standards and obligations for its employees, as well as students and contractors engaged by the University and provides some working examples which illustrate the intention and scope of this Code.

2. Policy Description

2.1. Objective

The University of Kurdistan-Hewler (UKH) has an important role in the provision of services to the community in Erbil, Kurdistan and the wider region. This places staff and students of the University in a unique position of trust and responsibility, requiring standards of ethical behaviour that reflect community expectations.

This Code of Ethics and Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour expected of UKH staff and students. It is intended that the Code of Ethics and Conduct guide staff and students in solving ethical dilemmas they face at work or study, in their dealings with colleagues, students, the University, local employers and other stakeholders, and the broader local, national and international community. More specifically University staff and students when making decisions in the course of their work or study shall consider the following:

- i) whether the decision is lawful;
- ii) whether the decision is consistent with University policy and in line with the University's objectives and code of conduct;
- iii) what are the likely outcomes for all concerned parties;
- iv) whether the outcomes raise a conflict of interest or lead to private gain at University expense;
- v) whether the decision is justified in terms of the public interest.

For the purposes of this Code of Ethics and Conduct, "staff" includes all employees, Governing Board members, contractors and visitors engaged in any University-related activity. Also, "students" includes all those who receive the educational services from the University whether they are full time, part time or on professional development courses.

2.2. Principles

The University of Kurdistan Hewler Code of Ethics and Conduct is based upon four principles:

- **Integrity** - Earning and sustaining public trust by being honest, open and transparent in all dealings and by acting in the best interest of communities served by the University;

- **Respect** – Treating colleagues, students, stakeholders and the broader community with respect and courtesy, and having regard for the dignity and needs of the people with whom staff members interact. In short, respecting one self, respecting others and respecting UKH.
- **Accountability** - Taking personal and professional responsibility for actions, and achieving results through the best use of University financial and physical resources and by working effectively with people. In addition staff and students are accountable for their actions and deeds both inside and outside the University.
- **Service Focus** - Demonstrating a spirit of service by providing a relevant and timely service to clients, colleagues, students, stakeholders and the broader community, and by valuing the views of these groups and using them to improve service quality.

2.3. Scope and Application

All University staff and students must be aware of and observe the relevant sections of this Code of Ethics and Conduct. This policy supports a number of the University's Strategic Commitments and Priorities and embeds compliance with government legislation. Staff and students found in breach of the code will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

3. Policy Content, Definitions and Implementation

3.1. Integrity in Practice

Integrity is about the intent or meaning behind actions. Behaving with integrity involves dealing with others openly and honestly. It also involves complying with any applicable legislative, industrial or administrative requirements.

- **Behaving honestly**

UKH staff and students are required to act honestly while performing their duties at all times.

- **Use of University money, property and facilities**

UKH's money, property and facilities should be used with appropriate care and for official purposes only and in accord with its published financial regulations.

- **Exerting influence, accepting gifts, benefits or favours**

University staff should not accept gifts, benefits or favours where these may influence, or may reasonably be seen to influence, decision making. Benefits other than those of nominal value can only be accepted with approval of the Vice Chancellor.

- **Conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest is where the financial or other interests of a staff member or associate are, or may reasonably be seen to be, in opposition to duties undertaken as a University staff member. Each staff member should be alert to any actual or potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, and disclose these to his or her supervisor as well as to chairs of any committees in which they are serving. This includes

conflicts of interest that may arise in the supervision of students or other staff members.

- **Nepotism and patronage**

It is unacceptable for staff members to favour relatives (nepotism) or people they know (patronage) in decision-making and provision of service.

- **Conduct in public**

UKH staff and students must consider the impact of their actions in public, whether on duty or not. Staff and students must reflect a positive image of UKH at all times. Furthermore, they must not do or say anything to degrade UKH and to ensure that their conduct in public upholds the principles expressed in this Code of Ethics and Conduct at all times.

- **Ensuring merit and equity**

Staff members must ensure selection processes apply merit principles in order to select the most suitable applicants with abilities, aptitudes, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to a position.

- **Integrity in financial reporting**

All material financial information and disclosure must be accurately represented in UKH's accounts. Staff members must not conceal information, nor take any action to influence, coerce, manipulate or mislead either internal or external auditors.

- **Fraud**

Staff members and students of the University must not engage in fraudulent activities, and fraud or suspected fraud should be reported. For the purposes of this Code, fraud is defined as dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means.

- **Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is an essential component of scholarly activity. Such activity involves researching, understanding and building upon the work of others and requires that credit to others be given where it is due and that the contributions of others be acknowledged. UKH expects a high level of professional conduct from staff and students, and plagiarism, collusion and related forms of cheating and academic dishonesty and fraud are not acceptable or permitted.

3.2. Respect in Practice

- Respect is about how people are treated. University staff members and students are required to show consideration for other people in the execution of all duties, including the provision of service and advice and in decision making. In short, respecting one self, respecting others and respecting UKH

- **Respect for Individuals**

University academic staff, officers, employees and students should treat other University academic staff, officers, employees and students with respect, courtesy, fairness and equity. This involves, but is not limited to:

- Fairness in dealing with others;
- Carrying out work with integrity and objectivity;

- A client-centred approach to work;
- Avoiding unlawful discrimination, for example on grounds such as: gender, sexual orientation, race, cultural background, religion, or political conviction;
- Avoiding behaviour which might reasonably be perceived as harassment, bullying or intimidation;
- Carrying out work in a safe manner and taking precautions to protect the health, safety and welfare of oneself and others;
- Complying with any legislative, industrial or administrative requirements;
- Avoiding behaviour which might reasonably be perceived as creating an unsafe or unhealthy environment;
- Respecting an individual's right to privacy and undertaking to keep personal information in confidence;
- Respecting privacy laws and confidential information given to them in the course of their employment..

Examples of behaviour that is unacceptable include (but is not limited to):

- Using mockery, sarcasm and innuendos in UKH communications aimed at degrading others and the University.
- Rude or insulting behaviour;
- Persistent sarcastic behaviour;
- Making decisions based on favouritism;
- Stalking, threatening or menacing behaviour.

- **Workplace bullying**

University staff and students must not bully or otherwise harass colleagues, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community. Bullying includes behaviour aimed to demean, humiliate or intimidate either individuals or groups of people.

Equity

Equity is about being fair and just to all people, but does not necessarily mean treating everyone in the same way. It may be necessary to treat a person differently according to their circumstances and needs, in order to give them an equal chance in comparison with others. The services delivered by staff members must be made inclusive and responsive to all groups.

- **Cultural diversity**

Cultural diversity is an important and valuable asset for the University. The University strongly supports cultural diversity in its various communities, and is committed to forging mutually beneficial relationships with these communities, built upon a foundation of trust and respect. Staff members can expect to work within a culturally diverse environment, and are expected to discharge their duties in a manner that is inclusive and responsive to all groups, and recognises the culture, history, uniqueness and diversity of these groups within UKH, Erbil and Kurdistan as a region.

- **Discrimination**

Staff and students must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, in their treatment of individuals or groups of people on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status and so on. For the purposes of this Code, discrimination

means treatment in a manner that is less favourably because of a characteristic or circumstance that has no bearing on the individual's or group's capacity to perform the activity being evaluated.

Academic leaders, Supervisors and student leaders must ensure that the workplace is free from all forms of harassment and discrimination. They should understand and apply the principles of equal employment opportunity and ensure that the employees they supervise are informed of these principles. Furthermore, officers, employees and students must comply with the University's e-mail and internet policies, procedures and practices.

- **International regulation and customs**

It is essential that UKH staff familiarise themselves with all the laws and customs of any particular country if they have responsibility for any relevant aspect of activities in that country.

- **Privacy of personal information**

UKH and individual staff members share responsibility for ensuring that personal information is used in such a manner that the rights and legitimate interests of others are respected. Staff have an obligation to:

- ensure that personal information concerning students or staff is secured against loss, misuse or unauthorised access, modification or inappropriate disclosure;
- report to their supervisor, or another senior officer of the University, actual or suspected misuse of information.

- **Confidential Information**

Official information must only be used for the work-related purpose intended and not for personal benefit. Officers and employees must make sure that they do not disclose, disseminate or make use of any information marked confidential without prior authorisation or unless specifically authorized by legislation. University officers and employees must take reasonable steps to ensure that any information marked confidential in any form (e.g. computer files), cannot be accessed by unauthorised people and that sensitive information is only discussed with people who are authorised to have access to it. Unauthorised disclosure or use of confidential information may result in disciplinary proceedings for misconduct.

- **Environment**

Staff and students must recognise their responsibility to respect, protect and improve the environment in their planning and execution of activities.

3.3. Accountability in Practice

Accountability is about fulfilling one's responsibility as a University staff member and student to colleagues, students, the University, local employers, other stakeholders, and the broader local, national and international community. Staff and students are expected to understand their role within the University, and to take personal and professional responsibility for their actions. They are also expected to access sufficient information, and ensure that they have the understanding, competence, knowledge, and resources to discharge their duties in a responsible manner. Staff and students must not engage in activities that potentially bring the University into disrepute and damage its reputation, where it can be reasonably

assumed that the University will be impeded from fulfilling strategic or financial goals as a direct result of the action.

- **Academic Freedom**

The University shall:

(a) guarantee academic freedom of both inquiry and expression provided such inquiry and expression does not contravene applicable Iraqi National and KRG legislation (such as defamation and privacy laws) and provided that if disputes arise, the University's dispute resolution practices are observed.

(b) encourage staff and students to express themselves through UKH processes using critical judgment and scholarship, subject to confidentiality obligations placed upon them by any privacy and research obligations.

(c) encourage officers and employees to express themselves through UKH Processes using critical judgment and scholarship, subject to confidentiality obligations placed upon them by the University either through defamation or privacy laws, University policy or under the terms of their contracts of employment.

(d) Staff and students have the right to pursue critical and open inquiry, publish research and scholarly works and, consistent with the University's academic processes and this Code of Ethics and Conduct, freely discuss, teach, assess and develop curricula.

(e) Staff members and students have the right to participate in public debates and express opinions about issues and ideas relevant to their particular acknowledged knowledge base, as well as express opinions about issues and ideas related to Higher Education policy, and the role of Higher Education in society, more generally.

(f) Staff members and students are encouraged to participate in the decision-making processes of the University guided by their contract and job description. However, staff members must recognise that internal and external public debate falling under the rubric of intellectual freedom must be undertaken in a manner consistent with this Code of Ethics and Conduct, must respect the privacy and confidentiality aspects around the employer/employee relationship and be respectful and sensitive to the culture in Erbil and Kurdistan Region.

- **Decision-making**

Staff and students must recognise that decisions made by them may affect colleagues, students, the University, stakeholders and the broader public and, therefore, must be fair and consistent. Effective decision-making takes into account the needs of people both now and into the future, integrating academic, social, environmental, economic and risk-management factors. All decisions must be honest, based upon relevant information, justifiable and understandable both by those who are affected by the decisions and those who may need to review the decision. Care needs to be exercised in giving information or advice that may be used as the basis for decision-making, either organisationally or personally.

- **Utilising and managing people and resources**

Staff members and students must efficiently and effectively utilise the resources at their disposal in discharging their duties. Staff members are expected to manage their own time within the allocated workload, and the activities of people under their responsibility, in a way that is outcome and performance focused. The use of all resources must be both sustainable and justifiable.

- **Health and safety**

Staff members and students must take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and of others while at work, and must not act in a way that could impinge upon the safety and wellbeing of others. Staff should obey any lawful orders from persons in authority. Staff and students should make themselves familiar with UKH emergency procedures and fire escape facilities in the Academic Building.

- **Performance**

There is a general expectation that the University be responsive, effective and efficient. Performance management, supporting fair and equitable management of staff and students and aiming to build a competent and high performing institution that is continuously improving its performance in delivering services, is a key component in meeting this expectation.

- **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual property generated by staff engaged UKH remains the property of the UKH. Staff members have a duty to declare and protect intellectual property, in line with University policy and practice.

- **Private and consultative practice**

Members of the academic staff may engage in private and consultative practice provided that it is undertaken in line with approved University processes. Staff members must ensure that their conduct upholds the principles expressed in this Code of Ethics and Conduct at all times, and that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure risk to the University is minimised.

- **Research**

The University expects all those engaged in research to observe a high standard of professional conduct, and to promote a culture of research practice that is ethical, competent, safe, accountable and compliant with University policy and practice.

- **Protecting government confidentiality**

UKH staff who for any reason have access to sensitive or confidential government information should protect and manage this in accordance with its security classification.

- **Use of the University's name**

Staff are encouraged to build their own and UKH 's professional profile within their area of expertise through public comment on matters within their particular professional expertise and acknowledged knowledge base. Members of staff writing or speaking publicly in such professional or expert capacities may identify themselves by their University appointment or qualifications and may, for that purpose, use the name of the University, at the same time making it clear that any views expressed are their own. However, members of staff commenting publicly on public issues other than in professional or expert capacities, drawing upon their acknowledged knowledge base, must do so from private addresses and should not use the name of the University, or otherwise identify themselves as members of the University.

The use of the University's name (University of Kurdistan Hewler or UKH) by staff and students in forming groups of any form or in communications, including Face

book, social networks, internet and e-mail groups in any context is not normally permitted. Approval may be given by the Vice Chancellor or the Executive Management Board, and only if it is seen to be of direct benefit to the University. Members of staff and students may not use or allow the use of the name of the University (University of Kurdistan Hewler or UKH) or identify themselves as students or employees of the University in the public promotion or advertising of commercial products without prior approval by the Vice Chancellor or the Executive Management Board.

- **Observe all legislative requirements and lawful and reasonable instructions.**

Staff and students must observe all legislative requirements and lawful and reasonable instructions from people with authority to give such instructions. This includes Acts, regulations, policies and processes directly relevant to your work and organisation.

- **Reporting of misconduct, corruption or illegal activity**

There is a general expectation that the University will have a high standard of integrity and be free from misconduct, corruption or other illegal activity. Staff and students have a role in ensuring that all members of the University are held accountable for inappropriate conduct. This includes reporting to the relevant authorities instances of conduct that staff reasonably believe are a breach of legislation and/or are illegal activities. Staff and students must not knowingly make a false disclosure.

- **Participation in political activities**

Political participation by staff as part of their normal involvement in community affairs is quite acceptable. However, staff should exercise caution and be alert for any real or potential conflict of interest between their official duties and issues that are raised as part of their participation in any political activity. Any potential conflict needs to be resolved quickly through discussion with the individual's supervisor. Workplace facilities must not be used for the purposes of political campaigns, fund raising or canvassing.

- **Internet, Facebook, Twitter and e-mail use**

The use of the above should be undertaken in a responsible, safe and productive manner, in line with University policy, process, code of ethics and conduct and ensuring that UKH's information infrastructure and confidentiality are protected. Staff and students managing any of the above groups are accountable for any breaches of UKH code and ethics and conduct and may face disciplinary procedures.

- **Personal relationships in the workplace**

Members of the University should strive to achieve high professional and ethical standards. Close personal relationships between members of the University community may place this objective at risk, or might reasonably be seen by others to involve a breach of trust and/or a conflict of interest.

In particular, staff should avoid situations requiring them to supervise or assess a student who is a member of their family or with whom they have, or have had, a personal or other significant relationship. They should also avoid situations requiring them to performance manage another member of staff with whom they have or have had a relationship of the kind referred to above.

Staff involved in close personal relationships which are not publicly known and where there could be, or could reasonably be seen to be, a breach of trust and / or conflict of interest, are required to declare the relationship to their Line manager/Head of Department or Division.

3.4. Service Focus in Practice

Service focus is about providing high quality customer service in all levels of activity and interaction. Staff members are expected to provide timely, accurate and informed services, based upon comprehensive research or professional expertise or opinion and allowing for objective decision making based upon honest and impartial presentation of available options.

- **Responsive, timely, effective and efficient services**

All staff members should be responsive to requests from colleagues, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community and provide advice or service in an objective, timely and professional fashion. Staff should actively seek innovative solutions that can be implemented to meet stakeholder needs in an efficient and effective manner.

- **Dimensions of service**

Staff members, and in particular those with some management and/or planning responsibility, must recognise that quality service provision requires attention to multiple aspects of the work environment and related activities. In particular, assessment of service quality, both as existing and for improvement purposes, should consider a balance of operational performance and outcomes, the commitment of staff members to University strategic goals and objectives, and dialogue with relevant customers, which may include colleagues, students, stakeholders or members of the broader community.

- **Complaints handling**

Colleagues, students, stakeholders or members of the broader community who have a complaint about University products or services should be dealt with fairly and with sympathy. The fundamental concept is that products or services should provide the degree of safety and utility that a customer in all the circumstances is reasonably entitled to expect.

- **A service-supporting environment**

An appealing, efficient and well-constructed University environment contributes to the quality of service delivery. Staff members should take account of customer service implications when undertaking any development that impacts upon the University environment in general, including physical infrastructure developments and the development of paper and electronic materials.

4. Breaches of this Code

University staff and students are to observe the Code of Ethics and Conduct. Breaching the Code, including obvious or perceived actions outside the spirit of this Code, whether regarded as deliberate or otherwise, may result in consequences ranging from reprimand through to termination of employment. Genuine mistakes will normally not be regarded by the University as breaches of this Code.

5. Further Information

For further information on any aspect of this Code, please contact Human Resources.

Acknowledgment

UKH acknowledges that this document was initially developed based on the Code of Conduct Ethics at Charles Darwin University in Australia