Staff Code of Conduct

About the Code of Conduct

(1) This Code applies to all staff (including honorary academic appointees), volunteers, University Council members, contractors (including agency staff) and external members of University committees (referred to as “All people this Code applies to”).

(2) This Code sets out principles and obligations which align with the University's values of excellence, equity, engagement and sustainability in accordance with the Looking Ahead Strategic Plan and the Ethical Framework. The University is a global leader distinguished by a commitment to Indigenous education, and to creating life ready graduates and a better future for its region through a focus on innovation and impact.

(3) This Code should be read in conjunction with the rules, policies, procedures, guidelines, manuals and frameworks located in the University policy library.

(4) This Code cannot address every situation that may be encountered. Please ask for guidance and support from a senior staff member or refer to one of the resources listed in this Code if you require assistance in a particular situation.

Part A - Principles

(5) All people this Code applies to must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the University's principles as outlined below.

Honesty

(6) Honesty fosters trust, integrity, and a culture of academic excellence. Honesty ensures the accuracy and reliability of research, teaching, and administrative processes, and assists in maintaining the University's reputation and the credibility of all associated with the University. Honesty supports open, transparent, and respectful communication. Honesty fosters an environment where diverse ideas and perspectives can be expressed and debated to reflect the University's strong commitment to the principles of academic freedom, freedom of speech and ethical decision-making.

Fairness

(7) Fairness guides actions that are impartial and consistent and encompasses the principles of inclusivity and natural justice. Fairness reflects the University's commitment to celebrating diversity and its zero tolerance for unlawful harassment or discrimination. Fairness is the foundation for making equitable decisions, ensuring equal access to opportunities, resources, and information. Fairness safeguards academic integrity by preventing favouritism or unlawful discrimination.

Trust

(8) Trust is achieved through honesty, fairness and transparency. It is fostered by cooperative collaboration amongst colleagues and delivering on commitments. Trust is cultivated by appropriately sharing information, while also preserving confidentiality and safeguarding privacy as appropriate. The University holds a position of trust in our

community which comes with the responsibility for us to act with integrity and professionalism.

Accountability

(9) Accountability means we take ownership of all actions or inactions within our control. It means upholding the integrity of our academic endeavours, avoiding conflicts of interest and taking action against wrongdoing. Accountability involves behaving professionally and being proactive about our knowledge and learning. It also means contributing to sustainability – social, economic and environmental.

Respect

(10) Respect means treating every person with courtesy, consideration and dignity. It means we behave and communicate in a way that is professional and does not offend, degrade or humiliate. It includes acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and heritage and the traditional custodians of the lands on which the University is situated. Respect fosters a harmonious and inclusive environment where diverse perspectives can be shared. Respect also extends to treating animals considerately and showing consideration for the property of the University and others.

Part B - Obligations

(11) The obligations in this Code support the consistent application of the University's values and the above principles.

Professional and respectful behaviours

(12) All people this Code applies to must:

a. exercise their freedom of speech and academic freedom in a manner consistent with the Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and in accordance with this Code;
b. acknowledge and attribute collaborators (see Collaborative Research Procedure);
c. be impartial and balanced in decision making, having a clear and sound rationale, consistent with the Ethical Framework;
d. deliver on commitments, be transparent in interactions, admit mistakes and work collaboratively to rectify problems quickly;
e. communicate professionally and respectfully with all members of the University community;
f. behave with compassion, kindness, and care in all aspects of their engagement with the University community;
g. uphold the highest standards of honesty and integrity when conducting research, teaching, and administrative duties including complying with the Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy;
h. behave professionally when representing the University and not engage in behaviour that has the potential to bring the University into disrepute;
i. demonstrate and encourage open and courteous communication including by providing candid, accurate and appropriate feedback to members of the University community;
j. value diversity and promote a culture of respect which does not tolerate bullying, or unlawful discrimination or harassment (see the Workplace Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy, Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy, the Gender Inclusive Membership of University Committees Policy, the Inclusive Language Policy, and the Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence Policy);
k. protect sensitive and confidential information appropriately and not use or disclose it other than in the proper performance of their role;
l. only make public comment on behalf of the University or share the outcomes and implications of research work when authorised to do so and following engagement with Communications & Engagement. See the Marketing,

Communications and Reputation Policy;

m. behave collaboratively and cooperatively and follow reasonable directions of their supervisors;
n. keep up-to-date with advances and changes in knowledge and professional and ethical standards relevant to their area of expertise and ensure their conduct is within these standards including by complying with any applicable professional standards or codes;
o. be familiar with and comply with the University's policies and procedures which may be accessed here;
p. perform their duties to the best of their ability, and proactively contribute to the success of the University;
q. treat animals with consideration and sensitivity, including where animals are used for research in accordance with the Animal Research Regulatory Manual;
r. refrain from the misuse of alcohol or drugs;
s. undertake research activities responsibly, ethically, with integrity, and in accordance with the Responsible Conduct of Research Policy.

Conflict of Interest

(13) All people this Code applies to must:

a. act in the best interests of the University;
b. carefully consider whether any personal interests or relationships may create a perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest;
c. avoid or disclose and manage any perceived, actual or potential conflict of interest in accordance with the Disclosure of Interest Policy;
d. not solicit or accept gifts and benefits for themselves or for another person which might in any way be seen to directly or indirectly compromise or influence them in their official capacity, and disclose reportable gifts in accordance with the Disclosure of Interest Policy;
e. not take advantage of their position with the University for personal gain;
f. avoid relationships with students and disclose any close personal, familial or other significant relationship (whether romantic, sexual, intimate, cultural, business or financial) with a student or colleague they may be required to make decisions about, including whether in recruitment, performance, remuneration, promotion, supervision or assessment in accordance with the Disclosure of Interest Policy;
g. obtain approval in advance for any outside work if required in accordance with the Outside Work Policy.

Legal duties

(14) All people this Code applies to must:

a. not engage in workplace bullying, unlawful discrimination, vilification, unlawful harassment, sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sex based harassment and/or victimisation (see the Workplace Bullying, Harassment, and Discrimination Policy, Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Policy, the Prevention and Response to Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Procedure and the Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence Policy);
b. take reasonable care for their own health and safety and the health and safety of staff, students and other members of the University community. All staff have a duty to promptly report any work, health and safety concerns, hazards, or incidents they encounter in the course of their duties in accordance with the Work, Health and Safety Policy;
c. respect the personal information of others by complying with the Privacy Policy;
d. maintain records in accordance with applicable law and the Records Governance Policy;
e. protect Australia's national interests by balancing their international collaborations against the risk of foreign interference in accordance with the Foreign Interference Policy and International Sanctions Compliance Policy;

f. not engage in corrupt conduct, maladministration, fraud, waste of public money, or other criminal activity and promptly report any reasonable suspicion about such conduct to the University. See the Fraud and Corruption Framework and the Public Interest Disclosures Policy;
g. comply with the University's obligations in relation to the copyright of others in accordance with the Copyright Compliance Policy;
h. complete all required training modules in accordance with University policy or related documents (including, but not limited to, the Mandatory Training and Onboarding Procedure);
i. comply with all applicable laws and contractual duties and not engage in conduct that has the potential to cause the University to contravene any law or contractual duty;
j. treat children and young people in an appropriate and respectful manner, maintaining their dignity and rights, prioritising their wellbeing, and ensuring compliance with the Child Safety and Wellbeing Policy.

University procedures and resources

(15) All people this Code applies to must:

a. act with care and diligence when exercising delegations in accordance with the Delegation of Authority Guidelines, the Delegation of Authority Framework, and the Risk Management Policy;
b. promote the principles of good governance and social, economic and environmental sustainability. See the Environmental Sustainability Policy;
c. show transparency in the expenditure of public funds and expend University funds in accordance with the Procurement Policy;
d. support scholarly activity, promote innovation and lawfully deal with and use University resources in accordance with the Intellectual Property Policy, and Intellectual Property Procedure, and Open Access Policy;
e. obtain permission before using University property for personal use;
f. appropriately use the University's information and communications technology resources including taking reasonable steps to manage security risks and protect confidential information, in accordance with the Digital Technology Conditions of Use Policy and the Digital Security Policy;
g. only use the University's brand and logo in accordance with the Marketing, Communications and Reputation Policy.

Non-compliance with the Code of Conduct

(16) Breaches of this Code may constitute misconduct or serious misconduct, which may result in disciplinary action or other action, up to and including termination of employment, affiliation, engagement or other commensurate action.

(17) While isolated or minor breaches of this Code may not result in immediate disciplinary (or other) action, they may be considered more seriously if they are part of a recurring pattern of behaviour.

(18) To raise concerns about potential breaches of this Code refer to the Complaint Management Policy, Resolving Workplace Concerns and Grievances Procedure, or Public Interest Disclosures Policy or submit a breach report.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	10th November 2026
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Responsible Executive	Martin Sainsbury Chief People and Culture Officer martin.sainsbury@newcastle.edu.au
Enquiries Contact	Andrew Cairns Associate Director, Workplace Relations, Governance and Policy

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Graduate" - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Council member" - A person who is a member of the University Council as described in Section 8B of the University of Newcastle Act, 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Area of expertise" - An area in which a staff member or a student have been peer-reviewed or published.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Disciplinary action" - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

"Policy library" - The repository of policy documents published on the University website.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Senior staff" - Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Innovation Chair, Global Innovation Professorial Fellow, Head of School, Director or equivalent.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.