

## Professional Conduct Statement for University Centre Students

### 1. Purpose

- 1.1. The College has clear, broad standards of behaviour, as outlined in its Code of Conduct. This statement expands on the principle that you must not 'Behave in any way which adversely affects the reputation of the College'.
- 1.2. This statement seeks to outline and clarify what constitutes professional conduct, as distinguished from personal and academic conduct. It relates to the way that your conduct aligns to typical workplace standards in day-to-day dealings with the workplace, the College and University Centre.

### 2. Scope

- 2.1. This statement is aimed at students enrolled on programmes delivered by the University Centre. If you are enrolled on an access to HE diploma, foundation degree, HNC/HND, BA (Hons) top-up programmes, higher or degree apprenticeship, or another, shorter professional programme then you are usually working towards gaining qualifications that are likely to have a direct bearing on employment or professional status. Therefore you are expected to uphold high standards of academic, personal and professional conduct.
- 2.2. Both personal and professional misconduct shall be dealt with using the Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure. Section 3.4. of the Policy outlines that:

*Unacceptable conduct is any academic or non-academic conduct which adversely interferes with teaching and learning, is disrespectful to other members of the College community or College property or breaches the College Code of Conduct. This statement covers all learner activities such as work placements, trips and visits and other enrichment activities*

- 2.3. If you contravene a policy, code or regulation that applies in your workplace it is expected that this shall be dealt with using your workplace policy and procedure. If this matter also contravenes the principles set out in this statement then the College's Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure may need to be applied.
- 2.4. Students enrolled on University of Huddersfield-validated Certificate of Education, Professional Graduate Certification of Education and Postgraduate Certificate of Education programmes are bound by the University's regulations on professional conduct.
- 2.5. There are long standing and clear standards of academic conduct expected of you as a student at the University Centre. These can be found in the applicable policies relating

to such matters, which shall be applied where suspected academic misconduct has been identified.

- 2.6. Where there is sufficient evidence that your ability to safely and successfully participate in academic study is adversely affected and that it could reasonably be judged to be as a result of disability, physical or mental ill health, then the Fitness to Study Policy should be considered.

### 3. Details of Statement

#### Work

- 3.1. Work is any situation whether paid or unpaid in which you undertake work in a professional capacity or in an equivalent capacity for, or on behalf of, a business, organisation, charity or other entity, while enrolled on a programme of study. This may include situations such as:
- Employment – whether paid or voluntary (this may be at the College);
  - A period of work experience or an internship (this may be at the College);
  - A work placement;
  - Research and development.
- 3.2. The workplace is the situation in which this work takes place. This may be a physical place of work, it may be virtual, remote or otherwise arranged.
- 3.3. If a case of professional misconduct arises against you and you are a contracted employee of the College then the misconduct shall be dealt with by the College's Human Resources team, according to the appropriate policy and procedure.

#### Professional Conduct

- 3.4. Professional conduct relates to the way that your conduct aligns with typical workplace standards. This includes interactions with the College, professional bodies, businesses or other organisations in a work-related capacity. You should consider carefully how you conduct yourself in terms of:

**Communication** – Contact should be formal, clear, concise and neutral in tone. Strong emotional responses are best edited out of communications whether written, verbal or recorded (this does not include assessed work where an emotional response is required. For example, a reflective account of an experience that provoked a strong emotional response). At all times communication with others should be with the aim of facilitating or constructively supporting the work being planned, undertaken or evaluated, or getting across a point of feedback, information or issue. An example of this is email. Although

email can be seen as quite an informal medium for sending messages it should be treated formally, taking care over the content, tone and construction of messages. Please include a salutation (i.e. 'Hi [person]' or 'Good morning'/'Good afternoon') and sign off properly (i.e. 'Thanks' or 'Kind regards' or something similar).

**Social Media** - Do not forget that all interactions and messages sent on social media are permanent and can be equally damaging in terms of professional conduct. When you apply for a job, for example, your prospective employer may browse through your social media accounts to get a picture of your interests, lifestyle and friendships or associations. Any content that reflects negatively on you may have an impact on the outcome of the application. Equally, the messages that you send via social media to others in your workplace or course group should be respectful and constructive. Bullying and harassment that takes place via social media is still classed as bullying and harassment, so respond carefully and use the same guidelines as you would for all communication.

**Data Protection** - You have a responsibility to handle data properly under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018. There is a guide available online from the Information Commissioner's Office, available at <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/> . You should familiarise yourself with the regulations to ensure you are not acting illegally. The regulations apply in all situations where personal data is handled, defined as 'information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual'. GDPR also applies to primary research, where individuals' data is being collected and they are identifiable within that dataset (even where published data are subsequently anonymised).

**Written Materials** – When producing written materials you should ensure that appropriate standards of wording, tone, spelling, grammar and punctuation are used. For example, in a written essay you should be constructing your writing using paragraphs and coherently structuring the writing with the aim of presenting a series of points to your reader. For written work that is assessed, you are also usually awarded marks for the presentation of the work (including spelling, grammar and punctuation) so this is worth paying attention to. When you produce materials for use in the workplace or with members of the public – including letters and documents relating to primary research – it is expected that your writing promotes the positive reputation of the University Centre as a place that values high standards in writing. Care should also be taken in written communications of all kinds.

**Respect** – Treat each person you come across with respect. Every colleague, student, manager, tutor or other person you interact with has a role to play in your situation- whether in the workplace or at College - and it is your responsibility to maintain good working relationships where possible. You may also wish to take account of the seniority, position, or other status of the person you are interacting with and adapt your approach accordingly.

**Boundaries** – It may be useful or appropriate to set and maintain limitations on your

interactions with others that facilitate constructive working relationships. For example, setting out limits on your working pattern that make it clear to others when they may contact you about work matters, or, if they contact outside this time, a reasonable timeframe for your response. Another example would be setting your own boundaries around sharing certain views with others that may cause rifts or conflict (these might be political or religious views that you know are contentious to others). This is not to say that debate and discussion of opposing points of view is not valid and should never be shared, but that introducing them into a workplace should be done with sensitivity, as the ensuing conversation could be counterproductive, shifting the focus away from the work being undertaken.

**Relationships** – Where personal, business or familial relationships exist that might cause a conflict of interest within a workplace these should be mitigated where possible by adapting practices or adding safeguards against preferential treatment or the perception of preferential treatment. Where a personal relationship develops in a workplace with the potential to create a conflict of interest then it is advisable to notify the workplace of this.

**Ethics** – You should familiarise yourself with any ethical codes of conduct that apply in your workplace. These include professional codes, such as those for nursing or care, codes of ethics for research – where research is being undertaken. You should also be guided by your own general moral compass. If your feeling is that something is wrong then it is better to express this view and explain your position rather than keep quiet. However, this should be done carefully so that people can understand exactly why you consider there to be an ethical problem.

**Your safety and the safety of others** – You should abide by the health and safety regulations that apply in your workplace at all times. Where your personal safety is at risk, for example, in a situation where you or others feel harassed, threatened or are at risk of actual harm it may be appropriate to intervene or to make someone aware whose responsibility it is to intervene. For example, you should know whom to report an accident in the workplace, and how to do this, or whom to report a safeguarding concern.

**Safeguarding** - Safeguarding is a specific duty for staff in certain workplaces. For example, educational establishments all have a duty of care towards their students and if any are considered vulnerable or at risk of harm then this must be reported so it can be followed up appropriately. You should know if there is a specific policy on safeguarding in your workplace – or an equivalent – and if you are not aware of one then you must seek clarification on this.

3.5. Where you undertake work the expectations for conduct within that workplace should be made clear to you by your employer or line manager. It is the responsibility of employers to raise awareness of, and employees to adhere to, policies, codes and regulations that relate to your workplace, such as:

- A code of conduct;

- Absence management;
- Equal opportunities;
- Bullying and harassment;
- Grievances;
- Safeguarding;
- Acceptable and safe usage of equipment, technology and information sharing;
- Performance management;
- Conflicts of interest;
- Ethical working;
- Alcohol, drugs and substance abuse;
- Health and safety.

3.6. If you are unaware of your employer's policies, codes and regulations on such matters – or any other matter – you should seek clarification and information from your employer in the first instance.

#### **4. Links to other policies/procedures/documents**

College Policies:

- Learner Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- IT Acceptable Use Policy (in particular the paragraph entitled 'Unacceptable Use')
- Work Placement Policy (in particular Section 6. Student Responsibilities)
- Fitness to Study Policy
- Safeguarding, Child Protection and Prevent Policy
- Work Based Learning Commitment Statement (for apprentices and employers)
- Code of Conduct
- Research Ethics Policy

Other acts and statutes:

- Equality Act 2010
- Malicious Communication Act 1988
- General Data Protection Regulations 2018 – a guide to GDPR is available online, published by the Information Commissioner's Office: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>