



Professional Conduct Statement for University Centre Students

AUTHOR: Quality, Partnership and Learner Engagement Manager

DATE: April 2021

VERSION 2

Table of Contents

1. Purpose.....	3
2. Scope	3
3. Details of statement	4
4. Policy monitoring.....	6
5. Related policies and procedures	6
6. Policy review.....	7
7. Equality impact assessment	7
8. Publication	7

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. Such programmes usually entail working towards qualifications that have a direct bearing on career progression, employment or professional status. Therefore students are expected to uphold high standards of academic, personal and professional conduct.

2.2. This statement does not address personal or academic (mis)conduct, or fitness to study. General misconduct is 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. As a University Centre student, there are clear expectations around academic conduct. These can be found in the applicable policy, which is applied where suspected academic misconduct (Unfair Practice) has been identified.

2.4. The Fitness to Study Policy is applied where there is evidence that the 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.

2.5. In your workplace it is expected that, if you contravene a policy, code or regulation that applies, this is dealt with in the workplace. However, 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.

2.6. Students enrolled on University of Huddersfield-validated programmes are also bound by the University's regulations on professional conduct.

3. Details of statement

Work

3.1. While a student, work is any situation whether paid or unpaid in which you undertake duties for, or on behalf of, a business, organisation, charity or other entity. You may undertake work for the College. Work includes situations such as:

- Employment – whether paid or voluntary;
- A period of work experience or an internship;
- 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 will be dealt with according to College 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 reflective writing which deals with a strong emotional response to a situation you encountered). 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. Email can be seen as an informal means of communicating, however try to stay formal, 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).

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 or report 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 assessed written work, you are also usually awarded marks for presentation (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 be taken in the production of written communications of all kinds.

Social Media - Do not forget that all interactions and messages sent on social media are usually 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).

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 to facilitate constructive working relationships. For example, not sharing certain views with others that have the potential to 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 these opposing points of view is not valid and should never be undertaken, but that introducing them into a workplace should be done with care and 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 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, and 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 ethically or morally 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 or moral 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/or 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. Policy monitoring

This statement will be reviewed on an annual basis, with changes being approved by the Policies and Procedures Committee.

5. Related policies and procedures

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
- Unfair Practice Policy
- Conflict of Interest 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/>

6. Policy review

Change(s) Made		Reason for Change			
New policy Statement		As requested by OU review			
Revised and updated wording throughout.		To ensure clarity of meaning.			
Added a new sub-section within paragraph 3.4 entitled ‘Written materials’.		To cover aspects of working not included in the previous version of the statement.			
Added Unfair Practice Policy and Conflict of Interest Policy to section 5.		To ensure that all relevant related policies are noted within this current version.			
Review Date	Reviewed by:	Initial Approval by:	Final Approval by:	Next Review Date:	Review Period
April 2020	David Clapham	Policies and Procedures Committee	Policies and Procedures Committee	April 2021	1 Year
April 2021	Jamie Leahy	Policies and Procedures Committee	Policies and Procedures Committee	April 2022	1 Year

7. Equality impact assessment

First Assessment Conducted by:	Date:	Final/Approved Assessment Conducted by:	Date:
Angela Harrison – Quality Administrator	09.06.2020	Angela Harrison – Quality Administrator	09.06.2020

8. Publication

Audience:	Published:
Learners	Moodle
General	College Website