



Ollscoil na hÉireann  
National University of Ireland

APPROVED 17/01/2013

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY of IRELAND**  
**CODE of CONDUCT - MEMBERS of SENATE**

***Introduction***

The Senate of the National University of Ireland (NUI) has adopted this Code of Conduct for its members. A copy of this Code is circulated to all members of the Senate and it will also be made available on the University's website.

***Intent and Scope***

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to the members of the NUI Senate in performing their duties. A separate Code of Conduct applies to the staff of the University; many of the principles and practices are common to both Codes.

***Objectives***

The objectives of the Codes are –

- To set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- To promote and maintain confidence and trust in the University;
- To prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices;
- To promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of the NUI;
- To promote compliance with best current management practices in all the activities of the University.

***General Principles***

All members of the Senate are required to observe the following fundamental principles whether set out for members specifically or as standards adopted by the University for the conduct of its affairs.

### *Primary duties*

- Members of Senate shall carry out their functions with integrity, independence, honesty, good faith and proper purpose and shall act in the best interests of the University;
- Members shall act responsibly and fairly with due care, skill, diligence, loyalty and the prudence of a reasonable individual;
- Members shall treat each other, and the staff of the University, with professionalism, courtesy and respect, and not improperly influence other members;
- Members shall not act as spokespersons for the Senate in any form, unless specifically requested by the Senate to do so; and
- Members shall participate actively and work co-operatively with fellow members in discharging their responsibilities as members.

### *Integrity*

- Members of Senate are required to disclose outside employment or business interests which they consider may be in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the NUI, or may be perceived as such – see . *Appendix* attached;
- The Senate will not allow staff to be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the NUI. It will put in place appropriate arrangements to give effect to this;
- Members will avoid giving or receiving gifts, corporate hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgment on business transactions;
- Members must be committed to having NUI compete vigorously and energetically but also ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, and with commercial and other providers of the services provided by the NUI;
- The University is committed to conducting its purchasing activities of goods and services in accordance with public policy and its purchasing regulations reflect this;
- The University is committed to ensuring that its engagement of consultancy and other services is in compliance with public sector guidelines;
- The University is also committed to ensuring a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to official needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector;
- The University is committed to ensuring that the university accounts/reports accurately reflect the operating performance of the University and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- Members of Senate are required to avoid the use of NUI resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organizations unconnected with the University or its activities or for the benefit of competitors; and

- The University is committed not to acquire information or business secrets by improper means.

### *Information*

- The University is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public;
- Members of Senate are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the University; this could constitute material such as personal information, information received in confidence by the University or any commercially sensitive information. This requirement does not end after cessation of membership;
- The University will comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. data protection legislation, the Freedom of Information Act, 1997);
- The University will observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest; and
- Members of Senate will observe due confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of Senate.

### *Obligations*

- The University will fulfill all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the NUI by the Irish Universities Act, 1908, the Universities Act, 1997, and other relevant legislation.;
- The University will comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure;
- NUI has introduced measures to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with the prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure;
- Members are required to use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Senate meetings;
- Members of Senate shall ensure their compliance with the relevant provisions of the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and Standards in Public Office Act, 2001. (see *Appendix* attached); and
- The Senate acknowledges the duty of its members to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

### *Loyalty*

- The members of Senate acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to the NUI and to be fully committed to all its activities, with due respect to the tenets of academic freedom, while mindful that the NUI itself must at all times take into account the interests of students who are pursuing

courses for NUI degrees and the providers of funding, including taxpayers.

### *Fairness*

- The University is committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation;
- The University is committed to fairness in all business dealings; and
- The University values all the students pursuing courses for NUI degrees, its suppliers, staff and customers and treats all of these stakeholders equally.

### *Work/External Environment*

- The Senate places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its staff;
- The University will ensure that community concerns are fully considered in its activities and operations; and
- The University will minimize any detrimental impact of its operations on the environment.

### *Responsibility*

- The University will circulate this Code of Conduct to all members of Senate for their retention;
- The University will ensure that all members of Senate receive a copy of this Code and understand its contents; and
- The University will provide practical guidance and direction as required on such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations which arise routinely.

### *Review*

- The University will review this Code of Conduct as appropriate.

January, 2013.

## APPENDIX

### DISCLOSURE of INTERESTS by members of the SENATE

1. It is central to the conduct of the business of the Senate that members should act, and be perceived to act, impartially and not be influenced in their roles as members by business or social relationships.
2. Members of the Senate must comply with the requirements of the *Ethics in Public Office Act 1995* and the *Standards in Public Office Act 2001*.
3. This legislation requires, *inter alia*, that persons who hold designated directorships, including membership of the NUI Senate, must make an annual statement or declaration of those interests (as defined in the legislation) which could materially influence them in the performance of their functions and refrain from exercising such functions in accordance with the legislation. The annual statement, which may be updated if interests change, must be made to the Registrar, in accordance with the provisions of the legislation, and, to the Public Office Commission established by the legislation. The Commission provides advice and publishes mandatory procedures concerning steps to be taken to ensure compliance with the Act.
4. In addition to the statutory requirements, the Senate requires that its members disclose all relevant interests (pecuniary, family <sup>1</sup> financial or other) by members of the Senate, which pose a real or potential risk for conflict of interest or could materially influence the member in the performance of his or her functions as a member of Senate or damage public confidence in the University. A member for whom a relevant interest arises in relation to matter for decision by the Senate should not take part in any deliberation or decision of the Senate in relation to the matter concerned.
5. Former members of the Senate should treat commercial information received while acting in that capacity as confidential.
6. Former members of the Senate should not retain documentation obtained during their terms of office as members.

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<sup>1</sup> For this purpose, persons or bodies connected with member include:

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