



**Ollscoil na hÉireann**  
National University of Ireland

# **Code of Conduct for Employees of the National University of Ireland**

**April 2022**

## Review and Approval of Code of Conduct for Employees of NUI

Owned by		NUI Senate	
Date Approved	5 May 2022	Approved by	NUI Senate
Next Review	Q1 2027	Review by	Registrar

<b>Version Control</b>			
<b>Version</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Changes</b>
CCE22 0.1	Stewart Roche	05.01.2022	First Draft
CCE22 0.2	Stewart Roche and Patrick O’Leary	28.01.2022	Changes based on feedback from employees of NUI re tone and accuracy re policies
CCE22 0.3	Stewart Roche, Patrick O’Leary and Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh	27.04.2022	Minor changes recommended by ARC (25.04.2022)
CCE22 1.0	Stewart Roche, Patrick O’Leary and Sorcha Uí Chonnachtaigh	05.05.2022	Approved by NUI Senate

**CCE:** Code of Conduct for Employees of the National University of Ireland

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Context

NUI seeks to meet the highest standard in governance. The 2019 Code of Governance of Irish Universities offers guidance on good governance practices in the sector. As recommended in that code, the NUI has developed, with the participation of those concerned, a Code of Conduct for Employees. This Code will be made available to all new and existing employees.

### 1.2 Scope and Purpose

The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance to NUI employees in performing their duties having regard to the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995, the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001, the Universities Act, 1997 and the Statutes and policies of the University. These policies include:

- NUI Computer Access Policy
- NUI Equal Opportunities Policy
- NUI Disciplinary Policy
- NUI Grievance Policy
- NUI Respectful Workplace policy.

This Code applies to all employees whether permanent or temporary, full-time or part-time, employed on an atypical or fixed-term basis.

### 1.3 NUI Values, Integrity and Reputation

NUI has developed a distinguished reputation for advancing the aims of University Education and providing services to its constituent universities and recognised colleges, underpinned by a set of shared values which includes a commitment to excellence, collegiality in all our interactions, a culture of performance, rewarding achievement, engagement of all employees, respect for academic freedom of our stakeholders, and fostering partnership. The Code of Conduct has been designed to promote these shared values and to provide a framework so that all employees can act in the public interest and within the confines of the law. The Code is accordingly to be always read in this spirit and not in any selective or restrictive manner contrary to its intent.

## 2. GENERAL CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR

### 2.1 NUI Values and Commitments

The general conduct and behaviour of NUI employees in carrying out their work is an important yardstick by which the performance, honesty, integrity, and impartiality of NUI are judged, and public trust maintained. It is important therefore that NUI's core values underpin the day-to-day activities of the University.

When conducting their work, NUI employees should be cognisant that the National University of Ireland is committed to fulfilling all regulatory and statutory obligations

imposed on the University by the Universities Act, 1997 and broader ethical commitments, including:

- fulfilling all other statutory and regulatory obligations; complying with relevant laws and regulations including employment equality and equal status legislation;
- fairness in all National University of Ireland dealings and not acquiring information or business secrets by improper means;
- conducting its purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with public policy and good business practice, including tendering and levels of authority for sanctioning relevant expenditure, and that its purchasing regulations reflect this;
- ensuring a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to official needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector;
- ensuring the engagement of consultancy / other services follows public policy guidelines;
- ensuring that the accounts / reports accurately reflect the operating performance of National University of Ireland and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- instigating measures to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with the prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.
- valuing students of NUI institutions, suppliers, employees and customers and treating all students in NUI, suppliers, employees and customers equally;
- placing the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its employees;
- ensuring that community concerns are fully considered in its activities and operations;
- supporting and promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This commitment is not just to those goals in areas related to NUI's core mission such as education, innovation, justice and equality but the wider goals related to NUI's day to day business such as those related to the environment, consumption of energy and other resources, the workplace and climate action.

## **2.2 Integrity of NUI Employees**

NUI employees should abide by this Code and must maintain the highest standards of integrity by:

- ensuring their conduct does not bring the integrity of the University into question;
- not acting in any manner that might undermine public trust and confidence;
- not using their position or the resources of the University for personal gain, for the improper benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with NUI or of competitors;
- avoiding conflicts of interest and declaring any conflicts if they do arise.

## **2.3 Responsibilities to Others**

NUI employees should observe appropriate behaviour at work by treating colleagues and stakeholders, including the public, with courtesy, respect, dignity, fairness and promptness (please also refer to the NUI Respectful Workplace Policy).

## **2.4 Public Trust**

NUI employees should maintain public confidence in performing their work by:

- performing their duties with diligence, efficiency, and courtesy;
- making impartial decisions based on examination of facts, merits and law relating to each matter;
- serving the University conscientiously, honestly and impartially;
- conforming to the highest standards of public service ethics in the performance of their duties.

## **3. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

- 3.1 NUI employees must never use or seek to use their position so as to improperly benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal, family or other ties.
- 3.2 NUI employees must never use or seek to use or pass on confidential information acquired in the performance, or because of, their employment, or official information which is not in the public domain, so as to improperly benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal, family or other ties.
- 3.3 An employee shall be considered to have a real conflict of interest when they hold a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, of which they are aware and which, in the opinion of a reasonably informed and well-advised person, is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality, and objectivity that they are obliged to exercise in the performance of their duties. In such situations, an employee should promptly make a full disclosure in writing of all relevant facts and circumstances giving rise to the conflict of interest to their Head of Unit or Registrar, as appropriate. Employees who have a 'real' conflict of interest should take no part in decision making in respect of the issue concerned.
- 3.4 An employee should be aware that they may have a perceived conflict of interest when they appear to have, in the opinion of a reasonably informed and well-advised person, a personal interest, whether direct or indirect, that is sufficient to call into question the independence, impartiality, and objectivity that they are obliged to exercise in the performance of their duties. In such situations, an employee should promptly make a full disclosure in writing of all relevant facts and circumstances giving rise to the perceived conflict of interest to their Head of Unit or Registrar, as appropriate. Employees who have a perceived conflict of interest should, if possible, take no part in decision making in respect of the issue concerned or, if taking part, should do so only with the full knowledge and express consent of their senior manager.
- 3.5 The Registrar, has an additional responsibility to take appropriate action when an employee makes a disclosure that establishes a real or perceived conflict of interest.

- 3.6 The Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 has specific disclosure requirements for certain categories of employees, which must be observed. Details may be found at: [www.irishstatutebook.ie/1995/en/act/pub/0022/index.html](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1995/en/act/pub/0022/index.html)

## **4. BENEFITS (GIFTS, HOSPITALITY)**

### **4.1 Gifts**

- 4.1.1 NUI employees shall not solicit gifts directly or indirectly.
- 4.1.2 Any gift other than a modest<sup>1</sup> token of nominal value should be firmly declined and should be reported to the relevant Head of Unit or Registrar, as appropriate. Gifts of nominal value that are generally considered as common business or social courtesies are acceptable only if they are reasonable in type, frequency and value. The Registrar's office will maintain a register of gifts and hospitality.
- 4.1.3 NUI employees shall not, by virtue of their official dealing with a supplier, accept on their own or family's behalf, any special facility, or discount on a private purchase or service, from a supplier.
- 4.1.4 NUI employees shall not accept cash as a gift under any circumstances.

### **4.2 Accepting Hospitality**

- 4.2.1 In their official contacts with outside organisations or persons, every care must be taken by employees to ensure that any acceptance of hospitality does not influence them, and cannot reasonably be seen to influence them, in discharging their functions.
- 4.2.2 No objection would normally be taken to the acceptance of what is regarded as routine or customary hospitality, the most obvious example being a business lunch, or attendance at a civic, cultural or festive event or acceptance of short-stay modest accommodation where the employee is officially representing the University, a guest of honour or speaker at a conference. Employees should seek guidance from their Head of Unit or Registrar, as appropriate, if in doubt.
- 4.2.3 Where hospitality must be declined, those making the offer should be informed of the standards required by this Code.

### **4.3 Granting of Hospitality**

- 4.3.1 The nature of university business is such that senior employees may be placed in situations where there is an accepted and reasonable expectation of hospitality to be extended to their guests/campus visitors. In such situations, care must be taken by employees to ensure that such hospitality is both modest and reasonable. While it is expected and accepted that distinguished visitors/guests may be extended more generous levels of hospitality, a useful baseline yardstick is the Civil Service allowances for lunches and dinners (at the current applicable rate) inclusive of refreshments.

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<sup>1</sup> A gift should be considered as modest if its value does not exceed €150. This limit will be adjusted from time to time in the light of prevailing economic circumstances.

## **5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

NUI employees must not make any public comment (whether by social media or any other medium) that purports to represent the views of the University, or represent themselves as being spokespersons for the University, unless expressly authorised to do so.

## **6. DUTY OF CARE FOR NUI RESOURCES**

NUI employees must:

- show reasonable care for university property, resources and funds and not use them, or permit their use, for unauthorised or non-official purposes;
- incur no liability on the part of NUI without proper authorisation;
- observe in full and at all times the rules governing the making of claims by, and payments of any kind to, them, whether of salary, overtime, allowances (including travel and subsistence) or other.

## **7. ATTENDANCE AND WORKING OUTSIDE OF THE UNIVERSITY**

- 7.1 Employees are obliged to attend at work as required and to devote their full attention to their official duties during working hours.
- 7.2 NUI employees shall not engage in any other gainful occupation that might impair the performance of their duties, conflict with the interests of the University or be inconsistent with the discharge of their duties as employees of the university. Permission to engage in outside work, including consultancy or serving on boards etc. must be approved by the Registrar.

## **8. WORKING RELATIONSHIPS**

- 8.1 During the course of their day-to-day business, employees engage with colleagues, both internal to NUI and within NUI institutions, the public and less frequently engage with students directly. Underlying these interactions are the principles of respect for others, collegiality, professionalism, equality, a responsibility to maintain a courteous, efficient and impartial workplace and a duty to uphold the law.
- 8.2 In dealing with students of NUI institutions and the public, employees should treat individuals with courtesy and in an impartial fashion. Queries should be dealt with in an open and helpful way with due regard to the protection of confidential information where appropriate.
- 8.3 NUI employees are required to take all reasonable precautions to prevent the unauthorised use or disclosure of confidential or personal information and must, in particular, observe all relevant provisions of the University's Data Protection Policy.
- 8.4 NUI employees are required to respect an individual's rights to privacy and maintain the privacy and confidentiality of information.

- 8.5 NUI employees must also treat their colleagues at work with dignity and should engender a positive working atmosphere.

## **9. VERIFICATION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

### **9.1 Offers to Candidates**

NUI offers of employment are made on the clear understanding that information provided by the candidate in his or her written application and at interview is correct in every respect. Where this is found not to be the case, the University reserves the right to initiate the University's disciplinary procedure,<sup>2</sup> which may result in dismissal, or take such other action as it considers appropriate in the circumstances. The University reserves the right to require applicants and employees to provide evidence of academic and/or other qualifications at any time.

### **9.2 Changes to Qualifications during Employment**

Any NUI employee who has been appointed by virtue of a specific professional qualification or licence, must immediately inform the Head of Finance and Administrative Services in writing of any change in status, withdrawal of or endorsement on such qualifications or licences.

## **10. CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS**

- 10.1 The University requires a declaration of criminal convictions both at the point of employment as a condition of that employment as well as throughout their employment, on an ongoing basis.
- 10.2 Any NUI employee who is charged with or convicted of an indictable criminal offence during their employment must report that fact to the Registrar. In certain circumstances, this could have implications for their employment. Such information will be treated in confidence, insofar as possible, and no record of it will be kept unless the information is considered relevant to the employee's employment. If the disclosure of such information necessitates an investigation by the University, it will be conducted in accordance with the principles of fair procedures and natural justice and the University's Disciplinary Policy.
- 10.3 An NUI employee who is charged with or convicted of a criminal offence prior to or during their employment and who fails to disclose this (as required by 10.1 and 10.2 above) will be subject to the University's Disciplinary Policy and may face dismissal.

## **11. IMPLEMENTATION**

- 11.1 This Code applies to all NUI employees (permanent and temporary, full-time, or part-time, employed on an atypical basis, temporary, part-time or fixed-term contract etc.). It also applies where relevant to employees on different forms of leave.
- 11.2 Breaches of this Code may result in the disciplinary procedure (as outlined in the University's Disciplinary Policy) being implemented.

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<sup>2</sup> Set out in the NUI Disciplinary Policy and Procedure.



- 11.3 The Code of Conduct for Employees of the National University of Ireland is available on the NUI website  
[http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/Codes\\_of\\_Conduct/NUI\\_Code\\_Employees.pdf](http://www.nui.ie/about/pdf/Codes_of_Conduct/NUI_Code_Employees.pdf)
- 11.4 NUI will review and amend this Code, and its supporting documents, as appropriate, and will apply as amended to all employees of the National University of Ireland.