Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Section 1 - Background, Purpose and Scope

Purpose

(1) The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to articulate The University of Queensland's (UQ or the University) values and set out the standards of conduct that the University expects and requires of all staff and contractors, and the consequences of failing to meet those standards.

(2) As required by the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld), this Code of Conduct is consistent with the ethics principles of integrity and impartiality, promoting the public good, commitment to the system of government and accountability and transparency.

Scope

(3) This Code of Conduct applies to the conduct of staff while performing their official functions for the University.

(4) 'Staff' means:

a. members of the University Senate,
b. all continuing, fixed term, and casual employees,
c. academic title holders, visiting academics, emeritus professors, adjunct and honorary title holders, industry fellows and conjoint appointment holders,
d. other persons acting in an honorary or voluntary capacity for UQ, including work experience students.

(5) To avoid doubt, this Code of Conduct only applies to a student of the University if they are also staff, and only to their conduct in their capacity as a member of staff.

(6) This Code of Conduct also applies to contractors undertaking an engagement with UQ.

(7) 'Contractor' means: a person who is a contractor or subcontractor engaged by UQ and the employee, apprentice, and trainee of a contractor or subcontractor, an employee of a labour hire company engaged by UQ, a counterparty in research agreements with UQ and any other person who is contracted to carry out work in any capacity for UQ or has otherwise agreed to be bound by the Code of Conduct or the University's policies generally.

(8) All staff and contractors are required to comply with the Code of Conduct.

Section 2 - Overriding Principles

UQ Values

(9) UQ values guide our behaviour and provide the foundation of our culture. UQ's values articulate what we strive for, how we work together, and our commitment to discovering and sharing truth.

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What We Strive for:

Creativity	We apply our creativity as a way of seeking progress. We value new ideas, seek fresh perspectives and pursue game-changing innovations and opportunities.
Excellence	We strive for excellence in everything we do. We apply the highest standards to our work to achieve the greatest impact for the benefit of communities everywhere.

Central to What We Do:

Truth	Truth is central to all that we do as a university. We seek truth through our focus on the advancement and dissemination of knowledge, and our deep commitment to academic freedom and freedom of expression.

How We Work Together:

Integrity	We always act with integrity. As stewards of the University's resources and reputation, we are honest, ethical and principled.
Courage	We are courageous in our decision-making. We are ambitious, bold and agile. We demonstrate moral courage so that we are always guided by a sense of what is right.
Respect and Inclusivity	We provide a caring, inclusive and empowering environment for all. We engage respectfully with one another and promote the value that our diversity brings to our whole community.

Standards of Conduct

(10) Staff and contractors are required to:

a. demonstrate and uphold the values of the University;
b. act honestly and with integrity;
c. maintain a high standard of behaviour and conduct themselves respectfully, fairly and professionally when dealing with colleagues, students or members of the public, and encourage others to do the same;
d. perform their duties safely, responsibly, conscientiously, in an ethical and impartial manner, and not abuse any position of power;
e. accept and demonstrate accountability for their conduct and decisions, including acting within the scope of their authority and relevant delegations;
f. act in the best interests of the University and avoid, or disclose and manage, conflicts of interest;
g. not engage in bullying, sexual misconduct, gender-based violence, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, humiliation or threatening behaviour;
h. demonstrate and encourage the pursuit of independent scholarly learning, critical judgement, academic integrity, academic freedom and ethical sensitivity in and to their students;
i. use university resources effectively, efficiently, economically, safely and for their intended purpose;
j. respect the privacy of others and manage personal information in accordance with privacy principles;
k. adhere to the principles of natural justice, procedural fairness and merit-based decision-making;
l. not engage in fraud, corrupt conduct, maladministration, criminal activity or other unlawful or improper conduct;
m. report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge of fraud, maladministration or corrupt conduct;
n. comply with University policies and procedures and follow all reasonable directions issued by a Supervisor, Senior Executive or other UQ officer with appropriate authority;
o. demonstrate commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion to enrich UQ's teaching, research and professional capabilities; and

p. comply with all applicable laws, their contract of employment or terms of their title and any applicable and binding professional standards or codes.

(11) Further guidance and examples of required and unacceptable conduct can be obtained in the accompanying Guideline.

Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom

(12) The University is committed to the protection and promotion of freedom of speech and academic freedom and supports the principles for their protection as set out in the Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom Policy and in the Enterprise Agreement. These principles enable the University to be a place where everyone can participate in the vigorous exchange and critique of ideas. However, freedom of speech and academic freedom are not unlimited and the University considers it reasonable and proportionate to require staff to observe the standards of conduct in this Code of Conduct and other applicable policies, and not engage in unlawful conduct.

Human Rights

(13) Staff must comply with the Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld). This requires staff to act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and, when making a decision, give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

(14) Any actual, attempted or alleged conduct that breaches this Code of Conduct will be dealt with by the University in accordance with this Code of Conduct, other relevant University policies and, if applicable, as misconduct or serious misconduct under the Enterprise Agreement or relevant employment contract.

(15) If staff or contractors are found to have breached this Code of Conduct, the University may take such action that it considers appropriate in the circumstances. Such action may include:

a. counselling, training or retraining;
b. formal warning;
c. taking disciplinary measures, including termination of employment; and
d. termination of title or termination of other engagements or relationships with the University and/or revocation of access to UQ services or facilities.

(16) The University has legislative obligations to notify particular breaches (including reasonably suspected breaches) of this Code of Conduct to external agencies, such as the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Section 3 - Roles, Responsibilities and Accountabilities

Senate

(17) The Senate is responsible for approving this Code of Conduct.

Vice-Chancellor

(18) Under the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld), the Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that:

a. a Code of Conduct is prepared that is consistent with the ethics principles and values;

b. appropriate consultation occurs in relation to the Code of Conduct;
c. staff have reasonable access to a copy of the ethics principles and values and this Code of Conduct;
d. staff are provided with appropriate education and training about public sector ethics and this Code of Conduct;
e. administrative procedures and management practices have proper regard to the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994, the ethics principles and values and this Code of Conduct;
f. each annual report includes an implementation statement giving the details of the action taken during the reporting period on paragraphs (a), (d) and (e) above.

Staff

(19) All staff must comply with this Code of Conduct and are encouraged to report any conduct that is reasonably suspected to breach this Code of Conduct. Reports can be made to a Supervisor, the Chief Human Resources Officer, the Chief Operating Officer or by lodging a complaint through UQ's central complaint management system.

(20) Reports made to a Supervisor, or received through the complaint management system, may be escalated to the Chief Human Resources Officer, the Chief Operating Officer or the Disclosures and Complaints Management Committee.

(21) Staff are required to report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge of fraud, maladministration or corrupt conduct to their Supervisor, the Human Resources Division, the Integrity Unit or the Chief Operating Officer. Reports of reasonably suspected corrupt conduct can also be referred directly to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

(22) Staff are required to report any charges or convictions of criminal activity against them and are also encouraged to report any reasonable suspicion or knowledge of criminal activity by other staff that could affect their ability to carry out their role for the University. These reports should be made to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

Supervisors

(23) Supervisors are responsible for promoting a positive culture consistent with UQ values and this Code of Conduct. Supervisors will also manage and, if required, escalate reports, about alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

(24) Where a report relates to criminal activity by a staff member that may impact on the ability of that staff member to perform their role for the University or that may adversely affect the University's reputation, the Supervisor must promptly disclose that report to the Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Operating Officer.

Disclosures and Complaints Management Committee (DCMC)

(25) The DCMC is responsible for making decisions about how particular complaints should be dealt with, including whether a complaint should be investigated and, by whom, and what resources should be made available to deal with or investigate the complaint.

(26) Members of the committee will refer serious matters, such as fraud or corruption, and other matters they consider should be handled by the Integrity Unit, to the DCMC for consideration. The composition of the committee and a link to its terms of reference is in the Complaints Management Procedure.

(27) In accordance with the Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy, all complaints involving reasonably suspected fraud or corrupt conduct must be referred to the Director, Integrity Unit, for proper assessment and where necessary, referral to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

(28) In relation to other complaints, the DCMC will determine whether the Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Operating Officer may refer an alleged breach of this Code of Conduct to the Integrity Unit for investigation. Matters not referred to the Integrity Unit may be referred to the Human Resources Division or another relevant organisational unit, such as the Research Ethics and Integrity unit, for consideration.

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Integrity Unit

(29) The Integrity Unit only investigates serious allegations of conduct that may amount to serious misconduct when referred by the DCMC, Chief Human Resources Officer or Chief Operating Officer. All investigations by the Integrity Unit will be done based on an investigation framework.

(30) The Integrity Unit is also responsible for the assessment and management of potential public interest disclosures, whistleblower disclosures and the referral, after consulting with the DCMC, of reasonably suspected cases of corrupt conduct to the Crime and Corruption Commission.

Research Ethics and Integrity Unit

(31) The Research Ethics and Integrity unit is responsible for receiving and managing complaints about the conduct of research and supporting the conduct of preliminary assessments and investigations.

Human Resources Division

(32) The Human Resources Division considers, advises on and manages all other allegations of conduct that may breach the Code of Conduct as appropriate.

(33) Human Resources is responsible for monitoring, review and assurance as stated in Section 4 and recording and reporting as stated in Section 5.

(34) Human Resources is also responsible for providing or organising appropriate education and training to staff about:

a. this Code of Conduct;
b. the operation of the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994 (Qld);
c. the application of ethics principles and obligations to staff;
d. the rights and obligations of staff in relation to contraventions of this Code of Conduct.

Section 4 - Monitoring, Review and Assurance

(35) The University, through the Chief Human Resources Officer, will periodically review this Code of Conduct to ensure its ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

(36) The University will publish and keep available for inspection by any person copies of this Code of Conduct.

Section 5 - Recording and Reporting

(37) The Chief Human Resources Officer will maintain complete and accurate records of all previous versions of the Code of Conduct, changes to the Code of Conduct and any communications issued about the Code of Conduct.

(38) All University records must be retained and disposed of in accordance with the University's policies and procedures about record management and storage.

Section 6 - Appendix

Definitions and Interpretation in this Code of Conduct

Terms	Definitions
Conduct of staff performing their official functions	means conduct that occurs during, or in connection with, the performance of the staff member's official duties, obligations or responsibilities to or for the University and may occur: 1. via electronic media; 2. at any time or in any place; 3. when a staff member is representing the University in any capacity; 4. during, or in connection with, any function, activity or event related to the University; 5. using the University's information and communication technology resources or any of the University's property, resources or vehicles; or 6. on, or in connection with, any property owned, leased, or occupied by the University or any lands or roads within any University campus.
Contractor	has the meaning set out in clause 7.
Corrupt Conduct	has the meaning given in the Crime and Corruption Act 2001 (Qld) and at the date of this code means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that: 1. adversely affects, or could adversely affect, directly or indirectly, the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of: 1. a unit of public administration; or 2. a person holding an appointment; and 2. results, or could result, directly or indirectly, in the performance of functions or the exercise of powers mentioned in paragraph (a) in a way that: 1. is not honest or is not impartial; or 2. involves a breach of the trust placed in a person holding an appointment, either knowingly or recklessly; or 3. involves a misuse of information or material acquired in or in connection with the performance of functions or the exercise of powers of a person holding an appointment; and 3. would, if proved, be: 1. a criminal offence; or 2. a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person's services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment. Corrupt Conduct also means conduct of a person, regardless of whether the person holds or held an appointment, that: 1. impairs, or could impair, public confidence in public administration; and 2. involves, or could involve, any of the following: 1. collusive tendering; 2. fraud relating to an application for a licence, permit or other authority under an Act with a purpose or object of any of the following (however described): 1. protecting health or safety of persons; 2. protecting the environment; 3. protecting or managing the use of the State's natural, cultural, mining or energy resources; 3. dishonestly obtaining, or helping someone to dishonestly obtain, a benefit from the payment or application of public funds or the disposition of State assets; 4. evading a State tax, levy or duty or otherwise fraudulently causing a loss of State revenue; 5. fraudulently obtaining or retaining an appointment; and 3. would, if proved, be: 1. a criminal offence; or 2. a disciplinary breach providing reasonable grounds for terminating the person's services, if the person is or were the holder of an appointment.
Criminal Activity	includes: 1. the commission, or suspected commission, of a criminal offence under a law of the Commonwealth, State or Territory by a staff member; 2. conduct or suspected conduct engaged in by a staff member outside of Australia which, if committed in Australia, would constitute an offence under a law of the Commonwealth, State or Territory; 3. a charge for a criminal offence laid in respect of a staff member; or 4. a staff member's conviction for the commission of a criminal offence.
Enterprise Agreement	means the University of Queensland Enterprise Agreement 2021-2026, or as amended or replaced.
Maladministration	has the meaning given in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld).

Terms	Definitions
Public Interest Disclosure	has the meaning given in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 (Qld).
Staff	has the meaning set out in clause 4.
Student	means a person enrolled as a student at the University or undertaking courses or programs at the University.
Whistleblower Disclosure	means a disclosure made under the whistleblowing provisions of the Commonwealth Corporations Act 2001. Unless the context requires otherwise: 1. a reference to legislation is a reference to that legislation and any subordinate legislation made under it, as amended or replaced from time to time; 2. a reference to a code is a reference to that code as amended or replaced from time to time; 3. 'includes', means includes without limitation; and 4. a reference to a policy of the University is a reference to that policy (including any procedures, guidelines, forms or other documents associated with it) as amended or replaced from time to time.

Key Policies

(39) Key policies include, but are not limited to:

a. Conflict of Interest Policy
b. Public Interest Disclosure Policy
c. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
d. Responsible Research Management Framework Policy
e. Fraud and Corrupt Conduct Policy
f. Sexual Misconduct and Gender-based Violence Prevention and Response Policy
g. Complaints Management Policy.

UQ Integrity Framework

(40) Integrity Framework.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	1st January 2026
Review Date	22nd September 2027
Approval Authority	Senate
Approval Date	17th December 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Policy Owner	Phil Vaughan Chief Human Resources Officer
Enquiries Contact	Human Resources Division

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