

	Title:	
	Code of Ethics	
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## CODE OF ETHICS

### INTRODUCTION

#### Objective

Charles Darwin University has an important role in the provision of services to the community. This places staff members of the University in a unique position of trust and responsibility, requiring standards of ethical behaviour that reflect community expectations.

This Code of Ethics sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Charles Darwin University staff. It is intended that the Code of Ethics guide staff in solving ethical dilemmas they face at work, in their dealings with colleagues, students, the University, local employers and other stakeholders, and the broader local, national and international community. For the purposes of this Code of Ethics, "staff" includes all employees, Council members, contractors, secondees and visitors engaged in any University-related activity.

#### Principles

The Charles Darwin University Code of Ethics is based upon four ethical principles:

**Integrity** - Earning and sustaining public trust by being honest, open and transparent in all dealings and by acting in the best interest of communities served by the University;

**Respect** - Treating colleagues, students, stakeholders and the broader community with respect and courtesy, and having regard for the dignity and needs of the people with whom staff members interact.

**Accountability** - Taking personal and professional responsibility for actions, and achieving results through the best use of University financial and physical resources and by working effectively with people.

**Service Focus** - Demonstrating a spirit of service by providing a relevant and timely service to clients, colleagues, students, stakeholders and the broader community, and by valuing the views of these groups and using them to improve service quality.

#### Scope and Application

All University staff must be aware of and observe the relevant sections of this Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics does not seek to identify common or statutory law requirements, nor specific management or governance requirements. Reference must be made to the Charles Darwin University Act, the Charles Darwin University Certified Agreement, University policies and processes, and other sources for such guidance.

### INTEGRITY IN PRACTICE

#### Definition

Integrity is about the intent or meaning behind actions. Behaving with integrity involves dealing with others openly and honestly. It also involves complying with any applicable legislative, industrial or administrative requirements.

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**Behaving honestly**

Charles Darwin University staff members are required to act honestly while performing their duties at all times.

**Use of University money, property and facilities**

Charles Darwin University's money, property and facilities should be used with appropriate care and for official purposes only.

**Exerting influence, accepting gifts, benefits or favours**

University staff should not accept gifts, benefits or favours where these may influence, or may reasonably be seen to influence, decision making. Benefits other than those of nominal value can only be accepted with approval of the Vice Chancellor.

**Conflict of interest**

A conflict of interest is where the financial or other interests of a staff member or associate are, or may reasonably be seen to be, in opposition to duties undertaken as a University staff member. Each staff member should be alert to any actual or potential conflicts of interest, financial or otherwise, and disclose these to his or her supervisor. This includes conflicts of interest that may arise in the supervision of students or other staff members.

**Nepotism and patronage**

It is unacceptable for staff members to favour relatives (nepotism) or people they know (patronage) in decision-making and provision of service.

**Conduct in public**

Charles Darwin University staff members must consider the impact of their actions in public, whether on duty or not. Staff members must ensure that their conduct upholds the principles expressed in this Code of Ethics at all times.

**Ensuring merit and equity**

Staff members must ensure selection processes apply merit principles in order to select the most suitable applicants with abilities, aptitudes, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities relevant to a position.

**Integrity in financial reporting**

All material financial information and disclosure must be accurately represented in Charles Darwin University's accounts. Staff members must not conceal information, nor take any action to influence, coerce, manipulate or mislead either internal or external auditors.

**Fraud**

Staff members of the University must not engage in fraudulent activities, and fraud or suspected fraud should be reported in accordance with Charles Darwin University's Fraud Control Policy and Plan. For the purposes of this Code, fraud is defined as dishonestly obtaining a benefit by deception or other means.

**Plagiarism**

Academic integrity is an essential component of scholarly activity. Such activity involves researching, understanding and building upon the work of others and requires that credit to others be given where it is due and that the contributions of others be acknowledged. Charles Darwin University expects a high level of professional conduct from staff and students, and plagiarism, collusion and related forms of cheating and academic dishonesty and fraud are not acceptable or permitted.

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## **RESPECT IN PRACTICE**

### **Definition**

Respect is about how people are treated. University staff members are required to show consideration for other people in the execution of all duties, including the provision of service and advice and in decision making.

### **Respect and courtesy**

Colleagues, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community are entitled to receive personal respect and courtesy and to maintain their dignity in their interaction with the University and University staff members. Staff members can reasonably expect to work in an environment that promotes their ability to work with one another and shows regard to the sensitivities of people within the workplace. It is important that people are treated in all workplace interactions with respect and courtesy and without coercion or harassment of any kind.

### **Career assistance**

The importance of University staff members in providing the services required by the community may be recognised and fostered through the provision of career assistance such as mentoring, training and development opportunities appropriate to the work they are undertaking or may be reasonably expected to undertake.

### **Workplace bullying**

University staff members must not bully or otherwise harass colleagues, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community. Bullying includes behaviour aimed to demean, humiliate or intimidate either individuals or groups of people. Staff members, and in particular managers, must take action to address and prevent bullying and harassment.

### **Equity**

Equity is about being fair and just to all people, but does not necessarily mean treating everyone in the same way. It may be necessary to treat a person differently according to their circumstances and needs, in order to give them an equal chance in comparison with others. The services delivered by staff members must be made inclusive and responsive to all groups.

### **Cultural diversity**

Cultural diversity is an important and valuable asset for the University. The University strongly supports cultural diversity in its various communities, and is committed to forging mutually beneficial relationships with these communities, built upon a foundation of trust and respect. Staff members can expect to work within a culturally diverse environment, and are expected to discharge their duties in a manner that is inclusive and responsive to all groups, and recognises the culture, history, uniqueness and diversity of these groups.

### **Discrimination**

Staff members must not discriminate, directly or indirectly, in their treatment of individuals or groups of people on the grounds of age, gender, race, disability, sexuality, marital status, pregnancy, or any other ground covered by equal opportunity or other anti-discrimination legislation. For the purposes of this Code, discrimination means treatment in a manner that is less favourably because of a characteristic or circumstance that has no bearing on the individual's or group's capacity to perform the activity being evaluated.

### **Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment is a particular form of discrimination. It involves sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, occurring in

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connection with professional activities or roles, that is either unwelcome, offensive, creates a hostile workplace environment, or is sufficiently severe or intense to be perceived as harassment to a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or multiple persistent or pervasive acts. Sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited.

### **International regulation and customs**

It is essential that Charles Darwin University staff familiarise themselves with all the laws and customs of any particular country if they have responsibility for any relevant aspect of activities in that country.

### **Privacy of personal information**

Charles Darwin University and individual staff members share responsibility for ensuring that personal information is used in such a manner that the rights and legitimate interests of others are respected. Staff must recognise their responsibility to collect, manage, use and disclose personal information in accordance with prevailing community standards of best practice and relevant legislation and University policy.

### **Environment**

Staff members must recognise their responsibility to respect, protect and improve the environment in their planning and execution of activities.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY IN PRACTICE**

### **Definition**

Accountability is about fulfilling one's responsibility as a University staff member to colleagues, students, the University, local employers and other stakeholders, and the broader local, national and international community. Staff members are expected to understand their role within the University, and to take personal and professional responsibility for their actions. They are also expected to access sufficient information, and ensure that they have the understanding, competence, knowledge, and resources to discharge their duties in a responsible manner. Staff must not engage in activities that potentially bring the University into disrepute, where it can be reasonably assumed that the University will be impeded from fulfilling strategic or financial goals as a direct result of the action.

### **Intellectual freedom**

Staff members have the right to pursue critical and open inquiry, publish research and scholarly works and, consistent with the University's academic processes and this Code of Ethics, freely discuss, teach, assess and develop curricula. Staff members have the right to participate in public debates and express opinions about issues and ideas relevant to their particular acknowledged knowledge base, as well as express opinions about issues and ideas related to tertiary education policy, and the role of tertiary education in society, more generally. Staff members have the right to participate in the decision-making processes of the University, including the right to express opinions about the operations of the University in internal University forums, to build a sound understanding of the issues and exchange ideas, without fear of harassment, intimidation or unfair treatment. However, staff members must also recognise that internal and external public debate falling under the rubric of intellectual freedom must be undertaken in a manner consistent with this Code of Ethics and must respect the privacy aspects around the employer/employee relationship.

### **Decision-making**

Staff members must recognise that decisions made by them may affect colleagues, students, the University, stakeholders and the broader public and, therefore, must be fair and consistent. Effective decision-making takes into account the needs of people both now and into the future, integrating academic, social, environmental, economic and risk-management factors. All

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decisions must be honest, based upon relevant information, justifiable and understandable both by those who are affected by the decisions and those who may need to review the decision. Care needs to be exercised in giving information or advice that may be used as the basis for decision-making, either organisationally or personally.

#### **Utilising and managing people and resources**

Staff members must efficiently and effectively utilise the resources at their disposal in discharging their duties. Staff members are expected to manage their own time, and the activities of people under their responsibility, in a way that is outcome and performance focused. The use of all resources must be both sustainable and justifiable.

#### **Health and safety**

Staff members must take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of themselves and of others while at work, and must not act in a way that could impinge upon the safety and wellbeing of others. Staff should obey any lawful orders from persons in authority.

#### **Performance**

There is a general expectation that the University be responsive, effective and efficient. Performance management, supporting fair and equitable management of staff and aiming to build a competent and high performing institution that is continuously improving its performance in delivering services, is a key component in meeting this expectation.

#### **Intellectual Property**

Intellectual property generated by staff engaged Charles Darwin University remains the property of Charles Darwin University. Staff members have a duty to declare and protect intellectual property, in line with University policy and practice.

#### **Private and consultative practice**

Members of the academic staff may engage in private and consultative practice provided that it is undertaken in line with approved University processes. Staff members must ensure that their conduct upholds the principles expressed in this Code of Ethics at all times, and that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure risk to the University is minimised.

#### **Research**

The University expects all those engaged in research to observe a high standard of professional conduct, and to promote a culture of research practice that is ethical, competent, safe, accountable and compliant with University policy and practice.

#### **Protecting government confidentiality**

Charles Darwin University staff who for any reason have access to sensitive or confidential government information should protect and manage this in accordance with its security classification.

#### **Use of the University's name**

Staff are encouraged to build their own and Charles Darwin University's professional profile within their area of expertise through public comment on matters within their particular professional expertise and acknowledged knowledge base. Members of staff writing or speaking publicly in such professional or expert capacities may identify themselves by their University appointment or qualifications and may, for that purpose, use the name of the University, at the same time making it clear that any views expressed are their own. However, members of staff commenting publicly on public issues other than in professional or expert capacities, drawing upon their acknowledged knowledge base, must do so from private addresses and should not use the name of the University, or otherwise identify themselves as members of the University.

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The use of the University's name in the promotion or advertising of commercial products is not normally permitted. Approval may be given by the Vice Chancellor, and only if it is seen to be of direct benefit to the University. Members of staff may not use or allow the use of the name of the University or identify themselves as employees of the University in the public promotion or advertising of commercial products without prior approval by the Vice Chancellor.

Observe all legislative requirements and lawful and reasonable instructions

Staff must observe all legislative requirements and lawful and reasonable instructions from people with authority to give such instructions. This includes Acts, regulations, policies and processes directly relevant to your work and organisation.

### **Reporting of misconduct, corruption or illegal activity**

There is a general expectation that the University will have a high standard of integrity and be free from misconduct, corruption or other illegal activity. Staff have a role in ensuring that all employees are held accountable for inappropriate conduct. This includes reporting to the relevant authorities instances of conduct that staff reasonably believe are a breach of legislation and/or are illegal activities. However, this responsibility to report does not apply to inappropriate conduct of a trivial nature. Staff must not knowingly make a false disclosure.

### **Participation in political activities**

Political participation by staff as part of their normal involvement in community affairs is quite acceptable. However, staff should exercise caution and be alert for any real or potential conflict of interest between their official duties and issues that are raised as part of their participation in any political activity. Any potential conflict needs to be resolved quickly through discussion with the individual's supervisor. Workplace facilities must not be used for the purposes of political campaigns, fund raising or canvassing.

### **Internet and e-mail use**

The use of Internet, Intranet and e-mail resources should be undertaken in a responsible, safe and productive manner, in line with University policy and process and ensuring that Charles Darwin University's information infrastructure is protected.

### **Personal relationships in the workplace**

Members of the University should strive to achieve high professional and ethical standards. Close personal relationships between members of the University community may place this objective at risk, or might reasonably be seen by others to involve a breach of trust and/or a conflict of interest. In particular, staff should avoid situations requiring them to supervise or assess a student who is a member of their family or with whom they have, or have had, a personal or other significant relationship. They should also avoid situations requiring them to performance manage another member of staff with whom they have or have had a relationship of the kind referred to above.

Staff involved in close personal relationships which are not publicly known and where there could be, or could reasonably be seen to be, a breach of trust and / or conflict of interest, are required to declare the relationship to their Head of School or work unit, Dean or Executive Director.

## **SERVICE FOCUS IN PRACTICE**

### **Definition**

Service focus is about providing high quality customer service in all levels of activity and interaction. Staff members are expected to provide timely, accurate and informed services, based upon comprehensive research or professional expertise or opinion and allowing for objective decision making based upon honest and impartial presentation of available options.

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### **Responsive, timely, effective and efficient services**

All staff members should be responsive to requests from colleagues, students, stakeholders and members of the broader community and provide advice or service in an objective, timely and professional fashion. Staff should actively seek innovative solutions that can be implemented to meet stakeholder needs in an efficient and effective manner.

### **Dimensions of service**

Staff members, and in particular those with some management and/or planning responsibility, must recognise that quality service provision requires attention to multiple aspects of the work environment and related activities. In particular, assessment of service quality, both as existing and for improvement purposes, should consider a balance of operational performance and outcomes, the commitment of staff members to University strategic goals and objectives, and dialogue with relevant customers, which may include colleagues, students, stakeholders or members of the broader community.

### **Complaints handling**

Colleagues, students, stakeholders or members of the broader community who have a complaint about University products or services should be dealt with fairly and with sympathy. The fundamental concept is that products or services should provide the degree of safety and utility that a customer in all the circumstances is reasonably entitled to expect.

### **A service-supporting environment**

An appealing, efficient and well-constructed University environment contributes to the quality of service delivery. Staff members should take account of customer service implications when undertaking any development that impacts upon the University environment in general, including physical infrastructure developments and the development of paper and electronic materials.

### **COMPLIANCE TRAINING**

To ensure high standards of ethical behaviour and conduct, and that everyone is aware of their rights and responsibilities, all associated with Charles Darwin University, including the Council, senior management, staff and contractors will complete ongoing compliance training on this Code.

### **BREACHES OF THIS CODE**

All University staff members are to observe the Code of Ethics. Breaching the Code, including obvious or perceived actions outside the spirit of this Code, whether regarded as deliberate or otherwise, may result in consequences ranging from reprimand through to termination of employment. Genuine mistakes will normally not be regarded by the University as breaches of this Code.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

For further information on any aspect of this Code, please contact the Manager, Governance.

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