
Open University
of Mauritius



CODE OF ETHICS

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CODE OF ETHICS



Vision of the Open University

To be among the best open universities in the world.

Mission of the Open University

Use technology and flexible mode of teaching to serve society, transform lives and make high quality education, lifelong learning, and training accessible to everyone while promoting excellence in research.

Our Values

The Values of the Open University are:

- Openness, Diversity and Inclusion
- Excellence
- Engagement and
- Integrity

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Code of Ethics is a written set of guidelines issued by the Open University, to its employees and stakeholders to help them conduct their actions in accordance with its primary values and ethical standards.

The Open University of Mauritius is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct in all its activities. OU community has the responsibility to act ethically and in accordance with this Code of Ethics.

Since, its establishment in July 2012, the OU has recognised and acted upon the importance of ethical values that have been embedded in the University regulations. The Open University Act encompasses well-established ethical policies and procedures relating to our core activities of delivery and assessment of open distance learning courses (Academic), Research, Fundraising and Finance.

2. THE CODE OF ETHICS STRUCTURE

The code describes the ethical conduct grounded in OU's core activities.

The OU Board has an overarching responsibility to keep this code under review. However, for each of the core areas, detailed ethical matters and processes, including the detailed consideration of ethical cases, rest with the University's Ethics Committee.

3. SCOPE

The Code outlines the standards of behaviour expected of all members of the University Staff. It is intended to help and guide staff of OU to conform to the highest professional standards and work ethics. The Code should be read in conjunction with OU Act, policies and procedures. It requires compliance by all members of OU Staff: These include the following categories:

Academic and Non-Academic staff members who are employed by OU under regular or other employment contracts. It excludes the Code of Conduct of Learners.

This code sets the standard of professional conduct expected from each member of staff.

4. AIM

Code of Ethics are fundamental to the OU values. The primary purpose of the Code of Ethics is to maintain a professional and safe environment in which the OU community can work and learn to promote a culture of fair and ethical behaviour while ensuring that the University meets its obligations.

5. STANDARDS OF INTEGRITY

OU staff members must maintain high standards of integrity by upholding fundamental values that include, respect for the rights, differences and dignity of others, honesty and integrity in all dealings, accountability for actions and conduct in the workplace and compliance with the University regulations.

6. PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOUR

All staff must:

- 6.1 maintain and develop knowledge and understanding of their area of expertise or professional field;
- 6.2 exercise their best professional and ethical judgement as well as carry out their duties and functions with integrity and objectivity;
- 6.3 act diligently, ethically and conscientiously;
- 6.4 act fairly and reasonably, and treat students, staff, visitors of the University as well as members of the public with respect, impartiality, courtesy and sensitivity;
- 6.5 avoid conflicts of interest;
- 6.6 maintain a co-operative and collaborative approach to working relationships; and
- 6.7 comply with existing rules and regulations, policies of the University and professional codes of conduct and practice, including in relation to: – the conduct of research; confidentiality and privacy of information; equal opportunity; health and safety policies and practices; efficient and effective use of University resources including information communication and technology resources; and protection of the University's interests in intellectual property arising from its teaching and research;
- 6.8 ensure that their personal appearance, dress and presentation are clean, tidy and appropriate for their work role;
- 6.9 not consume alcoholic drinks and smoke on Open University premises;
- 6.10 not accept gifts, and
- 6.11 never disclose any information related to the University without the consent of the Director-General.

7. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University strives to maintain the highest standards in all its teaching and research. Staff members must not conduct themselves in ways that may undermine the academic standards of its awards or the integrity and dissemination of its investigations. Examples of inappropriate conduct and breaches of Academic Integrity include but are not limited to the following:

- 7.1 granting undue favours to students;
- 7.2 receiving undue favours from students in exchange for academic favours;
- 7.3 disclosing personal information related to staff or students without their consent;
- 7.4 violation of University policies related to research and academic honesty including those guiding the conduct of tutorials, examinations and assessment and

7.5 engaging in plagiarism evidenced in published or unpublished research manuscripts.

8. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

In the performance of their official duties, all employees of OU have access to confidential information or other confidential documents. They shall ensure that confidential information to which they may have access are not disclosed. Employees must not disclose any information gained by them as a result of their employment to any unauthorised person or to the public, orally or in writing, without the prior approval, in writing, of the Director General. An employee authorised to report an information shall ensure that it is being done without causing prejudice to the organisation.

No officer shall have access to records relating to him, or in any circumstances, take copies of either minutes or correspondence contained in such records or else they may be liable to disciplinary action. They shall not, in any case whatsoever, misuse such information for their private interests.

OU employees shall be bound by, and shall continue to observe, their duties of confidentiality after they leave the service.

OU employees are not allowed to keep photocopies of any document and file of OU with them at office or at their residence without any prior approval in writing of the Director-General.

Members of staff are not allowed to talk about OU to the press or in any gathering including workshops, conferences and congress without the approval in writing of the Director-General.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of Interest is defined as "A situation in which an individual's financial, professional or other personal considerations may directly or indirectly affect, or have the appearance of affecting, his or her professional judgement in exercising any official duty or responsibility."

Employees of the University and other community members shall conduct themselves in an honest and fair manner and shall not make any personal use or gain from University property or knowledge gained from their position.

Whenever necessary, they should declare their interest in writing to the Director-General.

10. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

All staff must comply with the intellectual property regulations as specified in the OU General Rules.

11. USE OF UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

- 11.1 All OU resources must be utilised for business purposes only and may not be used for personal gain or use. These include all office equipment, telephone and resources at the disposal of staff.
- 11.2 OU members have an obligation to act in the best interest and not let outside activities or interests interfere with their duties.

12. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

The Open University recognises that its employees are its most valuable resources and it shall therefore ensure that all its employees are treated fairly, with respect, dignity and equity. At the Open University, we strive to ensure that equal opportunity is a reality that our faculty, staff, and students can work and study in an environment free of unlawful harassment and discrimination.

The University discourages discrimination and harassment and provides equal opportunities for all its members, irrespective of their race, religion, gender, and any other characteristic protected by law.

13. WORKPLACE SAFETY

The Open University has an obligation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2006 to provide a safe and healthy working environment. OU Officers have an obligation to take steps to protect their own health and safety and that of their colleagues, students and visitors.

OU Employees must observe risk management, health safety, security and personal protective equipment procedures and requirements. They must identify and report hazards promptly and supervisors must ensure risks are eliminated or controlled in line with Health and Safety policy of Open University.

14. STATEMENT TO THE PRESS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

OU employees should not, without written approval of the Director-General, provide to the news media, social media, publish any information, or make public statements relating to the policies, activities, processes and documents of the Open University.

15. COMPLIANCE WITH THE CODE

All Members of the OU Staff are accountable for their actions, and as members of the University community, are collectively responsible for upholding professional standards of behaviour. They must conduct their duties in compliance with the University Rules & Regulations and Policies.

16. ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Ethics Committee deals with all reports, complaints, problems and matters arising from this code of Ethics within the Open University of Mauritius. The Ethics Committee will ensure that this code is kept updated and provide advice on all matters pertaining to

Code of Ethics for OU Staff

the Code. The exact role, powers and members of the Ethics Committee is defined by the University Board.

This Code of Ethics and the matter contained herein are neither a contract of employment nor a guarantee of continuing policy. This Code may be amended or supplemented from time to time, with or without notice, by the Ethics Committee.

OPEN UNIVERSITY OF MAURITIUS – CODE OF ETHICS

EMPLOYEES COMMITMENT FORM

I,....., holding the post ofat the Open University of Mauritius confirm having read and understood the Code of Ethics of the Open University of Mauritius , I hereby undertake to commit to uphold the values of personal integrity and fairness while complying to all the provisions stated in this Code. I will maintain the highest ethical standards in all my actions.

.....
Date

.....
Signature