

Ravensbourne University London

Ethics Framework

Introduction

Ravensbourne University London has established an Ethics Code of Practice. The Code covers the following areas:

- Governance and ethical behaviour
- Financial integrity, including fundraising and commercial partnerships
- Research integrity
- Respect, equality and diversity
- Professional behaviour
- Intellectual freedom
- The environment

The University, its governors, staff and students, subscribes to the seven principles of public life (the Nolan Principles): selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, honesty, openness and leadership. In addition, the University aims to uphold the principles contained within the CUC Code of Governance 2020:

- Integrity: transparency, accountability, honesty, freedom of speech and academic freedom
- Sustainability: financial and environmental
- Inclusivity: equality, diversity, accessibility, participation and fair outcomes for all
- Excellence: high-quality research, scholarship and teaching
- Innovation and growth: social, economic and cultural
- Community: public service, citizenship, collegiality, collaboration

The University aims to meet high ethical standards in its decision-making and in the professional behaviours of its governors, staff and students.

The University has established a set of organisational values in its Strategic Plan 2018-25. These are to be:

- Creative
- Engaged with industry
- Inclusive

In addition, the University has articulated a set of behaviours, which are to be:

- Resilient
- Collaborative
- Connected
- Socially responsible
- Courageous

In order to achieve these values and behaviours, the University has set out an Ethics Code of Practice Framework, which will inform its engagement with students, staff, governors and stakeholders. High standards of ethical behaviour are expected from all those within its community including integrity, honesty, dignity and respect for all members of the University.

Governance and ethical behaviour

Ethical behaviour, and individual standards of integrity, help to build trust in the activities of the University. The Executive, the Board of Governors and the Academic Board have specific responsibilities in relation to the University's regulations, policies and procedures. The University is required to meet and maintain compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration, and in particular Condition C relating to protecting the interests of all students, Condition D on financial sustainability and Condition E on good governance.

Individuals taking decisions on behalf of the University should have due regard to the process by which those decisions are taken. The decision making process will require transparency, responsibility and accountability. Individuals should consider the impact of their decisions and at all times should declare any possible conflict of interest, personal or professional. Issues to consider will include justification for the decision, impact of the decision, consistency with university regulations, policies and procedures, and the possibility of any reputational risk to the University.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Anti-bribery policy*
- *Public interest disclosure (Whistleblowing)*
- *Register of Interests of the Board of Governors*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Staff disciplinary procedures*
- *Staff declaration of interests*
- *Student Code of Conduct*

Point of contact: University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

Financial integrity, including fundraising and commercial partnerships

It is essential that all financial matters are handled appropriately and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and other relevant policies and procedures. This includes fundraising and the acceptance of gifts, whether corporate or personal. University funds must never be signed off by any member of staff either for personal gain or for the benefit of eg a family member. Goods and services purchased on behalf of the University must be procured appropriately. Staff must declare any personal interest if they are involved in the purchase of goods or services.

Before entering into formal partnership agreements with other institutions, companies or organisations, Ravensbourne will undertake a due diligence process considering the partner's legal and financial standing, their strategic alignment with the University, congruence with the University's values and behaviours, and any potential reputational impact which may arise.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Anti-bribery policy*
- *Course development and approval policy*
- *Consultancy guidance*
- *Financial regulations*
- *Gifts and donations policy*
- *Procurement policy*
- *Staff declaration of interests*

Point of contact: Director of Finance, University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

Research integrity

The University is committed to good practice in research and scholarly activity, which demands that research is conducted in accordance with agreed ethical principles. All academic activities with an ethical dimension require a formal ethical sign off. The Research Ethics Code of Practice adheres to the commitments signed under The Concordat to support research integrity, including:

- Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research;
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards;
- Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers;
- Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise;
- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly. These commitments provide an ethics framework that will be used in approving all research conducted under the auspices of the University.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Concordat for research integrity*
- *Research Ethics Code of Practice*
 - *Principles*
 - *Responsibilities of researchers*

- *University responsibilities*
- *Partnership ethics: external relations, knowledge exchange and impact*
- *Research Governance*

Point of contact: Director of Research

Respect, equality, diversity and inclusion

All members of the university community have the right to be treated with respect and dignity. There should be no discrimination because of any protected characteristic. The University determines that its equality and diversity policies and statements shall have a major impact on all aspects of university life and that its responsibilities are carried out comprehensively.

Staff should respect professional boundaries with colleagues, and particularly students. Staff should ensure that support for vulnerable members of the community is provided. Staff and students should be able to raise issues and complaints within this environment without fear of retribution. All complaints should be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Bullying and harassment*
-
- *Child protection policy*
- *Disciplinary policy and procedures*
- *Equality and diversity statements and policies*
- *Freedom of Information policy*
- *Grievance policy and procedures*
- *HR and staffing policies*
- *Public Interest Disclosure (Whistleblowing)*
- *Safeguarding policy*
- *Staff student relationships*

Point of contact: Director of HR and OD, University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

Professional behaviour

All staff are expected to undertake their role in a professional manner, focused on the delivery of the student experience. For academic staff, this will include maintaining high standards of teaching and support for students. Those responsible for course design should ensure that the course is fit for purpose, that it supports the academic strategy and values of the University, and that assessment is fair, rigorous and transparent. For professional service staff, this means maintaining or supporting high standards of service, which enable students to succeed. All staff must engage in continual professional development to ensure that are up-to-date with current

practice in their area and maintain a good knowledge of appropriate policies and procedures.

Accountability and transparency

Staff are expected to comply with all university regulations, policies and procedures. (See Staff Code of Conduct for regulations, policies and procedures).

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Quality framework*
- *Staff Code of Conduct*
- *Student Charter*
- *Student Code of Conduct*
- *Academic regulations*
- *Student Protection Plan*
- *Complaints procedure*
- *Bullying and Harassment Policy*

Point of contact: University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

Intellectual freedom

The University has a duty to uphold individual freedom of expression and ensure that the University environment promotes debate. Staff must also uphold academic freedom to question and test received wisdom, and to put forward new ideas including controversial or unpopular opinions, provided they are within the law. Under The Education Act (No 2) 1986 freedom of speech within the law is secured for its employees, students and visiting speakers. However, staff should exercise these freedoms responsibly in a way that does not discriminate or endanger either their safety or that of others.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom*
- *Prevent Duty*

Point of contact: University Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer

The environment

All staff and students should treat the university environment with respect and ensure that their actions do not put themselves or others at risk. Health and safety training is provided for all members of the university community: governors, staff and students.

The university has a duty of care to ensure the integrity of information held by the university and how this is disseminated and processed. Ravensbourne is part of the JANET community of higher education providers, which has an acceptable and unacceptable use policy.

The university aims to achieve environmental and sustainability benefits through, *inter alia*, reducing pollution, minimising waste and conserving resources.

Relevant regulations, policies and procedures:

- *GDPR policy*
- *Health and Safety policy*
- *IT Policy for staff and students*

Point of contact: Director of Projects and Operations

Maureen Skinner, Interim Clerk to the Board of Governors

January 2021