



Maynooth University
Human Resources
Office

Code of Conduct for Employees of Maynooth University

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Other Relevant Information and Policies

- Code of Governance for Irish Universities.¹
- The Universities Act 1997
- Maynooth University policies, procedures, regulations and schemes, University statutes, including:²
 - University Governance Policies;
 - Human Resources Policies;
 - Finance Policies;
 - Research Policies;
 - Data and Privacy Policies;
 - Health & Safety Policies;
 - Website Cookie Policy;
 - Information Technology Policies;
 - Equality and Diversity Policies;
 - Child Protection Policy

¹Available here <<https://www.iua.ie/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Code-of-Governance-for-Irish-Universities-14.10.19-digital-1.pdf>>.

² Available here <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies>>.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Maynooth University's growing global reputation is based on the originality, quality, importance and impact of our research and scholarship, our commitment to teaching and learning, the quality of our academic programmes, and our leadership in widening participation in higher education. The sources of our success are the dedication of our employees and the energy and engagement of our students. Maynooth University is a university with ambition, vision and values, a clear identity and a sense of purpose, a history of achievement, and a future of considerable promise.
- 1.2 To ensure Maynooth University's continued success, it has developed a Code of Conduct to give effect to the University's principles and values, namely:
 - 1.2.1. scholarly rigour;
 - 1.2.2. academic freedom;
 - 1.2.3. integrity and ethical behaviour;
 - 1.2.4. collegiality, transparency and trust;
 - 1.2.5. equality, inclusiveness and social justice;
 - 1.2.6. operational excellence, organisational flexibility and responsiveness; and
 - 1.2.7. dignity, respect and care for the individual.
- 1.3 This Code of Conduct ('this Code') takes account of the implications of the Ethics of Public Office Acts, 1995, the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, and the Universities Act 1997. Moreover, it meets Maynooth University's obligations under the Code of Governance for Irish Universities. A copy of this Code is published on the Maynooth University website and is available upon request from the Human Resources Department (humanresources@mu.ie).
- 1.4 This Code sets out the general principles of acceptable conduct in Maynooth University. In instances where the conduct in question is covered explicitly under other University policies, procedures, regulations, or University statutes, the matters will be dealt with under those mechanisms.
- 1.5 University employees are obliged to comply with this Code and any lawful policies, procedures and regulations that the University may adopt.³ While the University will make all reasonable efforts to inform employees of new policies and/or significant policy changes, employees must consult the University's [website](#),⁴ from time to time to make themselves aware of their obligations under all of these policies, procedures and regulations.

³ For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, where the term "employee" appears, it should be taken to include all employees of the University.

⁴ Available here <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies>>.

2 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

- 2.1 The purpose of this Code is to provide guidance to employees of Maynooth University in the performance of their duties and to document an agreed set of ethical principles. This Code seeks to ensure compliance with the current governance and management practices in all the activities of the University. This Code aims to prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices and promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of the University.
- 2.2 Building on a tradition of scholarship and excellence in all aspects of its teaching, learning and research activities within the liberal arts and sciences tradition, Maynooth University is committed to being an Internationally recognised research-led centre of teaching and learning, academic discovery and innovation.
- 2.3 This Code has been designed to promote the University's principles and values, as outlined in clause 1.2 above, and to provide a framework so all employees can strive to act in the public interest and within the confines of the applicable law.
- 2.4 The Code is to be read in this spirit at all times and not in any selective or restrictive manner contrary to its intent.
- 2.5 The core objectives of this Code are to:
 - 2.5.1. set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
 - 2.5.2. promote and maintain public confidence and trust in University employees;
 - 2.5.3. prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices; and
 - 2.5.4. promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of the University.

3 Scope of the Code of Conduct

- 3.1 This Code applies to all employees, whether full-time or employed on a temporary, part-time or fixed-term contract basis. It also applies to employees when they are on different forms of leave.

4 General Principles and Obligations

Integrity:

- 4.1 University employees are required to be honest and adhere to the highest standards of integrity in the performance of their duties.
- 4.2 The University expects its employees to devote their full attention and energy to official duties during working hours. Employees are obliged to attend work as required and not to absent themselves from duty without authorisation.

- 4.3 Employees shall not engage in any gainful occupation, other than as an employee of the University, that might impair the performance of their duties, or that actually or potentially conflicts with the interests of the University, or be inconsistent with the discharge of their duties as an employee of the University.⁵
- 4.4 Employees will ensure that their conduct does not bring the integrity of their position or the University into disrepute.
- 4.5 Employees are required to avoid the use of Maynooth University resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the University or its activities, or for the benefit of competitors.

Information and Confidentiality:

- 4.6 Maynooth University is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.
- 4.7 Employees shall not acquire information or confidential University information by improper means.
- 4.8 Employees are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by Maynooth University, both during their employment and after their employment has ended. Sensitive information constitutes material such as:
 - 4.8.1. information in whatever form relating to the business, products, services, affairs, trade secrets, finances of the University;
 - 4.8.2. information received in confidence by Maynooth University;
 - 4.8.3. personal information relating to staff or students; and/or
 - 4.8.4. any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of Maynooth University, including future details of major organisational or structural changes.
- 4.9 Employees should, in particular:
 - 4.9.1. ensure that appropriate care is taken to guarantee the security of sensitive information, whether in paper or electronic form;
 - 4.9.2. respect the confidentiality of information received in the performance of their duties; and
 - 4.9.3. ensure that confidential records are subject to appropriate access procedures and respect the privacy of individuals.
- 4.10 Former employees will not retain documentation obtained during their employment and will return such documentation to their Head of Department or the University Secretary. They should indicate to the University that all such documentation in their possession, including information held electronically, has been disposed of in an appropriate manner when leaving their employment.

⁵ Maynooth University employees 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 put into question the independence, impartiality, and objectivity that the person is obliged to exercise in the performance of their duties.

Obligations

- 4.11 Employees acknowledge the duty of all to conform to the highest standards of business ethics.
- 4.12 Any employee charged or convicted with an offence, other than a road traffic offence,⁶ must report that fact to the Director of Human Resources. In certain instances, this information may necessitate an investigation or any other appropriate action under the Disciplinary Statute. Employees should consult the Disciplinary Statute for further information on this issue.
- 4.13 Employees appointed by virtue of a specific professional qualification or licence must immediately inform the Director of Human Resources in writing of any change in status, withdrawal of or endorsement of such qualifications or licence.

5 General Conduct and Behaviour⁷

Conduct and Behaviour

- 5.1 Employees of Maynooth University should observe appropriate behaviour, including:
- 5.1.1. treating colleagues, students and the public with courtesy and respect;
 - 5.1.2. dealing with colleagues, students and the public fairly and efficiently; and
 - 5.1.3. promoting equality and inclusiveness in all dealings.
- 5.2 Employees of Maynooth University should maintain public confidence by:
- 5.2.1. performing their duties with diligence, efficiency and courtesy;
 - 5.2.2. making impartial decisions based on the examination of the facts, taking into consideration the strategic imperatives of the university, the law, and relevant contextual matters.
 - 5.2.3. serving the University conscientiously, honestly, and impartially;
 - 5.2.4. conforming to the highest ethical standards in the performance of their duties.
- 5.3 Employees will act in the best interests of Maynooth University at all times, with due respect to the tenets of academic freedom⁸, while mindful that Maynooth University itself must at all times take into account the interests of its students and providers of funds, including taxpayers.

⁶ Road traffic offences must be reported if driving is part of the employee's role in the University.

⁷ This section of the Code of Conduct summarises the general conduct and behaviour required of University employees. For more information on each obligation, employees should consult the relevant University policies available here <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/university-policies>>. Where there is conflict in the interpretation of this Code and University policy, the University policy shall prevail.

⁸ As defined in the Universities Act 1997.

Conflict of Interest

- 5.4 Employees must never seek to use their position to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal, family, or other ties. Similarly, they must never seek to use or pass on confidential knowledge acquired in the performance, or as a result of their employment, or official information which is not in the public domain, so as to benefit themselves or others with whom they have personal, family, or other ties. If in any doubt, employees should consult with their managers, Heads of Department, or the University Secretary, as appropriate.⁹
- 5.5 Employees must not solicit gifts, fees, favours, rewards, preferential treatment, gratuities, or remuneration directly or indirectly from any third parties. Employees must not accept cash received outside the scope of their role under any circumstances. Any gift¹⁰, which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to exercise independent judgement, should be courteously but firmly declined.
- 5.6 By virtue of their dealing with a supplier, employees should not accept, on their own or family's behalf, any special facility or discount on a private purchase or service from a supplier.
- 5.7 In all instances, employees must ensure that they abide by university policies, including but not limited to procurement policies and procedures, and abide with their reporting obligations under all policies.

Hospitality

- 5.8 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/or could not reasonably be seen to influence them in discharging their functions.
- 5.9 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. Employees should seek the guidance of their Head of Department if in doubt.
- 5.10 Where hospitality has to be declined, those making the offer should be courteously and firmly informed of the standards required by this Code.

Regard for University Resources

⁹ The Ethics in Public Office Act 1995 has specific disclosure requirements for certain categories of employees that must be observed. Details may be found at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1995/en/act/pub/0022/index.html>. These requirements are in addition to all other statutory obligations of disclosure.

¹⁰ For the purposes of this Code "gifts" includes, but is not limited to, cash, fees, favours, rewards, preferential treatment, gratuities, or remuneration directly or indirectly from any third parties.

- 5.11 All employees must:
- 5.11.1. show reasonable care for University property, resources, and funds and not use them, or permit their use, for unauthorised or non-official purposes;
 - 5.11.2. incur no liability on the part of Maynooth University without proper authorisation; and
 - 5.11.3. observe in full and at all times the rules¹¹ governing the making of claims and payments of any kind to them, whether of salary, overtime, allowances (including travel and subsistence).

Satisfactory Working Relationships

- 5.12 Employee engagements with colleagues, students and the public must be conducted in a manner underpinned by the principles of respect for others, collegiality, equality, a responsibility to maintain a courteous, efficient, and impartial workplace, and a duty to uphold the law.
- 5.13 Employees shall carry out such duties and/or instructions as are assigned to them, by their Head of Department or other relevant authority within the University, in relation to their employment, as provided for in their general terms and conditions of employment.
- 5.14 In dealing with students and the public, employees should treat individuals equally, 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.
- 5.15 Employees must show due respect for their colleagues at work and engender a positive working atmosphere.

Disclosures

- 5.16 The University is committed to the highest possible standards of honesty and accountability where its workers¹² can report concerns in confidence.
- 5.17 Workers who suspect or identify any wrongdoing within the University should make a disclosure of wrongdoing to the University under the [relevant policy](#).

6 Non-compliance with this Code of Conduct

- 6.1 Failure to comply with this Code may result in the matter being referred to the appropriate University policies, procedures and/or statutes, including the University's Disciplinary Statute.

7 Review and reporting

- 7.1 Maynooth University will review and amend this Code every five years in consultation with the staff representatives.

¹¹Available here:

<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/Expenditure%20policy%20AUG%202015_0.pdf>.

¹² See the Section 3 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 for the definition of 'workers'.

8 Employee queries regarding this Code of Conduct

- 8.1 If any clarifications regarding this Code of Conduct are required, employees should contact Human Resources (humanresources@mu.ie).

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