

Corporate Ethics Policy

Purpose

The University of the West of England aims to promote and achieve the highest ethical standards. The corporate ethics policy articulates the general principles that will guide all members of the University in meeting these standards and provides guidance on ethical dilemmas.

Policy Statement on Ethics

UWE encourages the pursuit of knowledge in an open community, valuing freedom of speech, critical engagement and a respect for diverse opinions.

UWE is committed to sustainable development, health and well-being, and the highest standards of corporate governance.

UWE is an inclusive community which welcomes staff, students and external users from diverse cultures and social backgrounds. We must ensure people are treated fairly regardless of age, disability, race, nationality, ethnicity, gender, religion or sexual orientation. We must provide the appropriate resources, teaching methods and assessment, to enable all users to benefit from and participate fully in the life of the University.

UWE expects its staff, students, governors and external partners to undertake University activities in a way which embraces the above and realises the values of UWE:¹

- **Academic rigour** - knowledge, critical independence, creativity, innovation, flexibility, and academic renewal
- **Community** - public service and citizenship, collegiality, teamwork, mutual understanding and respect, valuing others, and open engagement
- **Integrity** - openness, transparency, honesty and a respect for truth and individuals
- **Inclusiveness** - diversity, equality of opportunity and access
- **Professionalism** - provision of effective, efficient, customer-focused services, in all aspects of our work (internally and externally), and continuous improvement

Furthermore, the University is committed to ensuring that all its activities are conducted in accordance with relevant international, national and regional, laws, regulations, and best practice. Activities must also serve to substantiate the Nolan Principles set out in 1995 by the Committee on Standards in Public Life: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership.²

University staff and governors are expected to promote and support the University's values and the above principles, through leadership and example setting. Staff must ensure the principles are a reality and don't just serve as an ideal. In developing and implementing our ethics principles we should be guided by several key questions: Is the action legal? Will I and UWE be proud of the action? Does the action

comply with the University's values? Can I confidently and credibly defend the action to my friends, family and the media? Staff and students must ensure that they can answer 'yes' to these crucial above questions; if they cannot be certain, faculties and professional services must have an identified nominee who can be turned to for advice. An implementation plan is at Annexe B.

University activities

Ethical issues arise across all spheres of University activity; from learning, teaching, and research, to knowledge exchange, community and public engagement, and relations with sponsors and donors. The above principles must inform the University's staff, students, governors and external partners as they undertake all University activities, inclusive of, but not restricted to the activities below, for example:

In **learning, teaching and the student experience** the University will:

- Exercise a duty of care to all students, ensuring transparency, equity and good customer service prior to their arrival, throughout their time at the University and beyond, in accordance with the UWE Charter and other policies.³
- Expect high academic standards, valuing integrity and thoroughness, and rejecting plagiarism in the work of UWE students.
- Support involvement in the Students' Union and encourage students and Students' Union representatives to enter into dialogue about the University's ethical stance, policies and procedures.
- Not tolerate inappropriate relationships between staff and students.

In **research** activities:

- Staff and students will further knowledge in a responsible and rigorous manner, demonstrating the highest standards of integrity, critical awareness, the rejection of plagiarism and the rejection of falsified data or results.
- Staff and students will protect the safety, rights, dignity, well-being, confidentiality and anonymity (except where covered by an appropriate protocol) of research subjects, the welfare of animals, the community, and the sustainability of the environment; as is within the scope of the Research Ethics Policy.
- Each Faculty will make sure appropriate ethical guidelines are available for research undertaken under its auspices, taking into account recommendations made by relevant outside bodies, to ensure the highest standards of ethical behaviour in relation to research activities.⁴

¹ These values underpin the University's vision, mission and strategic goals.

² http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2004/04_40/

³ The UWE Charter sets out clear rights and obligations on both sides of the partnership between the University and students.

⁴ Such guidelines will be continuously reviewed. New researchers will be assisted to develop an understanding of good research practice. The ethical scrutiny undertaken in Faculties is ultimately

accountable to

In its **knowledge exchange, consultancy, and external partnerships** with the community, employers, suppliers and other educational providers, international, national, and regional, the University and its staff and students will:

- Look to engage with external organisations (regionally, nationally and internationally) which display responsible employment practices, adopt sustainable environmental practices and demonstrate excellent corporate governance and the observance of the rule of law.
- Develop relationships characterised by honesty, fairness, mutual trust, and academic integrity; demonstrating transparency and confidentiality in relation to conflict of interests with individuals, Faculties and the University, and a repudiation of any improper bias.
- Seek to deliver a prompt quality service that offers value for money and good customer service, maintaining high professional standards at all times. Consultancy and advice will only be offered within the consultant's area of knowledge and field of expertise.
- Ensure ethical considerations form an integral part of the University's financial affairs and acceptance of donations, following the principles and ethics test set out in UWE's Corporate Social Responsibility Policy in Procurement and the ethics guidance on fundraising respectively. The University must look to maximise both the public benefit of its activities and its financial performance and achieve an appropriate balance.

In the **staff experience** the University will:

- Exercise a duty of care to staff, ensuring transparency and equity in its dealings with them, putting in place appropriate structures to ensure staff development and equality of opportunity.
- Create a working environment that minimises harmful stress, is conducive to healthy living and working, is free from unlawful discrimination, and which supports the University's Human Resources Strategy.
- Defend the right of all staff to teach and discuss challenging and urgent issues, within the constraints of the law. All staff must however be mindful of the ethical issues arising from the discussion of such topics, and if in doubt refer the matter to the Faculty or University procedures as appropriate.
- Not tolerate inappropriate relationships between staff and students.

UWE recognises and accepts that it has an obligation to all those with whom it has dealings with to observe and meet the standards outlined in the ethics policy. Governors and staff must make themselves fully aware of, and adhere to, this policy and the relevant codes of conduct with which it is associated. This applies to all University activities, wherever, whenever, and however they are conducted. Commitment to this ethics policy is fundamental to the University's reputation and long-term success.

Adherence

Our commitment to this Ethics policy is fundamental to our reputation and long-term success. This will be demonstrated through staff development and training, adherence and accountability regarding performance.

Adherence to this Policy is a condition of employment and of student registration. Failure to comply with the Policy may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal of staff or expulsion of students. Staff and students have an obligation to report actual or potential infringements of the Policy. Intimidation and bullying, including retaliation or retribution for reporting genuine concerns, violate the University's ethical principles and will not be tolerated.

Alleged breaches of the Policy may be dealt with by appropriate bodies specified under specific strategies, policies, procedures, guidelines or codes of practice. If they cannot be addressed under any specific procedure, they must be considered by the Ethics Advisory Forum and referred to the appropriate authority inside or outside the University. No part of this Policy may be waived or suspended.

Annex A: Current UWE policies and guidelines which contribute to an overall ethics policy framework

Italicised headings identify areas where it is appropriate to formulate ethical guidance but where UWE is currently reviewing its policies and/or may not have developed adequate policy guidance.

University of the West of England Choices and Opportunities

University of the West of England Strategic Plan

Community Liaison Policy

Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Freedom of Speech

- Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech and the Right of Lawful Assembly http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayEntry.asp?URN=777&rp=listEntry
- Data Protection Policy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/sec/dp/>
- Whistleblowing <http://info.uwe.ac.uk/secretariat/>

Diversity

- Disability Equality Scheme http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=6331&rp=listEntry.asp&pid=1
- Equality and Diversity Strategy
- Equal Opportunities Policy Statement http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayEntry.asp?URN=739&rp=listCategory.asp&cat=438
- Gender Equality Scheme http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=6333&rp=listEntry.asp&pid=1
- Racial Equality Scheme
- Sexual and Racial Harassment Policy and Procedure http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=1902&rp
- Widening Participation Strategy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/wideningparticipation/strategy/WPSTRFN2005to2010.pdf>

Leadership, Governance, Management and Finance

- Basic Donor Recognition Policy
- Corporate and Social Responsibility Policy in Purchasing <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/documents/CSR%20Policy%20-%202009%20Feb.pdf>
- Finance Policy and Procedure: Donations and Sponsorships offered to or Received by UWE
- Financial Regulations <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/fserv/finRegs/intranet/finRegs/fin2/>
- Guide for Members of Higher Education Governing Bodies in the UK, Committee of University Chairmen 2009 http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_14/
- Human Resources and Organisational Development Strategy http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=1441&pid=2&return=false
- Procurement Strategy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/welcome/strategy.shtml>
- Questionnaire for suppliers <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/finance/purchasing/documents/forms/supplier%20questionnaire.doc>
- Risk Management Policy

Research, Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy

- Commercial Activity
- Consultancy
- Code of Good Conduct in Research
- Intellectual Property Policy and Regulations http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayEntry.asp?URN=3705&pid=16
- Knowledge Exchange Policy and Implementation Strategy
- Research Ethics http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayEntry.asp?URN=4380&pid=16
- Guidance for Researchers <http://rbi.uwe.ac.uk/internet/Research/ResGov/ResearcherGuidance.asp>
- Research Strategy
- Universities UK and Cancer Research UK Joint Protocol on Tobacco Industry Funding to Universities <http://info.cancerresearchuk.org/images/pdfs/jointprotocol.pdf>
- Research Governance Framework for the Department of Health (Health and Social Care Research) http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Policyandguidance/Researchanddevelopment/A-Z/Researchgovernance/DH_4002112

Staff and Student Conduct

- Complaints Policy and Procedures <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/complaints/>
- Contracts of Employment http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/listCategory.asp?pid=2&cat=438
- Dignity at Work http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayEntry.asp?URN=769&rp=listCategory.asp&cat=438 or http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=1902&rp=http://info.uwe.ac.uk/secretariat/default.asp&pid=11
- Disciplinary Procedures and Rules for Students http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=1921&rp=listEntry.asp&pid=11
- Health and Safety Policy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/healthandsafety/>
- IT Services Rules and Codes of Conduct <http://uwe.ac.uk/its/corporate/ourpolicies/studentaup.shtml>
- Library Services Rules and Codes of Conduct http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/displayentry.asp?URN=1921&rp=listEntry.asp&pid=11
- Personnel Policies and Procedures http://imp.uwe.ac.uk/imp_public/listCategory.asp?pid=2&cat=438
- Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults – to be published

Sustainability

- Sustainability Strategy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/environment/documents/index.shtml>

Teaching

- Academic Regulations and Procedures <http://acreg.uwe.ac.uk/rf.asp>
- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy <http://www.uwe.ac.uk/info/landt/>

Annex B: Governors Ethics Forum Terms of Reference

Purpose

The Board of Governors Ethics Forum (“the Forum”) is a representative sample of the University’s stakeholders, from which Ethics Panels (“Panel”) of three or four individuals will be drawn to advise the Vice Chancellor and the Board of Governors on ethical matters that cannot be resolved within existing policies.

Terms of Reference

1. Panels will consider and report on ethical matters referred to it by the Vice-Chancellor, where appropriate, provide recommendations to safeguard the reputation of the University, members of staff and students.
2. the Forum will provide an annual report each July to the Board of Governors on its activities.

Composition

The Forum will be composed of internal and external stakeholders of the University as follows:

Internal members:

- 1 Independent Governor;
- 1 Chair of University Research Ethics Committee;
- 3 Academic members of staff nominated by Academic Board;
- 3 Members of Professional Services to be nominated by Academic Board;
- 2 Students, to include one postgraduate student nominated by the Students’ Union

In the case of Academic Board nomination, staff will be asked to express an interest in the role. Where more than three members of staff in either category are put forward for the Forum each potential nominee will be given the opportunity to provide a 500 word statement to Academic Board on why they wish to sit on the Forum which will then hold an anonymous vote to select its nominees.

External members

(co-opted by the Board of Governors to be part of the Forum):

- 4 representatives from the wider South West Community
- 1 representative with a background within the NHS

The Chair of the Forum will be a nominated by the Chair of the Board of Governors from the co-opted members.

The Panels will compose of at least two external members. From the Panel membership the Chair of the Ethics Forum will nominate a Chair.

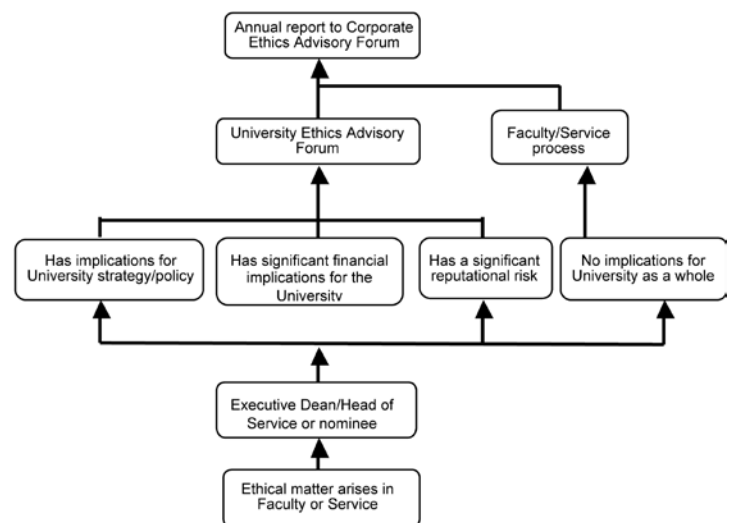
Officer: The Clerk to Governors (or nominee) will support both the Forum and individual Panels.

To phase membership and promote continuity all members will serve on the Forum for a period of between two and four years, as outlined in their appointment letter. The Chair will hold the position for the duration of their appointment.

Communication of New Policy

- Web presence will appear under ‘Policies and Strategy’ link
- Reference to ethics policy will be made in the staff induction (verbal and written communication)
- Executive Deans and Heads of Services will be asked to reflect on the policy with their management teams and establish whether they need to make any changes
- Each Faculty and Service will be asked to ensure that all their respective staff members are made aware of the policy and any local implications
- RBI and other relevant Services will be asked to inform partners of the policy and direct them to its web location
- Communication of any changes to procedures will also be undertaken via the above mechanisms

Escalation Model



Faculties and Services will review their current procedures for dealing with ethical matters. Faculties and Services to identify a named nominee to deal with ethical matters. They will be drawn from the Faculty Executive or a senior member of the Central Service. It is not expected that Faculties or Services will require their own panels but they may wish to take advice from a range of internal/external individuals. They may also wish to consult the Chair of the Corporate Ethics Advisory Forum. Ethical matters raised in Faculties and Services will be fed into the Corporate Ethics Annual Report.

Annex C: The Seven Principles of Public Life

The Committee on Standards in Public Life, chaired by Lord Nolan (the Nolan Committee) was established in 1994. Its first report (HMSO 1995) enunciated seven principles of public life, as follows:

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

These principles apply to all aspects of public life. The Committee has set them out here for the benefit of all who serve the public in any way.

For further information go to

<http://www.public-standards.gov.uk/>.

