

# Code of Behaviour

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## 1. Introduction

1.1 This code of practice applies to all Employees of Sheffield Hallam University and aims to establish a framework of expectations for professional behaviour at work. The University's Management and the Trade Unions recognise that working together in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect is in the interests of the organisation and the people who work for it. The purpose of this code is to establish a set of ground rules and a shared understanding which help to avoid conflict and make it easier for colleagues to communicate with each other and minimise misunderstandings.

## 2. A Code of Behaviour for University Employees

2.1 All employees are expected to follow the code set out below and be mindful of the potential consequences and impact of their actions on others and the success of the University.

### 2.2 Problem Resolution Framework (PRF)

The problem resolution framework provides a structured approach to resolving people issues in the workplace and is used where normal line management actions have failed to achieve a solution.

The policy applies to a range of procedures that together form the Problem Resolution Framework:

- Sickness Absence;
- Performance and Capability;
- Disciplinary;
- Grievance - individual and collective;
- Dignity at Work;
- Suspension/authorised absence.

Failure to comply with the procedures that fall under the Problem Resolution Framework could result in Disciplinary Action.

For further information see the [Problem Resolution Framework](#).

## 2.3 Confidentiality

The confidentiality of colleagues is to be respected and maintained; this includes personal and sensitive information.

Failure to maintain confidentiality could result in:

- Loss of trust and mutual respect;
- Damage to working relationships with colleagues;
- Damage to personal reputation;
- Disciplinary action

For further information see [Confidentiality](#).

## 2.4 Digital Technology Services

The University's digital technology services are provided for educational, administrative, research and personal development use associated with an employee's role. It is the responsibility of each employee to familiarise themselves with the guidelines and they apply to all employees at all levels of seniority, in their use of IT facilities which are:

- Used by employees either at the University's premises or connected to the University's networks;
- Owned, leased or hired by the University;
- IT enabled communications entered into on behalf of the University.

Failure to comply with the Digital Technology Services Guidelines could result in:

- Failure to provide business continuity, leading to complaints from internal and external customers;
- Prevention of information-sharing with colleagues to support business activities;
- Illegal activities or a breach of the University policies and regulations occurring in your name;
- Investigation of your personal usage resulting from an investigation of another employee's usage of IT or email;
- Breach of the Human Rights Act 1998 or the Data Protection Act 1998;
- Damage to working relationships with colleagues;
- Anxiety caused to others or potential complaint under the Dignity at Work Policy;

- A complaint being made to an Employment tribunal which could impose financial penalties on the University.

For further information see [Digital Technology Services\[MK1\]](#)

## 2.5 Netiquette

All employees are expected to adhere to the University's good practice guidelines governing e-mail and related services e.g.:

- Be polite;
- Remember your audience;
- Take care when dealing with emails of a sensitive nature;
- Make sure the email identifies you and your position within the organisation;
- Do not use email to avoid using other methods of communication.

Failure to maintain netiquette could result in:

- Anxiety caused to others if emails are not dealt with sensitively or they are not sent or copied into relevant emails;
- Colleagues may take offence to emails which they deem to be inappropriate in terms of content and/or language;
- Breach of confidentiality if the email is sent to the wrong destination;
- Disciplinary Action

For further information see [Netiquette.](#)

## 2.6 Dignity at Work

Employees are expected to demonstrate mutual respect for others in the University e.g. colleagues by:

- Being polite and supportive;
- Listening to and acknowledging the opinions of others;
- Creating and promoting a positive working environment where colleagues feel safe to express their views;
- Being open to constructive feedback formally and informally, and providing feedback to others as appropriate;
- Being committed to resolving conflicts and personality differences in a positive, objective and creative way, seeking support when required;  
Avoiding aggressive, dismissive or malicious behaviour;
- Avoiding shouting or using a raised voice;

- Not allowing individual personalities to override the object of resolving the issue.
- Respect differences.

Failure to maintain dignity at work could result in:

- Disagreements, conflicts and misunderstandings between colleagues;
- Poor morale;
- Ineffective meetings where agreements cannot be reached and actions cannot be progressed;
- Disciplinary action

For further information see [Dignity at Work](#).

## **2.7 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

All employees should act in a way that does not unfairly discriminate against an individual or group of individuals on the grounds of their gender, race, religious or philosophical belief, cultural background, disability, size, sexual orientation or status in the workplace.

Failure to act in accordance with the University Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy could result in:

- A complaint in accordance with one of the University's procedures e.g. Grievance procedure;
- A complaint being made to an Employment Tribunal which could impose financial penalties on the University;
- Damage to the University's public reputation as an equal opportunities employer;
- Disciplinary action;
- Civil or Criminal action.

For further information see [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#).

## **2.8 Bribery Act**

All employees whose role involves the management of University expenditure, accounts and commercial or agent contracts, or who are responsible for relationship management of suppliers, partners and officials, in the UK or overseas should familiarise themselves within these guidelines.

The Bribery Act 2010 came into force on 1 July 2011 and outlines four corporate offences, three of which also apply to individuals:

- Paying or offering a bribe;
- Receiving or requesting a bribe;
- Bribing a foreign public official;
- Failing to prevent bribery.

Failure to act in accordance with the guidelines regarding Bribery could result in:

- An unlimited fine if the University is found to have committed any bribery offence;
- Employees could face a ten year prison sentence and also an unlimited fine;
- The University could be liable if a very senior person commits a bribery offence - the person's activities would then be attributed to the University;
- Repetitional damage and increased scrutiny from HEFCE and the Charity Commission. Even an allegation of corruption has the potential to damage reputation and jeopardise future funding or contract negotiations.

For further information on the Bribery Act see [Finance Policy Library](#).

## **2.9 Social Media**

All employees are expected to:

- Protect themselves, their peers and the University by being cautious about the information shared when registering for and using social media sites;
- Be confident that what they have posted on a social media site cannot be misconstrued or have the potential to upset other employees.

Failure to act in accordance with the Social Media Policy could result in:

- A complaint in accordance with one of the University's procedures e.g. Grievance procedure;
- Damage to the University's public reputation;
- Disciplinary action;
- Civil or Criminal Action

For further information see [Social Media](#).

## **2.10 Professionalism**

All employees are expected to:

- Adhere to appropriate and professional standards of conduct and University policies, procedures and guidelines;
- Act in accordance with the vision and values of the organisation;
- Be committed to the University's success by achieving objectives and pursuing career and personal development opportunities;
- Work effectively within the time available;
- Operate with openness, honesty and trust;
- Work collaboratively with other areas across the University, consciously acting in the interests of the wider university community.

Demonstrate mutual respect for others in the University e.g. colleagues and students by:

- Being polite and supportive;
- Listening to and acknowledging others opinions;
- Creating and promoting a positive working environment where colleagues and students feel safe to express their views;
- Being open to constructive feedback formally and informally and providing feedback to others as appropriate;
- Being committed to resolving conflicts of interest and personality differences in a positive, objective and creative way, seeking support when required;
- Avoiding aggressive, dismissive or malicious behaviour;
- Avoiding shouting or using a raised voice;
- Not allowing individual personalities to override the objectivity of resolving the issue.

Failure to maintain professionalism could result in:

- Bringing the University, profession and discipline into disrepute;
- Bringing the actions or character of colleagues into disrepute;
- Disciplinary action

For further information see [Relationships at Work and Professional Behaviours](#).

## **2.11 Relationships at Work**

Where there is a potential conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality or unfair advantage, all employees are expected to:

- Disclose a personal relationship with another employee, even when this relationship was in the past;
- Not be involved in the recruitment or appointment of an individual where there is a personal relationship;

- Make alternative arrangements where a personal relationship exists or develops between employees where there is a line management responsibility;
- Declare to the appropriate line manager a personal relationship with a student where the employee has responsibility for the student's supervision, assessment, tutoring, teaching or administration.

Failure to comply with the procedures that fall under the Relationships at Work and Professional Behaviours Policy could result in Disciplinary Action.

For further information see [Relationships at Work and Professional Behaviours](#).

### **3. Consequences of not following the Code of Behaviour**

3.1 Certain breaches of this code could constitute unacceptable behaviour or gross misconduct under the University's Disciplinary Procedure. Where an employee is aware that there has been a breach of this code, they are to bring it to the attention of their line manager in the first instance, or the Human Resources and Organisational Development Policy and Employee Relations Team.

### **4. Associated University Policies and Procedures**

- Grievance Procedure;
- Disciplinary Procedure;
- Dignity at Work: Procedure and Guidelines;
- Netiquette – Good Practice Guidelines for the use of E-Mail and Related Services;
- Staff Policy on the Use of E-mail and other Digital Technology Services;
- Social Networking Guidelines;
- Social Media Policy;
- Relationships at Work Policy
- Anti-Bribery Policy