

Code of Conduct - Staff

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) QUT acknowledges its responsibility to uphold the community’s trust and confidence. A critical component of this responsibility is the behaviour and conduct of its staff members as representatives of the University.

(2) QUT expects that all staff members will contribute to the promotion of its priorities and values, and the enhancement of its reputation. QUT is committed to fostering an environment that encourages and supports ethical and principled behaviour, and that is responsive to human rights.

(3) The QUT staff code of conduct (referred to in this policy as the ‘Code’) mandates the expectations, ethical principles, obligations and standards guiding the behaviour and actions of all staff members. It is complemented by the priorities articulated in [Connections - the QUT Strategy 2023 to 2027](#), as well as a number of specific policies relating to staff members’ conduct and performance.

Section 2 - Application

(4) The Code applies to all staff members, whether full-time, part-time, ongoing, fixed-term, casual or sessional. It also applies to the following members of the University community:

- a. members of QUT Council or other University committees whether they hold office by election, nomination or appointment;
- b. distinguished or honorary title holders, or other academic or research collaborators;
- c. volunteers who contribute to, or act on behalf of, the University;
- d. individuals who have been granted access to QUT property, services or infrastructure;
- e. consultants, independent contractors and agents undertaking services for, or acting on behalf of, QUT.

(5) The Code is applicable in all circumstances where staff members are carrying out duties for the University, as well as other activities such as work-related functions, training events, travel, conferences, social media interactions and any situation in which they participate as a representative of QUT.

(6) For the purposes of this Code, and except where specified in Section 13, the term ‘staff member’ means any person employed by QUT as well as the other members of the University community as specified in this section.

Section 3 - Roles and Responsibilities

Position	Responsibility
All staff members	Undertake their duties in compliance with the provisions of the Code and other policies of the University. Report any suspected breaches of the Code to their supervisor, another appropriate manager, or the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar. Undertake training on the Code as required.

Position	Responsibility
Managers and Supervisors (within their scope of authority)	Ensure staff members are aware of their obligations for appropriate conduct in the workplace and that staff complete training on the Code as required.
Vice-President (People) and Chief People Officer	Ensures appropriate training on the Code is available for all staff members.

Section 4 - Relationship to TEQSA Threshold Standards

(7) The Code assists the University comply with the provisions of Standard 6.1.4, as well as the provisions of select standards in Part A of the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#), relating to maintaining high-quality education and compliance with relevant policies and regulations. The Code also complies with the University's commitment to Academic freedom.

Section 5 - Ethics Principles and Values

(8) As a public sector entity, QUT's staff members have an obligation to conduct themselves and perform their duties in a manner consistent with the ethics, principles and values detailed in the [Public Sector Ethics Act 1994](#). These principles are:

- a. integrity and impartiality;
- b. promoting the public good;
- c. commitment to the system of government; and
- d. accountability and transparency.

(9) The QUT staff code of conduct is consistent with these ethics principles and values.

Section 6 - Respect for People and their Human Rights

(10) QUT values social justice and equal opportunity, and seeks to create a safe, supportive and inclusive working and learning environment.

(11) QUT recognises its obligations to the traditional owners of the land on which QUT stands and Indigenous students, staff, visitors and other members of the University community.

(12) Staff members are expected to treat others with respect and consideration, and with proper regard for their human rights and the University's anti-discrimination compliance obligations.

Being Responsive and Courteous

(13) Staff members are expected to act in a respectful manner and to be responsive and courteous in dealing with requests or enquiries from students, staff or others.

Avoiding Discriminatory, Harassing or Bullying Treatment of Others

(14) Staff members must treat all people equitably and fairly. Staff members must not unlawfully vilify, treat less

favourably, make distinctions, or apply any exclusions or restrictions based on any irrelevant factor to a person's ability to work, study or access QUT services.

(15) Staff members must not engage in behaviours which may be unwelcome or which may be distressing, offensive, humiliating or intimidating to others regardless of whether this occurs face-to-face, in writing, via email, via social networking sites, or via any other electronic media. Such behaviour may amount to harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault and/or bullying and may be unlawful under legislation.

(16) The University's social justice policies provide a framework of expectations for equitable and respectful treatment of others. Procedures for related complaints for sexual harassment, sexual assault and discrimination are included in the [Resolution Procedures for Sexual Harassment, Sexual Assault and Discrimination Related Complaints](#) which provide further detail of the behaviours or actions which must be avoided. Staff may also report concerns about sexual harassment and discrimination through '[Your Call](#)'.

Respecting the Privacy of Others

(17) Staff members must respect the privacy of others when they collect, access, manage or use personal information in the course of their University duties or activities, and must not disclose personal information except as permitted by QUT's [Information Privacy Policy](#) and related protocols.

Respecting the Opinions of Others

(18) Staff members must respect the opinions of others by:

- a. dealing with differing opinion by rational informed debate and avoiding unfounded criticism of a person's motives; and
- b. giving fair consideration to the views and contributions of others irrespective of their status or position within the University.

(19) Grievances or disputes should be managed by following appropriate channels in accordance with the University's resolution framework and [Complaints Framework for Staff Policy](#) and related procedures. Initiating grievance resolution or other appropriate procedures must not result in victimisation or intimidation.

Section 7 - Honesty and Integrity

(20) QUT staff members are placed in positions of trust and should act in ways which maintain public confidence in the University, and which advance the good of the University community. Staff members, regardless of their position or duties, must act with honesty, integrity and propriety.

Identifying and Managing Conflicts of Interest

(21) QUT recognises that on occasion a conflict between a staff member's University duties and their personal interests may arise. QUT expects that staff will recognise, declare, and appropriately manage conflicts of interest to promote accountability and public confidence in the integrity of QUT's activities.

(22) Conflicts of interest may be actual, perceived or potential in nature. Conflicts of interest may include situations involving financial interests, personal relationships, personal benefits or conflicts between duties to QUT and other organisations, including potential foreign interference resulting from international collaboration activities.

(23) Where conflicts of interest arise a staff member has a duty not only to identify and declare a conflict, but to take positive steps to manage the situation in a manner which is clearly consistent with the University's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#).

(24) QUT's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and [Procedures for disclosure of interests](#) (QUT staff access only) provide further information on identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest.

Avoiding Improper Use of Position

(25) Staff members must use their official position properly and honestly. Improper use of a staff member's position includes actions which may result in detriment to QUT or others, or which result in real, potential or apparent advantage to a staff member, or any other person or organisation.

(26) The nature of student/staff interactions and the role of Supervisors and Managers may place a staff member in a position of power over other staff and students. This imbalance of power creates the potential for undue influence of a student or other staff member, due to age or other factors such as the capacity to influence outcomes. In particular, the development of a relationship (including sexual relationship) where a power imbalance exists creates the potential for abuse of position, for damage to the less empowered and potentially vulnerable individual, and for conflicts of interests.

(27) A staff member must not abuse a position of power.

(28) Consistent with the University's [Conflict of Interest Policy](#) and this section of this Code, where a personal relationship develops with a student or other member of the University community which may lead to an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest, the staff member concerned must notify their Supervisor or the Human Resources Department, follow all reasonable directions, cease any related decision-making role and take any other necessary steps to manage the conflict of interest. Staff may also report concerns through the external reporting process '[Your Call](#)'.

Preventing Fraud, Corruption or Maladministration

(29) QUT does not tolerate corrupt or fraudulent conduct and maladministration.

(30) Staff members have a responsibility to report any suspected fraud, corrupt conduct or maladministration to their Supervisor or the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar and/or external authorities. Staff may also use the external reporting process managed by [Your Call](#) to report any concerns. The University has an obligation to refer complaints or information that it reasonably suspects may involve corrupt conduct by staff members to the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission. Further information about corruption and fraud is detailed in QUT's [Corruption and Fraud Control Policy](#).

(31) Where a person discloses impropriety or corrupt conduct to appropriate authorities, this must not result in harassment or other reprisal action by University staff members in accordance with the [Public Interest Disclosure Management Policy and Procedure](#).

Using Resources for University Purposes

(32) In line with QUT's commitment to a sustainable environment, staff members must ensure that University resources are used economically and efficiently, and in a manner, and for purposes, consistent with the University's priorities and values.

(33) All staff members have a responsibility to ensure that University resources are used only for legitimate purposes and are not wasted or abused, and that expenditure is appropriately authorised and consistent with University policy and delegations. Guidance on appropriate financial and asset management is provided in QUT's financial management policies and in the [Finance Manual](#) (QUT staff access only). Staff members who identify areas of duplication, potential abuse or other obviously inefficient practices or procedures should report these matters to their supervisor or staff may also use the external report process managed by [Your Call](#).

(34) Staff members must comply with QUT's policies on use of University resources and intellectual property when undertaking private outside work ([Outside Work, Private Consultancies and Directorships Policy](#)).

Appropriately Using Information and Communications Technology Resources

(35) QUT provides information and communications technology (ICT) resources to support its learning and teaching, research, administrative and business activities. Staff members must use these resources with transparency and accountability, consistent with Commonwealth and State legislation. Staff members must also ensure they maintain the security of the University's ICT resources and facilities.

(36) The University's [Acceptable Use of Information and Communications Technology Resources Policy](#) provides a framework for the use of ICT resources at QUT, including details on what constitutes acceptable use and unacceptable use of ICT resources. Staff members must use ICT resources consistent with this Policy.

Conducting Research Responsibly

(37) QUT is committed to the highest standard of integrity in research. Research is a core function of the University and research integrity ensures that QUT's research output contributes to knowledge, scholarship and community needs.

(38) Staff members must adhere to the principles outlined in the [QUT Code for Responsible Conduct of Research](#). These principles relate to responsible and accepted research methodology and practice, research collaboration and authorship, and describe the role of staff or others who provide research training as supervisors of research students or trainees.

Integrity in Research and other Commercial Activities

(39) Staff members may develop intellectual property during their research at QUT which is suitable for commercialisation. Commercialisation of research must be undertaken within the framework of QUT's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) and related protocols, and will occur via structured and approved arrangements for the creation of spin-off companies or other suitable vehicles for commercialisation. While a creator may have a financial interest in a spin-off company if created, as part of QUT's policy for distribution of commercialisation returns, share acquisition by other staff of the University must not occur until the spin-off company is publicly listed.

(40) Staff members must not use information about commercial transactions or activities acquired from their QUT position that is not generally available for their personal gain or for the benefit of friends, family members or associates. In particular, staff members must not use QUT information to inform any personal decision-making such as trading in securities or otherwise use QUT information in ways which could contravene the provisions of the, [Corporations Act 2001](#), including prohibitions on insider trading.

Section 8 - Making Fair Decisions

(41) Staff members should observe procedural fairness ('natural justice') in their decision-making, particularly if a decision may be made which will adversely affect the interests of a staff member, student or other person. Staff members must take steps to:

- a. give an affected individual a fair hearing, including disclosure of sufficient information to understand the 'case to be met', and the opportunity and reasonable time to respond to it before a decision is made;
- b. make decisions which are impartial and not influenced by patronage, favouritism or conflicts of interest;
- c. make decisions reasonably based on logical and relevant evidence; and
- d. properly document and record the process and reasoning behind the decision-making.

Section 9 - Freedom of Expression

(42) QUT supports the right of staff members to free expression, including on campus. In expressing themselves, staff members must always give appropriate regard to other provisions of this Code, in particular those relating to respect for others and respect for human rights. Freedom of expression does not entail freedom from critique.

(43) The University acknowledges that there may be specific circumstances which limit such freedom of expression, for example, commercial-in-confidence arrangements or other legal limitations such as defamation or anti-vilification laws.

Academic and Intellectual Freedom

(44) QUT recognises and supports the traditional right of academics to engage in free enquiry and active criticism on matters of public concern, and to pursue research within their field of expertise on matters which may be controversial or unpopular, even where this involves challenge to or criticism of ideas, methods or practices of government or public institutions. The principles by which QUT demonstrates its commitment to the protection of academic freedom are detailed in the [Protection of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy](#).

Freedom of Speech

(45) QUT is committed to protecting the rights of staff to freedom of expression as a necessary and essential feature of civil rights, as recognised in, and limited by, the [Human Rights Act 2019](#). The principles by which QUT demonstrates this commitment are detailed in the [Protection of Academic Freedom and Freedom of Speech Policy](#).

Public Comment

(46) QUT encourages staff members to engage in public discourse on subjects in which they have professional expertise, and which are relevant to the University's activities. However, if staff members comment publicly outside their areas of professional expertise, they should not purport to represent the University in any manner, or to comment on its behalf. In this circumstance, staff members should avoid association with QUT when making comment and should otherwise comply with QUT's [Social Media Policy](#).

Section 10 - Promoting a Safe Environment

Creating a Safe Working Environment

(47) All staff members have an obligation to follow safe work practices, to avoid actions which may harm themselves or others and to report hazards in the work environment in accordance with the University's health and safety policies. In addition, Supervisors are responsible, within the limits of their authority, for ensuring that activities within their area are undertaken with proper diligence for the health and safety of staff, students and others. Staff may also report concerns about the safety of the work environment via [Your Call](#).

Alcohol and Drugs

(48) QUT expects that staff members will not carry out their duties while under the influence of intoxicating alcohol or drugs which may affect their performance, or the health, safety or well-being of themselves or others.

Safeguarding University Property and Assets

(49) All staff members are expected to treat University property and assets with due care and to ensure that they are secured against misuse and theft.

Section 11 - Respect for the Law and University Governance

(50) In common with all citizens, staff members are required to observe the law.

Complying with the Law

(51) While undertaking QUT responsibilities or activities, staff members must comply with State and Commonwealth legislation, and fulfill obligations required by law such as relevant registrations or certifications.

(52) Staff members with specific or defined legislative responsibilities or delegations on behalf of the University must ensure they are aware of their obligations and that QUT remains compliant with legislative obligations.

(53) Further information about the University's compliance obligations, including the responsibilities of specific officers, is detailed in the [Compliance Policy](#) and in the [Register of Compliance Obligations](#) (QUT staff access only).

Complying with QUT Policies and Procedures

(54) Staff members must comply with the University policies published in the Manual of Policies and Procedures (MOPP) which derive their authority from decisions or delegations of QUT Council or the Vice-Chancellor and President. Related procedures authorised under relevant policies must also be complied with and may be found on the QUT Digital Workplace.

Complying with Lawful Directions from a QUT Officer

(55) Staff members must comply with a lawful and reasonable direction from a QUT officer with appropriate authority (e.g. Supervisor, QUT security officer, fire warden) on their conduct, behaviour and actions.

Section 12 - Professional Performance

(56) Staff members must exercise proper care and diligence in performing their University activities and undertake their duties in a professional and attentive manner.

Acting Professionally

(57) Staff members are expected to conduct their duties in a professional, responsible and conscientious manner, and to be accountable for their actions and decisions.

(58) Staff members should maintain their professional skills and keep the knowledge associated with their area of work or scholarship current, including completing any QUT required training. Staff members should be aware of the performance standards expected of them for their duties and are expected to, where required, to participate in the CP+ process with their Supervisor.

(59) Staff members who work in a profession (for example, health care practitioner, lawyer, accountant, engineer) or teach or undertake research related to professional activities should be aware of any applicable codes of conduct or ethical standards for their profession and should act in a way which satisfies both the ethical standards of QUT and of their profession.

Exercising Proper Care and Attention

(60) Staff members have a responsibility to exercise due care in undertaking their activities, especially where

information or advice will be relied upon by others. Staff members must ensure that their actions are transparent, and that decisions made are supported by adequate documentation or evidence.

(61) Staff members must not allow outside work or activities to interfere with the performance of their University duties. Further information about a staff member's obligations in relation to private outside work and/or consultancy work is detailed in the [Outside Work, Private Consultancies and Directorships Policy](#).

Supervisory Behaviour

(62) A staff member with supervisory responsibilities has an important role in creating a supportive working environment, and supervisors have a particular obligation to maintain the standards of respect for others. Supervisors need to:

- a. make reasonable efforts to inform themselves of, and understand, their obligations and responsibilities as a Supervisor;
- b. act equitably and consistently in their dealings with all their staff;
- c. ensure their staff understand the performance standards expected of them;
- d. ensure their staff are complying with relevant policies;
- e. maintain open, honest and courteous communication with all staff;
- f. avoid interactions which may reasonably be perceived as bullying of staff;
- g. provide a safe working environment that complies with workplace health and safety obligations;
- h. provide equitable access to appropriate development, training and promotional opportunities; and
- i. provide reasonable adjustments for staff including those with a disability, illness, family responsibilities or to allow for religious or cultural observance.

Maintaining the Confidentiality of QUT Business Information

(63) Staff members must ensure that confidential business information of QUT is accessed and used only for University purposes and is not disclosed except where appropriately authorised in accordance with QUT's policies or appropriate legal frameworks.

(64) Staff members have a duty to maintain the confidentiality, integrity and security of QUT business information. Where particular confidentiality obligations exist due to the nature of the information, or contractual or legal obligations, staff members are expected to exercise proper care in understanding their obligations and complying with specific requirements.

Section 13 - Training on QUT staff Code of Conduct

(65) The University is responsible for developing and providing training on the provisions of the Code. It is mandatory for all staff members to complete this training on commencement of duty at the University, as well as regular refresher training.

Section 14 - Consequences of Non-Compliance with this Code

(66) The obligations contained in this Code define and regulate the standards of conduct required of all staff members and other members of the University community as defined in Section 2 of this Policy.

(67) Staff members should treat the requirements of this Code as directions from QUT as their employer. A staff

member whose conduct falls below the standards outlined in the Code will be dealt with in accordance with relevant University procedures.

(68) An alleged breach of this Code by a staff member may be dealt with under the processes outlined for:

- a. managing misconduct or serious misconduct ([Senior Staff Group Policy](#); clause 42 of the QUT Enterprise Agreement (Academic Staff) and clause 52 of the Enterprise Agreement (Professional staff)); or
- b. management of unsatisfactory performance ([Senior Staff Group Policy](#); clause 41 of the QUT Enterprise Agreement (Academic Staff) and clause 51 of the QUT Enterprise Agreement (Professional Staff)).

(69) A grievance or dispute relating to the Code will be handled in accordance with the University's resolution framework, [Complaints Framework for Staff Policy](#) and related procedures. These procedures include the provision for staff to utilise the external reporting processes available with [Your Call](#).

(70) Other members of the University community who do not comply with this Code may have their association with QUT terminated, or rights of access to QUT services, facilities or infrastructure revoked.

(71) Serious breaches of this Code may also have consequences for staff members and other members of the University community under criminal or civil provisions of the general law. Where the matter involves a reasonable suspicion of corrupt conduct as defined in the [Crime and Corruption Act 2001](#) the University must refer the matter to the Queensland Crime and Corruption Commission.

(72) Where a possible breach of this Code is suspected, the individual should discuss their concerns with their supervisor, staff of Human Resources, staff of Health, Safety and Environment (in the case of matters relating to Section 9 of this Code), or in the case of suspected corrupt conduct, the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar. Staff may also report concerns about non-compliance with the Code through [Your Call](#).

Section 15 - Definitions

Term	Definitions
An Authorised Officer	Means a QUT staff member who holds a position of responsibility within the University and who exercises authority in performing the duties and functions of that responsibility on the delegation of QUT Council or the Vice-Chancellor and President.
Human Rights	Refer to the rights stated in part 2, divisions 2 and 3 of the Human Rights Act 2019. For the purposes of Section 5, Avoiding Discriminatory, Harassing or Bullying Treatment of Others, of this Code, an irrelevant factor includes a person's age, breastfeeding, family responsibilities, gender identity or intersex status, sex characteristics, impairment or disability, lawful sexual activity, parental status, political belief or activity, pregnancy, race, relationship or marital status, religious belief or activity, sex, sexuality, social origin, trade union activity, irrelevant criminal or medical record.
A Staff Member	Means any person employed by QUT and other members of the University community as specified in Section 2 of this Code (with the exception of where defined in Section 13 of this Code). Certain members of the University community as specified in Section 2 of this Code may not be considered as staff members for the purposes of required training.
Your Call	An external organisation which allows staff to make disclosures

Status and Details

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Policy Owner	Leanne Harvey Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar
Author	Leanne Harvey Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Academic freedom" - Academic freedom means: (a) the freedom of academic staff and other staff engaged in academic work to teach, discuss, and research and to disseminate and publish the results of their research (b) the freedom of staff and students to engage in intellectual inquiry, to express their opinions and beliefs, and to contribute to public debate, in relation to their subjects of study and research (c) the freedom of staff and students to express their opinions in relation to QUT (d) the freedom of staff to participate in professional or representative bodies (e) the freedom of students to participate in student societies and associations (f) the autonomy of QUT in relation to the choice of academic courses and offerings and the ways in which they are taught, the choices of research activities and the ways in which they are conducted, and the choice of engagement activities and the way in which they are conducted.

"Public sector entity" - A public sector entity includes 'a university established under an Act', as defined in the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994.

"Corruption" - Corruption is defined in a practical way by AS8001-2021 as dishonest activity in which a person associated with an organisation (e.g. director, executive, manager, employee or contractor) acts contrary to the interests of the organisation and abuses their position of trust in order to achieve personal advantage or advantage for another person or organisation. This also can involve corrupt conduct by the organisation, or a person purporting to act on behalf of and in the interests of the organisation, in order to secure some form of improper advantage for the organisation either directly or indirectly.

"Freedom of Speech" - Freedom of speech means the freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other medium of choice, other than as restricted or prohibited by law.

"Maladministration" - Maladministration is defined in the Public Interest Disclosure Act 2010 as an administrative action that: a) was taken contrary to law; or b) was unreasonable, unjust, oppressive, or improperly discriminatory; or c) was in accordance with a rule of law or a provision of an Act or a practice that is or may be unreasonable, unjust, oppressive or improperly discriminatory in the particular circumstances; or d) was taken: (i) for an improper purpose; or (ii) on irrelevant grounds; or (iii) having regard to irrelevant considerations; or e) was an action for which reasons should have been given, but were not given; or f) was based wholly or partly on a mistake of law or fact; or g) was wrong.

"Fraud" - Fraud is defined by AS8001-2021 as dishonest activity causing actual or potential gain or loss to any person or organisation including theft of moneys or other property by persons internal and/or external to the organisation and/or where deception is used at the time, immediately before or immediately following the activity. This also includes the deliberate falsification, concealment, destruction or use of falsified documentation used or intended for use for a normal business purpose or the improper use of information or position for personal financial benefit. Fraud can also be seen as a major subset of corruption and is a deliberate, intentional and premeditated dishonest act or omission acted out with the purpose of deceiving to gain advantage from a position of trust and authority. It includes acts such as theft, making false statements/representation, evasion, manipulation of information, criminal deception and misuse of university property or time.