

SENATE

Title of paper: Code of Ethics

Main purpose of the paper: For information

Presenter(s): Dr Colin Campbell, Registrar

Date of paper: 6 November 2024

Purpose of the paper

Revised Code of Ethics, reviewed every three years

Relation to strategy and values

Core values and guiding principles

Recommendations:

None.

Consultation to date (including any previous committee consideration and its outcome):

University Executive Board, approved

Council, received for information

Code of Ethics

1. Introduction

Newcastle University exists to advance education, learning and research for the public benefit. Our vision is to build on this core purpose to address global problems through excellence in education, research and engagement and, in doing so, provide new knowledge and creative solutions that make a positive impact on the society we serve.

This Code is designed to provide an overarching guide to ethical conduct and the issues that should be taken into account in decision making by colleagues at all levels of the University, and all lay members of Council and Court, as well as lay members appointed to other University committees. This Code of Ethics is reflected in the Student Behavioural Code of Conduct which is part of the Student Charter.

2. Core Values

As part of our Vision and Strategy, we will maintain and enhance our longstanding commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, and social and environmental justice, while continuing to protect the principle of academic freedom. We are passionate in our belief that universities should play a fundamental role in creating and fostering societies that are more equitable.

Our guiding principles of Working Together, Visibly Leading, Freedom and Opportunity to Succeed, and Responding to Current and Future Challenges, explain how we will operate as an institution. There are a number of additional fundamental values common throughout the higher education sector to which everyone at Newcastle University should also commit. These include tolerance and open-mindedness, trust and integrity, transparency and parity of esteem.

3. Governance and Oversight

The University's governing body, Council, has ultimate responsibility for maintaining and protecting our core values. Executive Board has day-to-day responsibility for ethical issues that concern all University activities, including corporate matters, reputational risk, and donations. University Research Ethics Committee receives reports on our research within faculties, including that conducted by students, and makes recommendations to Executive Board and Council. Partnerships relating to teaching are considered via the University Education Committee, engagement partnerships (non-commercial) via the University Engagement and Place Committee, commercial partnerships fall under the remit of University Research and Innovation Committee (where it is not deemed to be a corporate matter), and international partnerships are reviewed by the University Global Committee.

The University is committed to sound corporate governance, taking into account the Office for Students Public Interest Governance Principles, as well as the Nolan Committee's 'seven principles of public life' for the conduct of its affairs, namely: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

4. Principles

We have designed a small number of principles that underpin our general stance on ethics:

- We are guided by our status as an educational charity with the object, for public benefit, to advance education, learning and research.
- We believe in transparency – we will provide timely, regular and reliable information on activities, financial situation and performance.
- We believe in institutional accountability and proportionality.

Therefore we:

- Conduct our operations with integrity, honesty and openness, and with respect for the rights of others.
- Respect the legitimate interests of those with whom we have a relationship.
- Comply with the laws in the countries in which we operate.
- Promote and support a positive respect for diverse cultures.
- Design our decision-making processes to manage conflict of interest arising from those with a direct, personal or beneficial interest.
- Do not give or receive, either directly or indirectly, bribes or other improper advantages for business or financial gain.
- Seek to address issues at an early stage and in a supportive manner.

In order for the University to maintain a strong ethical approach, it is important for individuals to take personal responsibility and for them to be supported by their line managers. **The key starting point is for colleagues always to declare any issue of concern and to seek advice and guidance from the relevant area of the University (as summarised below). If in doubt, ask.**

5. Where can I seek further guidance?

Issue	Advice available from
Academic work using animals (this whole area is very heavily regulated and controlled)	Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body E-mail: awerb@ncl.ac.uk
Academic work involving human participants or sensitive data	Faculty Ethics Committees HaSS wendy.davison@ncl.ac.uk FMS fmsethics@ncl.ac.uk SAGe sage.ethics@ncl.ac.uk
Academic work that might involve environmental or other damage	Faculty Ethics Committees HaSS wendy.davison@ncl.ac.uk FMS fmsethics@ncl.ac.uk SAGe sage.ethics@ncl.ac.uk Environment & Sustainability Committee (Hannah Owens)
Acceptance of a donation	Advancement Office advancement@ncl.ac.uk
Acceptance of external funding for research, teaching, or commercial activity	Research and Innovation david.hill@ncl.ac.uk Business Development & Enterprise estelle.blanks@ncl.ac.uk
Conflict of interest	Registrar Colin.Campbell@ncl.ac.uk
Gifts and hospitality (both receiving and giving) – basic rule do not give or accept gifts or hospitality worth more than £100.	Registrar Colin.Campbell@ncl.ac.uk
Partnership working	Due Diligence Framework David.Hill@ncl.ac.uk
Personal expenses	Finance payroll@ncl.ac.uk
Undertaking paid work for another organisation	Research and Innovation david.hill@ncl.ac.uk ; estelle.blanks@ncl.ac.uk
Whistleblowing	Registrar Colin.Campbell@ncl.ac.uk
Workplace difficulties	People Services or the trade unions HaSS: craig.armstrong@ncl.ac.uk FMS: marian.phillipson@newcastle.ac.uk SAGe: claire.brunton@newcastle.ac.uk PS: kathryn.scott@newcastle.ac.uk

6. Decisions

The principles outlined in this code should be used when making decisions. **When decisions are made a good test is how you would explain your actions if you had to justify them publicly? What would be the impact/unintended consequences for your reputation or that of the University?**

7. Policies and Procedures

We have a wide range of policies that embed our values. These can all be found from the home page under Policies and some key ones are summarised below.

a. List of Policies where people are personally responsible for their own behaviours

- [Bullying and Harassment](#)
- [Code of Conduct for Associates, Guests and Visitors of the University](#)
- [Consultancy and other external professional work](#)
- [Policy on Declaration of External Interests](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments](#)
- [Fraud, Corruption and Financial Misconduct](#)
- [Gifts and Hospitality](#)
- [Internet Use](#)
- [Policy on Use of IT Facilities](#)
- [Personal Relationships at Work Policy](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Standards of Behaviour](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Travel and Expenses Policy](#)

b. List of Policies concerning Corporate Behaviour

- [Data Protection](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion commitments](#)
- [Ethical Policy for the Acceptance of Philanthropic Donations](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Freedom of Information](#)
- [Freedom of Speech](#)
- [Health and Safety Policy](#)
- [Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement](#)
- [Socially Responsible Investment](#)
- [Value for Money](#)

8. Escalation Procedures

Some of the policies and guidance listed above have their own escalation procedures but if an ethical issue is not covered by the policies and procedures mentioned above, then the following are available:

- [Grievance Policy](#)
- [Policy and Procedure on Public Interest Disclosure \(Whistleblowing\)](#)

Document Control Information		
Does this replace another policy? Yes / No		
Approval		
Approved by: Colin Campbell, Registrar		Date:
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Responsibilities		
Executive Sponsor:		
Policy Owner: Colin Campbell, Registrar		
Person(s) responsible for compliance:		
Consultation		
Version	Body consulted	Date
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Analysis:		
Does the policy have the potential to impact on people in a different way because of their protected characteristics? No		
Initial assessment by: Simon Meacher, Head of Executive and Governance Office		Date: 9 August 2024
Key changes as a result of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Analysis		
Document location		
https://newcastle.sharepoint.com/docs/Corporate%20Policies/Forms/AllItems.aspx		