

Staff Code of Conduct Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) The Staff Code of Conduct (the "Code") has 2 key purposes:

- a. Part A of the Code sets out the minimum standards for the behaviour and conduct for all staff. Where conduct or behaviour falls below the standards outlined, disciplinary action may be commenced under the relevant industrial/employment agreement. Sanctions may also be applied in accordance with appropriate University Policy.
- b. Part B is a toolkit which provides further information and resources to support Part A.

(2) Overall, the Code exists to promote professionalism and excellence so that all staff are motivated 'to do the right thing' and feel safe and respected whilst at work. Part B also aims to provide staff members with guidance and support in ethically ambiguous and challenging situations in the workplace.

(3) In addition, the Code provides a public statement on Victoria University's (VU) social responsibilities, accountability and how we expect to be perceived which helps to assure public trust in the University and supports our strong community values. Compliance with the Code will foster and maintain student, staff and public trust and confidence in the integrity and professionalism of the University, the University Council and its employees.

(4) This Staff Code of Conduct is key to driving significant cultural change at VU and has been updated to reflect VU's current strategic priorities, including effective engagement with VU partners and engaged citizenship. It reinforces the personal responsibility of all staff members to interact in a positive way and, in being committed to working to the standards articulated throughout the Code, contribute to making VU an inspiring and rewarding place to work. The Code applies and will be widely promoted to all staff bringing a sense of unity to the complex nature of VU in terms of its multi-sectoral structure and diverse cultural backgrounds of staff and students.

(5) Finally, the Code is a means by which the University demonstrates its responsibility to live its values through its every day operations whether it be in convening a committee and ensuring diverse membership, in communication with colleagues or students, in connecting with local communities, or in providing professional development opportunities for its staff.

The VU Values and Behaviours

(6) The University's values and behaviours underpin our vision and mission, and are integral to guiding the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016.

(7) We Value:

- a. Access - Victoria University is an accessible and friendly university to students and staff from diverse countries and cultures, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, as well as to our industry, government and community partners;
- b. Excellence - Victoria University is committed to excellence in education, research and knowledge exchange; and
- c. Respect - The staff and students of Victoria University demonstrate respect for others from diverse countries

and cultures, educational and socio-economic backgrounds, and for the natural environment.

VU Behaviours

(8) In living out these values, the following behaviours are encouraged in the pursuit of the University's visions and mission:

- a. Engagement - Victoria University is proactive in building relations with industry, government, community and other education and training providers for the mutual benefit of the partners and the university;
- b. Collegiality - The Victoria University community demonstrates collegiality and teamwork with fellow students and staff; and
- c. Courage - Victoria University pursues its mission with courage, boldness, innovation and agility.

Application of the Code

(9) The Code recognises that all staff deserve a collegial work environment which is positive, productive, healthy and enjoyable at all times.

(10) The Code is binding to all those that it applies. Application includes all staff, including casual and sessional, contractors, honorary, adjunct and visiting appointments, and other personnel involved with VU including the Council and its committees and those employed by the University's subsidiaries in any capacity.

(11) This document does not replace, but supports, legislation, relevant professional bodies' codes of conduct or awards and policies. You are required to comply with relevant statutes, regulations and policies of the University, Federal, State and local government legislation and industrial/employment agreements.

(12) You are strongly encouraged to make suggestions to your supervisor on an ongoing basis on ways the workplace can be improved and to take opportunities to offer constructive feedback to the University through such tools as staff surveys. Likewise, you are encouraged to comment on and contribute to the further development of this Code by bringing your ideas to the attention of the General Manager Workplace Environment and Culture within People and Culture. Any Code-related queries may be referred to this General Manager. Over time this will provide an indication of how the Code is being embedded within the University and how it can be continuously improved.

Compliance with the Code

(13) You must take personal responsibility for being familiar with the substance and spirit of the Code and you must be aware that failure to comply with the Code will result in disciplinary action under the relevant industrial/employment agreement which may lead to the termination of your employment with the University.

(14) Supervisors have additional responsibilities to support employees in maintaining required standards of behaviour and conduct through:

- a. leading by example and assisting employees to understand the Code; and
- b. raising and resolving instances of a breach of the code immediately upon direct observation or upon a concern being raised.

(15) The Code should be read in conjunction with the University's policies and procedures located in the [Policy Library](#)

(16) Although the Code aims to cover a range of examples, it cannot explicitly address every situation that may be encountered. You can, however, test yourself on whether your behaviour and conduct is within the requirements of the Code by asking yourself these questions:

- a. Would I like to be spoken to or treated in this way?
- b. Am I working collegially?
- c. Would I be happy to have what I am saying or doing as an ambassador for VU on the front page of the newspaper?
- d. Does what I am saying or doing serve a purpose beyond self-interest?
- e. Are my relationships with students under 18 years of age all within professional boundaries?

(17) Further, if faced with a difficult situation, you should ask for guidance and support from your supervisor or refer to one of the related resources. You are also encouraged to seek advice from your supervisor on reporting any behaviour by staff, students or other persons (who have a significant association with the University) which could be considered unreasonable.

Part A - Minimum Standards

Minimum Standards

(18) This section of the Staff Code of Conduct sets out the minimum standards of behaviour and conduct in the workplace with which you must comply as required by your employment contract with the University. Further information which supports the Code is found in Part B.

Compliance with all University Statutes, Regulations and Policies

(19) You are required to observe and comply with all [University Statutes, Regulations, Policies and Procedures](#) at all times during the course of your employment with VU.

Professional Conduct

(20) Your personal and professional behaviour must conform to the standards that could reasonably be expected of such persons employed or associated with the University including a commitment to professional standards in learning and teaching, research, administration and community engagement. You are also required to follow any lawful and reasonable direction made by the University.

Respect and Support

(21) Respect and Support for Others.

- a. In accordance with the VU values and behaviours, you must at all times treat other employees, students and other members of the community with respect, courtesy, fairness and equity, including making decisions that are procedurally fair and avoiding behaviour which might create an unsafe or unhealthy environment. Examples of behaviour that is unacceptable include:
 - i. communicating in screaming or aggressive tones;
 - ii. rude or insulting behaviour;
 - iii. sarcastic comments;
 - iv. making decisions based on favouritism; and
 - v. misuse of position power to disadvantage or inhibit other staff members in fulfilling their duties.

(22) Equity and Diversity.

- a. Equality of opportunity and its underpinning principles, equity, diversity and social justice form the basis of all employment and education policies and practices, benefits and programs at VU. Therefore, you must treat all staff, students and other individuals in the University community in a fair, respectful and equitable manner regarding all aspects of the University's business. Staff must ensure they contribute positively to an

environment free of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment. This requires the implementation of fair and transparent practices and decisions, not influenced by irrelevant and unlawful attributes, as prescribed by anti-discrimination legislation.

Conflict of Interest

(23) Actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest must be identified, reported and appropriately managed in accordance with Part B of the Code. You must act with honesty, fairness and propriety at all times.

(24) You must not ask for or encourage commissions, the giving of gifts or benefits connected with performing your duties. You must not use your access to or knowledge of the University policies, systems, processes or people to obtain advantages not generally available to other staff.

(25) If you are unsure, you must seek the advice of your supervisor.

Integrity and Professional Responsibilities

(26) Corrupt, Improper and Criminal Conduct

- a. You must discharge your duties with honesty and integrity and refrain from any corrupt, improper or criminal conduct (including fraud, stalking and inappropriate relationships with students under the age of 18 years).
- b. You must report known and suspected instances of corrupt, improper or criminal conduct to your supervisor or to a senior manager and/or through the appropriate reporting mechanisms, such as those outlined in the University's [Fraud Prevention Policy](#) and the [Protected Disclosures Procedures](#).
- c. You must advise your supervisor if you are charged with a criminal offence which is punishable by imprisonment or, if found guilty, could reasonably be seen to affect your ability to meet the inherent requirements of the work you are engaged to perform.

(27) Outside Employment and Other Professional Activities

- a. Employment or professional activities other than those undertaken as part of your role with VU must not diminish public confidence in VU or your ability to perform your duties. Outside employment must not, nor have the potential to, adversely affect your performance or undermine, compromise or create a conflict of interest with obligations and duties to the University, in relation to your employment.
- b. Where outside employment opportunities are related to your position at VU these must be declared in writing to your supervisor and your supervisor will consult with you to determine the suitability or otherwise of the outside activities. It may be that the opportunity itself belongs to VU and that your acceptance of any benefit is itself a breach of your duty to VU.

Economy and Efficiency

(28) You must use VU's resources, including IT resources, in line with appropriate University Policies and avoid any waste of public resources. You must safeguard, properly use, protect and care for VU resources at all times.

Public Comment

(29) In making written or oral comments which purport to represent the views or authority of VU and which might reasonably be expected to become public, you must ensure that you hold proper authority to make such public comments, and that such authority has been properly given to you. Unless authorised specifically to do so, you must not make public comment on behalf of the University or in a context where a comment could be interpreted as a statement on behalf of the University.

(30) Where it is known you are associated with VU, you must make clear whether you are representing VU during a

particular activity or whether your comment is in your personal capacity.

Social Media

(31) Whether using social media for work use, or in a private capacity, you must not do anything that may adversely affect your standing as an employee of VU or which could bring VU into disrepute. When using social media for private purposes you must ensure that you make it clear that any comments relating to VU are not official and that you are speaking only on behalf of yourself. Furthermore, you should ensure that any personal comments do not compromise your capacity to perform your role at VU.

Responsible Conduct of Research

(32) Where you undertake, supervise or assist with research, you must do so in accordance with the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Plagiarism

(33) Plagiarism, or using another person's intellectual output and presenting it (without appropriate acknowledgement) as your own, is an academically dishonest practice that seriously deviates from conduct acceptable within a scholarly community. Should you suspect plagiarism, you must raise your concerns with your supervisor. Plagiarism by staff that arises in the course of research is handled under the University's Research Misconduct Policy.

Privacy

(34) You must comply with the University's Privacy Policy at all times and must not make improper use of information gained by being a staff member. You must ensure that personal information including data relating to other staff or students is collected, stored and used in accordance with privacy legislation, Freedom of Information and University policies and procedures, including records management practices.

Confidentiality

(35) Your employment contract requires that you keep VU's confidential information secret and take appropriate steps to prevent its unauthorised disclosure. These obligations apply equally to other people's confidential information (be they students, research collaborators or industry partners) which is provided to you as a result of your employment.

Interactions with Students

(36) In accordance with the Student Charter, you will:

- a. Provide a supportive, stimulating and effective learning environment that empowers students to reach their potential and encourages them to pursue opportunities;
- b. Treat students with respect, impartiality, courtesy and sensitivity and, wherever possible, involve them in decisions that affect them;
- c. Provide accurate, timely and useful information to students in relation to their course of study, enrolment, policies, services and processes;
- d. Provide an environment free from discrimination and harassment in accordance with Commonwealth and State Legislation and associated University policy (including recognizing and exercising professional boundaries with students under 18 years of age);
- e. Provide a clear statement of acceptable academic behaviour by students;
- f. Be committed to the ethical values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in your interactions with students; and
- g. Support the contribution of students and their representatives to the life of the University.

Engagement with our Partners and Communities

(37) In interacting with any external partner you will do so in the awareness that you are an ambassador for VU and your personal and professional behaviour will conform to the standards that could be reasonably expected of officers of the University in such situations. Your conduct will at all times demonstrate regard to the University's interests.

Communication

(38) Communication in the workplace, whether verbal or written, must conform to acceptable standards of behaviour at all times. Examples of unacceptable behaviour are highly emotive, rude, agitating or insulting verbal comments, sarcastic, colluding or agitating behaviour and highly emotive and inappropriately-worded or inappropriately-addressed emails or other written correspondence.

Staff as Students

(39) If you are a staff member and are enrolled as a student at VU your student status will not alter your obligation to first and foremost fulfil all employment duties, obligations and responsibilities. You must not use your position as a staff member in any way to gain advantage in your studies.

Safety and Security

(40) You will acknowledge your responsibilities and obligations under occupational health and safety laws and agree to take reasonable and practicable precautions to manage hazards and risks to ensure a safe University.

(41) You are required to:

- a. uphold your OHS responsibilities in line with your position requirements;
- b. perform all duties in accordance with relevant OHS laws, University policies and procedures;
- c. consult with all stakeholders including staff, students and contractors on any OHS matter; and
- d. support colleagues in return to work endeavours and approved flexible work arrangements because of, for example, family responsibilities, study arrangements, etc.

(42) You must report damaged or defective equipment/ facilities or hazards to the appropriate University officer and must ensure that where such damage or defect is a risk to health and safety that appropriate action is taken to protect others from such risks.

(43) You must ensure that you do not adversely affect your work performance or cause any risk to health and safety through the consumption of alcohol or use of other drugs.

Related Policies and other Resources

(44) The following list of resources outlines University policies, legislation and other Codes with which the VU Staff Code of Conduct is consistent. You should note that policies are added to, reviewed and amended on a regular basis and advice on policy changes is provided to the University community regularly. Note this list is not exhaustive.

- a. Privacy
 - i. [Privacy Policy](#); and
 - ii. Freedom of Information/Privacy Laws.
- b. Research and Ethics
 - i. Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research;
 - ii. Code of Conduct for Research;
 - iii. [Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism Policy](#);

- iv. Consultancy Activities: Policy and Procedures for Academic Staff of the Higher Education Division;
 - v. National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research involving Humans;
 - vi. Human Research Ethics Committee (Terms of Reference); and
 - vii. Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes 7th Edition 2004.
- c. Equity and Diversity
- i. Equity and Diversity Policy;
 - ii. Equity and Diversity Strategy for Students, Staff and Community;
 - iii. Discrimination, Harassment and Bullying Policy; and
 - iv. State and Commonwealth Anti-Discrimination Legislation.
- d. Staff
- i. Leadership and Management Capability Framework;
 - ii. Staff Issue and Complaints Resolution Policy;
 - iii. [Recruitment & Selection of Staff Policy](#) and [Procedures](#);
 - iv. Working With Children Check Policy;
 - v. Police Records Check Policy;
 - vi. Guidelines: Outside Employment and Other Professional Activities; and
 - vii. A VU Framework for Engagement and Partnerships with External Organisations.
- e. Students
- i. [Student Charter](#); and
 - ii. Student Complaints Policy.
- f. Use of Computers and Internet Use
- i. Appropriate Use of Electronic Mail Policy;
 - ii. [Computer Software - Licensing and Use of](#);
 - iii. [IT Security Policy](#); and
 - iv. ICT (Appropriate Use of).
- g. Finance, Purchasing, University Vehicles, Mobile Phones
- i. [Purchasing Policy](#);
 - ii. [Credit Cards Policy](#);
 - iii. [Financial Delegations Policy](#);
 - iv. [University Fleet Vehicle Policy](#);
 - v. [Purchase and Use of Mobile Phones](#);
 - vi. [Fraud Prevention Policy](#); and
 - vii. Official Hospitality Expenditure Policy.
- h. Intellectual Property/Copyright
- i. Intellectual Property Policy;
 - ii. Copyright Material (Use of) Policy;
 - iii. Copyright Act;
 - iv. Copyright agreements;
 - v. Patent/Trademark Acts and other relevant Intellectual Property legislation;
 - vi. [Academic Honesty and Preventing Plagiarism Policy](#); and
 - vii. [Records Management Policy](#).
- i. Occupational Health and Safety
- i. Occupational Health and Safety Charter;

- ii. [OHS Drugs and Alcohol Policy](#); and
 - iii. OHS Safe and Healthy Working Policy.
- j. Teaching
- i. Victorian Teaching Profession Code of Conduct; and
 - ii. [Learning and Teaching Policy](#).
- k. Travel
- i. Travel Policy.
- l. Whistleblowers Protection
- i. Whistleblowers Protection Procedures; and
 - ii. Whistleblowers Protection Act 2001.
- m. Other
- i. [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](#) Framework for the Victorian Public Sector; and
 - ii. Media Policy.

(45) You can access all University policies at the [Policy Library](#) at <https://policy.vu.edu.au/>. In addition the University provides support for and promotes awareness of these policies through its staff induction practices, staff performance and development planning and its staff developmental opportunities framework.

Part B - Toolkit

Introduction

(46) This toolkit provides further information and resources to support Part A of the Staff Code of Conduct where no other related University Policy or Guidelines exists. Some FAQs are also included and it is planned that case studies will be included in a Staff Code of Conduct online training.

Staff Code of Conduct Charter

ARE YOU WORKING THE VU WAY?

(47) Having a Positive Workplace Culture is a priority for VU.

(48) As staff members we:

- a. Treat one another with reciprocal respect, integrity, kindness, dignity, trust, equity and acceptance;
- b. Give others recognition and continually encourage them;
- c. Listen to others and if possible act on their suggestions;
- d. Manage negative behaviours and situations consistently;
- e. Allow people to make mistakes — and learn from them;
- f. Encourage fun in the workplace;
- g. Give opportunities for innovation;
- h. Model the culture we want to be;
- i. Focus on building our own and others strengths and abilities; and
- j. Assist one another to achieve our full potential.

(49) A positive work environment is productive, rewarding, enjoyable and healthy for everyone.

(50) Refer to the Staff Code of Conduct for further information.

Five-step Ethical Decision Making Model

(51) At times you will need to make decisions or take actions that are not specifically covered in the Staff Code of Conduct. The following simple five step model may help guide you in the process of making an ethical decision.

(52) Define the Problem

- a. What are the facts and circumstances of the situation?
- b. Who is involved and what are their points of view on the matter? Is there a need to collaborate or work together to find a solution or make a decision?
- c. Who is affected and are people's rights involved? If so which rights and how are they affected?
- d. Does it breach legislation, regulation or Policy?
- e. Do any of the principles or obligations in the Staff Code of Conduct apply in the situation?

(53) What guidelines/rules already exist?

- a. Are there existing Policies/ Guidelines/ Rules/ Procedures that can provide guidance on what to do? Which are the most important for this particular case?
- b. Are there any legal implications? Is subject expert or legal advice required?

(54) Identify and consider the options and assess the available decisions

- a. List all options you feel are reasonable given the situation.
- b. What are the costs and long-term consequences of each?
- c. What are the legal implications of each?
- d. What impacts will each option have on a range of stakeholders? (students, employees, government, partners, industry, community)
- e. Are you, or others, able to take the course of action in a safe manner.
- f. Consider the options in light of the University's values and the principles of the Code of Conduct.

(55) Test the options

- a. What would constitute a good outcome in this case?
- b. Would students, employees, government, community and other relevant stakeholders see your actions as reasonable, honest, impartial and ethical?
- c. Would you be happy if this action was done to you?

(56) Choose your course of action

- a. Prior to making a decision ensure you have consulted with necessary relevant stakeholders and obtained all advice, support and assistance you feel is necessary. You are encouraged particularly to approach your Supervisor or Manager prior to choosing a course of action.
- b. Make sure you choose an action which is:
 - i. within your delegation (authority) to make;
 - ii. legal and in line with the Staff Code of Conduct and the University's values;
 - iii. fair, impartial, honest and reasonable and able to be justified to the University and other stakeholders;
 - iv. able to withstand properly informed and unbiased scrutiny; and
 - v. documented, so that a robust statement of reasons and decision making process can be supplied at any stage if required.

Conflict of Interest

General Conflict of Interest

(57) A conflict of interest arises where personal associations or interests interfere with professional conduct.

(58) A conflict of interest is a serious matter even if it appears to be based only on existing or potential perception.

(59) An actual conflict of interest is one where there is a real conflict between an employee's work duties and responsibilities and their private interests.

(60) A potential conflict of interest arises where an employee has private interests that could conflict with their work duties.

(61) A perceived conflict of interest can exist where a third party could form the view that an employee's private interest could improperly influence the performance of their duties, now or in the future.

(62) In some circumstances the appearance of a conflict of interest could itself jeopardise your public integrity. You should stand down in any decision making process where you may be compromised.

(63) Staff are to actively prevent conflicts of interest, conducting themselves with honesty, fairness and propriety.

(64) Staff must not take improper advantage of their university position to obtain benefits for themselves or others.

(65) Actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest must be addressed by identifying and reporting the conflict (preferably in writing) to supervisors or others involved in decision-making, and to take responsibility and self-manage with their supervisor for resolution in the best interests of VU. This may include absenting yourself from deliberative forums in which such conflict decisions can occur.

(66) Sometimes only the individual staff member will be aware of the potential for conflict of interest. If so, or if in genuine doubt, the onus is on that staff member to report any possible conflict to their supervisor.

(67) As a staff member you must:

- a. take reasonable steps to restrict the extent to which a private interest could compromise, or be seen to compromise, your impartiality when carrying out your work duties;
- b. abstain from involvement in decisions and actions which could reasonably be seen to be compromised by your private interests and affiliations;
- c. avoid private action in which you could be seen to have an improper advantage from inside information you might have access to because of your work duties;
- d. not use your position or university resources for private gain;
- e. not misuse the power of your position with the University to disadvantage or inhibit another staff member in the fulfilment of their duties; and
- f. ensure that there can be no perception that you have received an improper benefit that may influence the performance of your duties.

(68) Below is some further information on a suggested approach to managing a conflict of interest situation.

Reasonable steps to manage conflict of interest

(69) Acting in a reasonable way means exercising sound judgement and taking a sensible approach. The "reasonable person" test can be applied with regard to managing conflict of interest in the same way as it is applied to any other action or decision. That is, would another reasonable person take the same decision in light of the same facts and

circumstances?

(70) The proper management of conflicts of interest does not require the wholesale avoidance or relinquishment of private interests, because they might give rise to a conflict of interest issue. What it does require is the appropriate management of the interaction between your own interests and your work duties.

(71) There are a number of options available for managing conflict of interest. These range from simply disclosing relevant details, to relinquishing the private interest or stepping down from the role. Commonly accepted procedures are:

- a. Register — details of the existence of a possible or potential conflict of interest are formally advised and noted;
- b. Restrict — restrictions are placed on the employee's involvement in the matter, eg remove from membership of selection panel;
- c. Recruit — a disinterested third party is used to oversee part or all of the process that deals with the matter;
- d. Remove — the employee does not participate at all in the matter;
- e. Relinquish — the private interest concerned is relinquished; and
- f. Resign — the employee steps down from the position they hold on a temporary or permanent basis, e.g. when a personal relationship develops between a supervisor and staff member, or between staff members with positional interaction, one party should actively seek alternative employment within or external to the University. The University will offer support in this regard.

Personal Relationships

(72) Staff should be particularly aware of actively preventing actual or perceived conflicts of interest if working with persons with whom they have, or form, close personal relationships such as relatives, close friends or personal associates or involvement in sporting, social or cultural activities. They include any tendency toward favour or prejudice resulting from friendship, animosity or other personal involvement with another person or group.

(73) Accordingly staff must not participate without a specific agreement to manage such a situation, in processes related to academic progress, assessment, recruitment, selection, promotion, performance appraisal, termination or transfer of any person with whom they have, or have had, a close personal relationship.

(74) In some cases only the individual staff member will be aware of the actual or potential for conflict of interest and the onus is on that staff member to report the conflict to their supervisor.

(75) Enmity as well as friendship can give rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

(76) Relatives or staff members who are or become involved in an intimate relationship with each other should not work within the same area or in a reporting relationship. One party should actively seek alternative employment within or external to the University. The University will offer support in this regard.

(77) Personal relationships between staff and students are not banned. However, such relationships must generally be viewed as problematic given the power imbalance inherent between staff and students.

(78) Staff who have or have had personal relationships with students with whom they also have professional relations are required to:

- a. Remove themselves from selection, supervision, assessment, appeals process or any other professional issue concerning that student and to ensure provision by other staff at no disadvantage to the student. This may require disclosure in confidence to the Course Coordinator, Head of School or Executive Dean; and
- b. Extend alternative arrangements to lectures, seminars, laboratory, fieldwork, etc if requested by the student or the relevant Head of School or Executive Dean.

Personal Relationships – Students Under 18 Years of Age

(79) Teachers/staff can hold a unique position of influence and trust that must not be violated or compromised. They exercise their responsibilities in ways that recognise that there are limits or boundaries to their relationships with students under 18 years. The following examples outline some of those limits.

(80) A professional relationship will be violated if a teacher or staff member:

- a. has a sexual relationship with a student under 18 years;
- b. uses sexual innuendo or inappropriate language and/or material with students under 18 years;
- c. touches a student without a valid reason;
- d. holds conversations of a personal nature, or has contact with a student under 18 years via written or electronic means including email, letters, telephone, text messages and social media sites including, but not limited to; Facebook, MySpace, Mashable, Twitter, Tumblr, StumbleUpon, LinkedIn, without a valid professional context; and
- e. accepts gifts, which could be reasonably perceived as being used to influence them, from students or their parents/guardians.

(81) A professional relationship may be compromised if a teacher or staff member:

- a. attends parties or socialises with students under 18 years; and
- b. invites a student or students under 18 years back to their home, particularly if no-one else is present.

(82) Students undertaking a placement at the University as a part of their studies are also bound by the above mentioned limits and boundaries.

Staff as Students

(83) Staff enrolled as students in this university must recognise that their student status does not alter their obligation to first and foremost fulfil all employment duties, obligations and responsibilities.

(84) Selection, supervision and academic progress must be managed with particular care to ensure that unfair advantage/disadvantage cannot occur or be perceived to occur. Supervisors of staff enrolled in postgraduate degrees must be independent.

(85) Staff enrolled as students have an additional responsibility to model the highest professional conduct as conflict of interest, or perceptions of conflict, can be common in these situations.

(86) Staff enrolled as students must not use their position as a staff member in any way to gain advantage.

(87) Staff as students must recognise that the information in 3.2 Personal Relationships - Students Under 18 years of Age still applies in this situation.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(88) This policy is important to all staff members.

(89) All academic, teaching and general continuing and fixed term staff.

Section 3 - Definitions

(90) Nil

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(91) Nil

Section 5 - Procedures

(92) Unless your employment conditions state otherwise, not all outside employment or activities need to be declared. These Procedures aim to assist a staff member in deciding whether a declaration is required based on the principle that a staff member acting reasonably would take into due consideration any activities that may have a 'real' or 'perceived' conflict of interest with the University and that may prevent or inhibit the employee in attending or performing their role at the university to the best of their abilities.

(93) If the staff member is in doubt they should consult with their supervisor for further guidance.

Outside employment unrelated to a staff member's position

(94) Staff may undertake other work not related to their duties or area of expertise without the need to seek prior approval, provided that the work does not result in a breach by the staff member of any of their obligations under clause 2 of these Guidelines, and provided that their conditions of employment with VU do not state otherwise.

(95) However, where such outside employment may result in a breach of these obligations, the staff member must notify their supervisor and take appropriate steps to remedy the situation in conjunction with the supervisor. Appropriate steps may include:

- a. management of a conflict of interest situation in accordance with VU's Staff Code of Conduct;
- b. subject to the agreement of the relevant manager, Head of School / Department, alteration of working arrangements (eg reduced hours of work, period of leave) to ensure that work performance for VU is not adversely affected by the outside employment commitments; and
- c. discontinuing the outside employment.

Outside employment related to a staff member's position

(96) Staff must declare in writing and obtain approval from their delegated officer (in line with the People and Culture Delegations Policy) prior to undertaking any outside employment related to their duties or area of expertise. It may be that the opportunity itself belongs to VU and that an acceptance of any benefit is itself a breach of the staff member's duty to VU.

(97) Requests for outside employment are to be assessed in a fair, equitable and transparent manner. In the vast majority of cases it is expected that approval will be granted should the delegated officer be satisfied that:

- a. the work does not result in a breach by the staff member of any of their obligations under clause 2 of these Guidelines;
- b. the staff member has demonstrated that appropriate risk management practices are in place for the type of work (such as insurance, registration or licensing requirements); and
- c. there is no other risk to the University or its reputation arising from the outside employment.

(98) Should the delegated officer not be satisfied with the proposed arrangements, they will write to the staff member outlining their reasons for not approving the request. Should a complaint arise, the staff member may seek resolution through the Staff Issue and Complaint Resolution Policy.

(99) All relevant documentation must be completed and approved, and records appropriately kept.

(100) The SPDP planning and review discussions will include prompts around outside employment. Details of any relevant outside arrangements may be recorded in a staff member's performance and development plan.

(101) Outside activities of academic staff will also be recorded as part of the University's Academic Workloads processes.

Section 6 - Guidelines

Outside Employment and Other Professional Activities

Obligations of Staff

(102) The obligations of staff in relation to undertaking outside employment or other professional activities are outlined in these Guidelines and exist to ensure that:

- a. the work or activities does not interfere with or have an adverse impact on the performance of the duties of their role at VU or the health and wellbeing of the staff member;
- b. the work does not involve the use of University resources (except where otherwise permitted by University policy);
- c. the work will not bring the reputation of VU into disrepute;
- d. the work does not involve a conflict between the staff member's personal interests and the interests of the University (refer to the Staff Code of Conduct); and
- e. the work does not involve a misuse of a staff member's position at the University.

(103) Failure to meet these obligations may result in disciplinary action against the staff member.

Status and Details

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Responsible Officer	Simone Wright Chief Human Resources Officer 9919 5447
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