# Code of Conduct

Please note: This Code of Conduct does not apply to staff, volunteers, University Council members, contractors (including agency staff) and external members of University committees, who are subject to the Staff Code of Conduct which became effective on 8 April 2024. All other members of the University community, including students, remain subject to this Code of Conduct.

(1) The University of Newcastle stands as a global leader distinguished by a commitment to equity and excellence, Indigenous education, and to creating life ready graduates and a better future for its region through a focus on innovation and impact.

(2) As members of the University community, we are committed to the Code of Conduct principles of honesty, fairness, trust, accountability and respect. At all times we will act in a way that is consistent with these principles both as individuals and as representatives of the University. This includes responsible use of social media use when communicating on one of the University's official social media channels or commenting on University matters on other social media channels.

(3) Our University values of Excellence, Equity, Engagement and Sustainability shape our decisions and underpin our strategic direction: Looking Ahead Strategic Plan.

(4) This code applies to students, staff, conjoints, volunteers, University Council members and external members of University committees, who are to act consistently with these Code of Conduct principles and comply with the code in their studies, the performance of their duties and in their endeavours. Partners, contractors and visitors are to acknowledge and observe the code in their University dealings.

(5) The code should be read in conjunction with the rules, policies, procedures and guidelines located in the University Policy Library.

(6) The code cannot address every situation that may be encountered. Therefore, if faced with a difficulty, individuals should ask for guidance and support from a senior staff member or refer to one of the resources listed at the back of this document.

## About the Code

(7) This Code of Conduct is critical in reinforcing the University's commitment to integrity, excellence and achievement.

(8) The Code aims to maintain public trust and confidence in the integrity and professionalism of our graduates, the learning and teaching, research and innovation, research training, and service and engagement activities of the University and the facilities and services that make up the University experience.

(9) Members of the University community are encouraged to:

a. seek advice on reporting any behaviour by staff, students, or others (who have a significant association with the University), which would be considered unfair, unjust or unreasonable. You should follow the University's Complaints and Grievances processes;

b. report behaviours or activities that could be considered to be corrupt conduct, maladministration, serious and substantial waste of public money, misconduct or illegal activity. You should follow the University's Fraud and

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[Corruption](#) reporting processes.

(10) Reporting matters related to corrupt conduct, maladministration and serious and substantial waste of public money is also known as 'whistle blowing' or making a public interest disclosure (PID). In accordance with the [Public Interest Disclosures Act 2022](#), the University has a policy and structures in place to protect and support whistle blowers to ensure you are not disadvantaged for raising your concern. To be afforded this protection, it is important you report your concerns correctly. You can also call the University's confidential and anonymous Fraud and Corruption Reporting Hotline for advice and guidance – phone 49 217 767.

(11) Senior members of staff are expected to act on reports in accordance with the relevant University policy and any legal and procedural requirements.

(12) Failure to comply with the code may lead to disciplinary action, including the possibility of termination of employment or exclusion from the University. Unlawful conduct will result in criminal proceedings.

## Principles of Conduct

### Honesty

(13) Honesty is being truthful, sincere and direct in intentions and actions through transparency and sharing information. It involves acting lawfully and with academic integrity.

(14) Honesty is the foundation of learning and teaching, research and innovation, research training, service and engagement, leadership and administration.

(15) It is the protection and promotion of freedom of speech and academic freedom.

### Fairness

(16) Fairness is demonstrated through inclusiveness and equity. All members of the University community have a right to expect, and a duty to give, fair treatment through clear expectations and a consistent approach.

(17) Fairness celebrates and values diversity.

### Trust

(18) Trust is fundamental in our teamwork and collaborations. Trustworthiness is promoted by setting and following clear guidelines and consistent standards and by a belief in the University's vision and purpose.

(19) It is being able to rely on the integrity, honesty, capability, confidentiality and fairness of others; and personally demonstrating those principles.

### Accountability

(20) Accountability is taking ownership of all actions or inactions within our control. It means upholding the integrity of our academic endeavours, delegating power to bring about change, avoiding conflicts of interest and taking action against wrongdoing. Accountability involves behaving professionally and being proactive about our knowledge and learning.

(21) It also means contributing to sustainability – social, economic and environmental, and ensuring that decisions are made in line with the University's [Ethical Decision-Making Framework](#).

### Respect

(22) Respect is valuing oneself and others and involves the considerate treatment of people, animals and property. It

is demonstrated in the acknowledgement of the traditional custodians of the land.

(23) Respect is displayed by being courteous and kind, listening, communicating openly, and recognising and valuing the importance of knowledge and experience. It means valuing others' ideas and contributions, recognising the importance of diversity and difference and promoting a respectful and collaborative culture that does not tolerate bullying or harassment.

# Section 1 - Honesty

## What honesty means to Our University community

(24) We are truthful, sincere and direct in learning and teaching, research and innovation, research training, service and engagement, leadership and administration.

(25) We have a strong and enduring commitment to the principles of academic freedom and freedom of speech.

(26) Honesty encompasses clarity and transparency in rules, policies, procedures and guidelines and the day-to-day dealings with each other in the University community.

## What honesty means to each of us as individuals

(27) We will:

a. exercise our freedom of speech and academic freedom in a manner consistent with the Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom and in accordance with this Code.
b. protect academic freedom and safeguard the presentation of ideas through robust, informed and respectful debate that is free from discrimination and harassment.
c. share information on the global and local engagements and relationships we have in the work we do.
d. ensure that in the course of our employment, studies or other association with the University no inappropriate advantage is taken, or sought.
e. gain official permission before using University property for personal use.
f. ensure that University funds are not used for personal gain.
g. acknowledge and attribute collaborators.
h. take responsibility for our own work and acknowledge the intellectual contribution of others.
i. provide candid and accurate comments and feedback to students, staff and other members of the University community.
j. maintain transparency and provide a clear rationale for decisions.
k. admit mistakes and work to rectify problems quickly.

# Section 2 - Fairness

## What fairness means to Our University community

(28) We are consistent and impartial. We apply the principles of inclusiveness, natural justice and procedural fairness in all actions.

(29) We value and celebrate diversity and do not harass or discriminate against others on the unlawful grounds of race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, transgender status, age, physical or mental disability, marital or domestic status, family or carer's responsibilities, pregnancy, religion, political opinion, nationality or social origin.

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### What fairness means to each of us as individuals

(30) We will:

    a. be inclusive and treat everyone equitably, consistently and appropriately.

    b. show compassion and make reasonable adjustments when accommodating others' needs.

    c. consider all stakeholders and the principle of equity in the distribution of resources.

    d. be impartial and balanced in decision-making.

    e. share or provide equitable access to relevant and appropriate information and knowledge.

    f. take into account the needs of all the University's campuses.

# Section 3 - Trust

## What trust means to Our University community

(31) Through honesty, fairness and providing others with the opportunity to contribute and participate we will achieve the trust and confidence of our colleagues and communities.

(32) Trustworthiness is promoted by transparency in all expectations and standards, through collaborations among colleagues in the wider University community and a belief in the University's vision and purpose.

## What trust means to each of us as individuals

(33) We will:

    a. demonstrate and encourage open communication.

    b. rely on our colleagues to achieve agreed outcomes.

    c. be reliable and ensure that decisions are implemented.

    d. be cooperative with other members of the University community.

    e. acknowledge the responsibility of our positions and that we are regarded as having expertise, knowledge and skills in our field and area of work.

    f. maintain the integrity, confidentiality and privacy of official University information.

    g. know when it is appropriate to share information with others inside and outside the University.

    h. share responsibility for the success of the University and take a proactive role in its endeavours and activities.

    i. protect Australia's national interests by balancing our international collaborations against the risk of foreign interference.

# Section 4 - Accountability

## What accountability means to Our University community

(34) We strive to obtain value for public money spent, avoid waste and extravagance, and act in the best interests of the University.

(35) We are responsible and are held responsible for our actions or inaction. We are committed to academic integrity and hold to account any unethical behaviour or wrongdoing.

## What accountability means to each of us as individuals

(36) We will:

a. comply with any relevant legislative, industrial or administrative requirements.
b. promote the principles of good governance and social, economic and environmental sustainability.
c. be aware of conflicts of interest, real or perceived, and declare and address them to ensure our political views, affiliations or other personal interests do not unduly influence the performance of our duties or obligations.
d. exercise due diligence in identifying risks and minimising harm.
e. show transparency in the expenditure of public funds.
f. keep up-to-date with advances and changes in knowledge and professional and ethical standards relevant to our area of expertise.
g. perform our duties to the best of our abilities.
h. manage and resource teaching, research and administration areas appropriately and maintain adequate documentation about decisions.
i. identify and report all occupational health and safety risks or security incidents.
j. make public comment on behalf of the University only if we are authorised or an acknowledged expert in the subject area.
k. use the University's Ethical Decision-Making Framework when making decisions.

# Section 5 - Respect

## What respect means to Our University community

(37) We demonstrate regard for individuality and diversity, treating all with courtesy and sensitivity. We recognise and value the importance of knowledge and experience.

(38) We promote collegiality by behaving inclusively and openly, and fostering academic freedom. We value our University and the broader community.

## What respect means to each of us as individuals

(39) We will:

a. acknowledge Aboriginal culture and heritage and the traditional custodianship of the lands on which the University is situated.
b. communicate courteously, openly and with understanding.
c. treat others with compassion and kindness.
d. behave and communicate in a manner that does not offend, degrade or humiliate.
e. promote a culture that does not tolerate bullying or harassment.
f. value difference and diversity and others' opinions, choices and approaches.
g. follow reasonable direction from supervisors, managers and lecturers.
h. behave in a professional/appropriate manner as a representative of the University in all our activities both on- and off-campus.
i. treat animals with consideration and sensitivity.
j. show consideration for the property of the University and the property of others.

# Section 6 - Resources

(40) Refer to the Associated Information page for links to a range of internal and external resources.

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## Status and Details

| Status | Historic |
|---|---|
| Effective Date | 25th August 2021 |
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| Responsible Executive | Belinda Yourn<br>Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) |
| Enquiries Contact | Eleanor Edwards<br>Executive Officer<br><br>Office of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) |

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"Graduate"** - (Noun) Has the same meaning as in section 3(2) of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"University"** - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

**"Council member"** - A person who is a member of the University Council as described in Section 8B of the University of Newcastle Act, 1989.

**"Risk"** - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

**"Area of expertise"** - An area in which a staff member or a student have been peer-reviewed or published.

**"Campus"** - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

**"Course"** - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

**"Student"** - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

**"Disability"** - As defined by the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Cth) (as amended from time to time, or as per any replacing legislation).

**"Disciplinary action"** - When used in relation to staff of the University, this is as defined in the applicable and current Enterprise Bargaining Agreement, or the staff member's employment contract. When used in relation to students of the University, this refers to the range of penalties that may be applied under the Student Conduct Rule.

**"Research"** - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

**"Senior staff"** - Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Global Innovation Chair, Global Innovation Professorial

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Fellow, Head of School, Director or equivalent.

**"Staff"** - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

**"Supervisor"** - Staff members with direct supervisory responsibility for other staff within the workplace (a Supervisor may also be member of Senior Management, with duties as an Officer as defined in the Work Health and Safety Act 2011, or any replacing legislation).

**"Foreign interference"** - Foreign interference occurs when activities are carried out by, or on behalf of, a foreign actor that are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interests.