Code of Ethics – London School of Commerce, Malta

1. Code of Ethics for London School of Commerce, Malta (LSCM).

1.1. Purpose

This code of ethics specifies the values, principles and behavioural standards expected of all staff members, management and students of LSCM and to ensure these codes are in line with MFHEA quality and ethical requirements.

1.2 Scope & Applicability

This code of conduct relates to all the full-time and part-time staff of LSCM, senior management and the students of LSCM.

All the above stated members should maintain required standards in relation to the ethical conduct, integrity, professionalism and accountability as stated in this code of ethics.

2. Key Definitions & Principles

2.1 Definitions

- **Ethical conduct**

This is the practice of making moral and good decisions led by values such as honesty, integrity and respect for others. Following rules and regulations, practising professionalism and being transparent in all activities are inclusive to ethical conduct and are applicable both to individual actions and to organisational practices as reflected in this code of conduct.

- **Conflict of Interest**

A situation which a person's personal interests have the possibility to compromise their professional behaviour and judgments. One example would be when partaking in a staff recruitment process and a candidate is known to one of the interview panel.

- **Stakeholder**

An individual, group or an entity which can be impacted (directly or indirectly) by the organisation's actions.

- **Research Misconduct**

This is a significant deviation from the accepted research practices which include plagiarism, fabrication, falsification and not adhering to ethical research standards.

- **Whistleblowing**

This is the act of an employee reporting doubtful misconduct at their workplace which include illegal activities, financial abuse, environmental damage, health and safety risks.

- **Academic Freedom**

The right to speak freely, research and teach, bearing in mind that there is a responsibility to do these within the ethical boundaries and with integrity.

- **Personal Data**

This is any data linked to identifiable individual. Anonymity, protecting privacy, obtaining consent from the data subject and processing these data fairly and lawfully are the ethical requirements related to personal data.

2.2 Core Principles

- **Quality of teaching, learning and research.**

Maintaining high and professional standards in the delivery of education, research and support for students should be a key priory for all staff.

- **Professionalism and loyalty to institutional mission.**

Staff should practice and demonstrate professionalism in all their acts in support of the organisation's vision, mission, core values and strategic objectives.

- **Accountability and transparency.**

Employees should accept responsibility for their decisions and actions, with a willingness to explain and justify these decisions / actions if required. Clear communication and maintaining proper documentation promotes transparency.

- **Integrity**

Practise and showcase honesty, consistency and fairness in all aspects of work in the job.

- **Respect & dignity.**

Practise courtesy and respect for the dignity of all stakeholders, valuing diversity, inclusiveness and maintaining a supportive and safe environment for all.

- **Impartiality & non-discrimination.**

Bias, favouritism and prejudice should not be a part of any decisions or actions. The institution, management and employees should be committed to principles of equal opportunity. No individual should be treated in a manner based on matters if gender, age, disability, race, religion and / or personal belief.

3. Standards of Conduct

- Maintain honesty, lawfulness and transparency in decisions and actions.
- Responsible use of institutional resources only for authorised purposes (financial probity).
- Maintain confidentiality of sensitive data / information and conform to data protection rules.
- Avoid any behaviour that could lead to discrimination, harassment and bullying.

4. Academic Integrity & Teaching

- Take actions to prevent academic misconduct and investigate any suspected academic malpractice such as plagiarism, collusion, suspected contract cheating and misuse of AI. Implement sanctions, in line with the LSCM and / or Partner University procedures as appropriate.

- Maintain up-to-date and accurate course information.

- Ensure that assessments match the learning outcomes, that candidates are not over-assessed. Consistent assessment judgements to be made, and assessments to be practicable to implement having regard to the resource available to students as well as to meet the MFHEA's programme accreditation expectations.

5. Research Ethics & Research Integrity

- Student must submit a research ethics form to get the approval prior to conducting research.
- Primary research which involves human participants, animals, sensitive materials or personal data need prior approval from the ethics committee prior to the commencement of the research.
- Any student conducting primary research without ethics committee approval will be considered as having potentially committed an academic offence.
- Any academic misconduct related to research should be directed the academic misconduct panel of the institution and thence to the University partner (where relevant) to handle the case under the appropriate academic misconduct procedures.

6. Conflicts of Interest in Internal & External Engagements

- Conflict of interest related to any internal and / or external activity or engagement should be disclosed formally prior to proceed with any such activity or engagement.

7. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- Discrimination, harassment, bullying, and victimisation based on gender, gender identify, race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic background, marital status or disability will not be tolerated.

- Staff are encouraged to incorporate diverse perspectives, experiences and cultures in the design and delivery of the curriculum.

- Ensuring the inclusivity and accessibility of teaching materials, assessments and support services to all students is paramount.

- A fair and unbiased admission process is applied to ensure equal opportunity for all applicants.

- Unbiased and transparent recruitment of staff assures equal opportunity for all applicants.

- Institutional policies and procedures that support equality and diversity are to be subject to regular monitoring to identify and implement any possible upgrades.

- Ensure accessibility is enabled not only to physical infrastructure, but to digital platforms, the Learning Management System and through communication methods.

- Clearly documented procedures are in place to handle complaints related to discrimination, harassment, or exclusion. (***Including in the Student and Staff Handbooks***)

- Awareness sessions on equality, diversity and inclusion, emphasising the value of mutual respect, dignity, and sense of belonging-ness within the institution are provided to all students (and new members of staff).

8. Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy & Responsible Behaviour

- Unrestricted academic freedom for academics, researchers and learners operating within the ethical boundaries of the institution require mutual recognition on their part to institutional obligations to respect accuracy and to pursue integrity and ethical conduct in teaching, learning and research.

- The institution has autonomy in its own academic governance, decision-making, curriculum design and delivery, in line with the standards set by MFHEA and Partner universities.

- All staff members and students must act responsibly supporting, respecting and promoting academic integrity, diversity, inclusivity to build a safe learning environment within the institution.

- All academic activities are to conform to academic regulations, ethical guidelines and be in line with MFHEA directives and University partner required standards.

9. Data Protection & Confidentiality

- Ensure compliance with the data protection laws (**GDPR**) and timely review of policies to align with any updates.

- Personal data is treated with care, obtaining consent of the data subject, maintaining privacy and anonymity according to the ethics requirements.

- Use of secure data storage to protect data against unauthorised access or misuse.

- Ensure secure discarding of data that is no longer required.

- Conduct awareness sessions with staff and students on data protection and ethical requirements.

10. Complaints, Reporting, Whistleblowing & Investigation Procedures

- Staff and students can raise concerns following the complaint procedure in the staff handbook and /or student programme handbook as is relevant.

- The institution is committed to ensuring that any staff concerns relating to any danger to the health and safety of staff or students, criminal activity, financial abuses, breach of a legal obligation, including negligence, breach of contract, breach of administrative law or any other unlawful activity **and the cover up of any of these** in the workplace will be taken seriously and investigated . Please see section 11 "Policy for the Disclosure of Information in the Public Interest" in the staff handbook.

11. Governance, Culture, Roles & Responsibilities

- The board of directors, executive management team and the academic board hold the main responsibility for establishing and preserving an ethical culture within the institution.

- The ethics committee oversees the compliance of research ethics requirements of students.

- The Deputy Dean and Senior Academic Manager provide central inspection of the institution's ethics and compliance framework.

- Department heads, programme leaders, module leaders and supervisors should lead by example as regards ethical behaviour within their teams.

12. Training and Communication

- Mandatory induction sessions for staff and student on the code of ethics.

- Regular reporting of any ethical concerns to the ethics committee and / or to the leadership.

13. Monitoring, Audit & Continuous Improvement

- Periodic independent review of ethics and bring forward for discussion in the managerial and staff meetings of the institute.

- Annual overall research ethics report is produced to the University in relation to any primary research related ethics processes.

- Timely review of the code of ethics for any continuous improvement and to adopt industry best practices in relation to ethics.

- Financial audit and compliance with the requirements of taxation and other legal authorities are key measures of externality, along with review by partner Universities and educational regulators.

14. Sanctions & Enforcement

- Breaches of the code of ethics are subjected to a fair and proportionate range of sanctions based on the severity, intention and impact of the misconduct. These sanctions may vary from informal resolution, mandatory training, formal warnings, temporary suspension, termination of employment or engagement or programme of study.

- Those under disciplinary consideration have the right to appeal by following the established appeal procedure (student appeal procedure in the student handbook and staff appeal process in the staff handbook)

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