



Tshwane University
of Technology

We empower people

#fromGood2Great

Code of Ethics

(Employees and
External Stakeholders)



Type of document	Code
Purpose	To promote and uphold ethical conduct in all interactions between TUT and its stakeholders by establishing clear behavioural standards and providing guidance to support ethical decision making.
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Owner	TUT Council
Curator	Registrar
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PREAMBLE

The Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) (herein referred to as the University) seeks to promote the highest standards of technical, scientific, scholarly and professional integrity. By so doing, it takes into consideration the ethical, social and environmental concerns arising from its activities.

The University promotes an ethical culture and high standards of ethics in all its endeavours. As such, it intends to ensure that all its activities have positive impact on its stakeholders. The aim, therefore, is to strive to promote and continuously improve the quality of university life for both employees and students.

The University aspires to:

- be a university of choice for students;
- be an employer of choice for employees;
- always apply ethical standards with integrity, resilience, stewardship, accountability, excellence and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) across all activities;
- consider the local, regional and international community and, in so doing, be a model corporate citizen;
- only undertake activities that are environmentally friendly and conform to high standards of environmental care; and
- promote and maintain ethical behaviour with its business partners and stakeholders.

The Code of Ethics ('the Code') commits the Tshwane University of Technology to the highest standards of integrity, behaviour and ethics in dealing with all its stakeholders, including its Council members, executive management, managers, employees, students, parents, sponsors of students, researchers, research participants, appointed contractors, service providers, suppliers, donors, alumni, industry and society at large.

APPLICATION

This Code applies to all TUT employees and its external stakeholders.

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	2
APPLICATION	2
1. AIMS OF CODE OF ETHICS	4
2. DEFINITIONS	4
3. ETHICS AND OUR VALUES	5
3.1 Resilience	5
3.2 Stewardship	5
3.3 Accountability	6
3.4 Excellence	9
3.5 Diversity	10
4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST	10
5. GIFTS AND GRATUITIES	10
6. SETTING THE TONE FOR AN ETHICAL CULTURE	11
6.1 Responsibilities of the Ethics Structures	11
6.2 Ethics Committee.....	11
6.3 How to Report Ethical Concerns or Violations or Seek Advice	12
7. BUILDING AN ETHICAL CULTURE	12
8. IMPLEMENTATION	13
9. REVISION OF THE CODE	13

1. AIMS OF CODE OF ETHICS

- 1.1 The Code of Ethics (the Code) provides a framework for both professional behavioural practice and decision-making about ethical issues as they occur during core University activities. This means the identification of key areas of ethical considerations which are fundamental to university life. Procedures for these key areas are designed within appropriate University fora under the guidance of the University leadership. The Code complements and aligns itself with the University's other elements of strategic intent, policies and procedures. It also takes into consideration important stakeholders and external professional bodies.
- 1.2 The Code further translates TUT values into regulative guidelines for easier governance, monitoring and evaluation.
- 1.3 Ethical behavioural concerns encompass all aspects of University life, ranging from University management to engaging with both employees and students at the University. The University thereby endorses its key values of integrity, resilience, stewardship, accountability, excellence, and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) to create and embrace an ethical organisational culture.
- 1.4 These values apply to every aspect of University life by employees, all its partners and stakeholders alike in their quest to educate and produce well-rounded ethical graduates.

2. DEFINITIONS

Conflict of Interest (COI) - means a situation in which someone has competing professional or personal interests; such competing interests can make it difficult to fulfill his or her duties and responsibilities impartially;

Council - means the council contemplated in paragraph 7 of the Institutional Statue of Tshwane University of Technology

Employee - means any person, excluding independent contractors, who works for the University and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration from the University;

External Stakeholder - means any supplier, contractor, consultant, vendor, service provider, volunteer, parent, funder, donor, alumni and any other person or organisation conducting business with, providing business to or acting on behalf of TUT;

Student - means any person registered to study at TUT;

Ethics - means the examination of the rational justification for our moral judgments; it studies what is morally right or wrong, just, or unjust. In a broader sense, ethics reflects on human beings and their interaction with nature and with other humans, on freedom, on responsibility and on justice;

The Ethics Committee (EC) - means a structure that provides oversight and leadership on ethics management in the University;

Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) - means the Tshwane University of Technology, as duly constituted in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended; and

University - means the Tshwane University of Technology, as duly constituted in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997), as amended.

3. ETHICS AND OUR VALUES

3.1 Resilience

We proactively adapt and recover effectively to ensure our long-term success and continued impact in an ever-changing world. Resilience, as a university value reflects our dedication to moral strength, adaptability and perseverance. As a university, we operate in a complex and evolving environment. Therefore, it is of outmost importance that we maintain consistent moral behaviour when adjusting to change, recovering from challenges, and preserving stable and effective operations, even in challenging circumstances such as hardship, injustice or social pressure.

To strengthen resilience, the University must equip employees not only to perform effectively in their academic and operational roles, but also to manage challenges in both their professional and personal life, enabling them to contribute positively to the University.

3.2 Stewardship

Stewardship involves responsible management of our environment, people and resources for the public good and

sustainable development. The University commits to treating everyone with dignity, managing financial and social resources responsibly, and respecting and greening our environment.

Our university believes that all its employees deserve to work in an environment where individuals are treated with dignity and respect. We are committed to providing a respectful working and learning environment that is free of discrimination and abusive, offensive and harassing behaviour. We are committed to incorporating more environmentally friendly infrastructure, systems and practices into our campuses.

Employees who feel they are being mistreated or discriminated against in any way, whether by a University employee or student, are encouraged to report the incident to their line manager, Human Resources and Transformation (HR&T) department, or the Ethics Hotline (see Section 6.3).

The ethical considerations of employees include honesty and integrity, respect for others, fairness and justice, professionalism, confidentiality, responsible use of resources, compliance with laws and regulations, and social responsibility.

3.3 Accountability

3.3.1 Relevant Legislations, Internal Policies, Rules, Guidelines and Codes

We are ethically responsible and accountable, guided by integrity in all conduct and governance. We commit to being answerable to each other and will always act in the best interest of the University.

Therefore, to ensure sustainability, employees must be responsible for promptly addressing ethical questions or concerns raised by other employees or students and for taking the appropriate steps to deal with such issues. We hereby confirm that any ethical concerns or threats must not be treated as a challenge to authority, but rather as an opportunity for open communication. We want the ethics dialogue to become a natural part of the University's daily routine.

Each of us is responsible for knowing and adhering to the values and standards set in this Code and for raising questions if we are uncertain about any University policies, codes, standards and legislation we must abide by. If we are concerned whether any of these standards are being met or are aware of any ethical violations, we can refer to this document.

We are accountable for the following:

3.3.1 Relevant Legislations, Internal Policies, Rules, Guidelines and Codes

Accountability is linked to our value of integrity. It begins with complying with the laws, rules and regulations, as well as policies, internal standards, codes, guidelines, processes and procedures set by the University. This requires that all employees understand those requirements that apply to our specific roles and responsibilities. If one is unsure of whether a contemplated action is permitted by law or the University, they should seek advice from the Compliance Office or any other relevant ethics structures. We hold ourselves responsible for preventing violations of University policies, laws and internal codes and standards and for speaking up if we see possible violations.

We undertake our teaching and research with academic integrity. Therefore, we foster and defend intellectual honesty by not committing plagiarism, self-plagiarism or any other academic fraud. We take zero tolerance approach to bribery, fraud, corruption and any form of misconduct, and commit to acting professionally, fairly, and with integrity in all our business dealings and relationships.

The success of the University in achieving its goals as a successful teaching and learning institution is dependent on displaying honesty and integrity through honourable conduct. Society will judge us on what we do to create an environment of integrity that incorporates both employees and students.

When considering any action, we should determine whether the environment created within the University will support the following: Will this build trust and credibility for our University? Will it help create a credible reputation for our University that earns respect from our stakeholders, partners and the broader society in which it operates? Can we follow through on our commitments? If we can answer “yes” to these questions, our integrity is intact. We must consciously continue to strive to meet the value of integrity.

Having integrity also means everyone should feel comfortable speaking their mind, particularly pertaining to ethics concerns. The University has a responsibility to create an open and supportive environment where employees and students feel comfortable raising ethical concerns.

The University will investigate all reported instances of questionable or unethical behaviour. In every instance where

improper behaviour is found to have occurred, the University will take appropriate action. There will be no retaliation against employees or students who raise ethical concerns in good faith.

3.3.2 Proprietary Information

We must respect the proprietary rights of other competitive learning institutions. We will not acquire or seek to acquire, by improper means, a competitor's trade secrets or other proprietary or confidential information. We will not engage in unauthorised use, copying, distribution or alteration of software or other intellectual property.

We will also not selectively disclose (whether in one-on-one or small discussions, meetings, presentations, proposals or otherwise) any material non-public information concerning our University's strategic operations and information. We should be particularly vigilant when making presentations or proposals to competitors, stakeholders, or other interested parties to ensure that our presentations do not contain such material non-public information.

3.3.3 Health and Safety

Our University is dedicated to maintaining a healthy and safe environment. A Policy on Health and Safety is available and designed to educate employees on health and safety at the University. This policy is available on the TUT Staff portal or may be accessed upon request through the Office of the Registrar.

3.3.4 Teaching and Learning, and Research Undertaken by the University

We observe ethical conduct in teaching and learning and recognise our duty to report violations of academic integrity. As educators, we provide responsible leadership to students and uphold high standards of education, supervision, mentorship and assessment.

The University regards research ethics as an integral part of research capacity building. We are committed to further develop knowledge of research ethics and employees' awareness and ensuring that research studies are conducted by academics in an ethical way. We ensure the originality of our research, obtain ethical approval for our research, conduct research with due regard for how data is used in our research and protect all involved in research.

There is a policy to independently evaluate, approve and monitor research that involves humans, animals and the

environment within a framework of generally accepted research ethics guidelines. This policy is available on the TUT Staff portal or may be accessed upon request through the Office of the Registrar.

3.3.5 Greening the Environment and Climate Change

Environment sustainability and climate change are great challenges facing humankind in the 21st century; they are a major focus of scientific research and teaching activities and a key responsibility for the University employees, students and management.

Climate change is said to be a “unique ethical problem”. Our moral accountability flows directly from our collective responsibility to take whatever actions required to mitigate the risks that could cause harm to future generations. Our moral accountability flows directly to our political and collective responsibility. We, therefore, look to our own efforts to limit or remove any harmful actions that are known to contribute to climate change risks and risks associated with sustaining a green environment.

3.3.6 Community-oriented Projects, Industry Collaborations and Partnerships

Our university is involved in community-oriented projects and industry collaborations that embody the University's ethos of combining education with real-world impact. The projects are based on ethical values stated in this Code, and what is applied in terms of ethics in our University is also applied to our efforts, which are designed to shape educational and professional standards in South Africa.

3.4 Excellence

In our commitment to move from ‘Good to Great,’ we foster world-class teaching, learning, and research, and a high-performance culture. We will constantly innovate, solve problems, and aim to improve ourselves and others. Excellence can also be attributed to minimising rules and, instead, promoting principles. Hence our Code of Ethics focuses on principles of ethical behaviour rather than stating rules. The value of excellence applies universally to all members of the TUT community (including students) as we seek to deliver quality services to all our stakeholders.

3.5 Diversity

We will embrace diversity, foster inclusivity, promote equity and support engaged and transformative scholarship. Diversity allows for new perspectives; equity creates a fair environment and can help to provide opportunities for individuals who need it; and inclusion helps employees and students feel a sense of belonging and understanding.

The foundation of diversity relates to the ethical principle of upholding the equity of every individual's contribution and their right to equal respect. The intent is to preserve the value of each individual and identify the right opportunities for personal and professional growth.

More than policies, programmes or headcounts, our University outpaces its competitors by respecting the unique needs, perspectives, and potential of their diverse workforce and student intake. As a result, diverse and inclusive institutions earn deeper trust and more commitment from their employees and, relative to our University, our students.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflict of interest can impair our ability to make objective decisions relative to our University and its students. Employees owe a duty to the University to advance its legitimate interests when the opportunity to do so arises.

Determining whether a conflict of interest exists is not always easy. Before engaging in any activity, transaction or relationship that might give rise to a conflict of interest, employees and students are encouraged to seek advice or review of the situation.

We seek to avoid conflicts of interest that result in the unfair preferential treatment of certain stakeholders. In cases where conflict of interest cannot be avoided, we disclose all actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest as soon as they arise and ensure that they are properly managed to mitigate them.

5. GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

The University is committed to competing solely on the merits of teaching, learning, research and academic innovation.

We are committed to avoiding any actions that create a perception that favourable treatment of outside entities by the University was sought, received, or given in exchange for personal courtesies. This includes, but is not limited to, gifts, gratuities, meals, refreshments, entertainment or other benefits from students, other persons, or companies and organisation with whom the University does or may do business.

We will neither give nor accept business courtesies that constitute or could reasonably be perceived as constituting unfair inducements that would violate the laws, regulations or codes and policies of the University or would cause embarrassment or reflect negatively on the University.

6. SETTING THE TONE FOR AN ETHICAL CULTURE

6.1 Responsibilities of the Ethics Structures

Committees and structures responsible for managing ethics have the added responsibility for demonstrating, through their actions, the importance of this Code. In any organisation, ethical behaviour does not simply happen; it is the product of clear and direct communication of behavioural expectations, modelled from the top and demonstrated by example.

To make our Code work, the University's designated personnel and structures must be responsible for promptly addressing ethical questions or concerns raised by employees and students, and for taking the appropriate steps to deal with such issues. Those at the helm should not consider employees' ethics concerns as threats or challenges to their authority, but rather as another encouraged form of organisational communication.

6.2 Ethics Committee

Where necessary, the University may establish an Ethics Committee which shall serve as an oversight body providing a connection between practice and the Executive Management of the University. The purpose of the Ethics Committee is to provide oversight and leadership on ethics management for the University employees and students. The Ethics Committee shall also consider and advise on ethical matters referred to by employees and students, and on conflicts of interest, if required.

6.3 How to Report Ethical Concerns or Violations or Seek Advice



For reporting violations or concerns, contact the Ethics Hotline at:

- Ethics Hotline Contact Information:
- Toll-Free Number: 0800 006 924
- Email Address: tut@connect.ethicsuite.com
- Url: <https://connect.ethicsuite.com/tut>

Stakeholders are encouraged to report suspected violations to their immediate supervisors or ethics hotline. We maintain an anonymous ethics hotline, which supports the anonymity of the whistleblower.

7. BUILDING AN ETHICAL CULTURE

At times, we are all faced with decisions we would rather not have to make and issues we would prefer to avoid. Sometimes, we hope that if we avoid confronting a problem, it will simply go away.

At our University, we must have the courage to tackle tough decisions and make difficult choices, secure in the knowledge that the University is committed to doing the right thing. At times, this will mean doing more than simply what the law requires. Merely because we can pursue a course of action does not mean we should do so.

Although the University's guiding principles cannot address every issue or provide answers to every ethical dilemma, we can define the spirit in which we intend to engage with each other, students, and stakeholders to guide us in our daily conduct.

Council and Executive Management have the added responsibility of demonstrating, through their actions, ethical leadership, and the importance of this Code. In any organisation, ethical behaviour does not simply happen; it is the product of clear and direct communication of behavioural expectations, modelled from the top and demonstrated by example.

8. IMPLEMENTATION

The overall promotion (including awareness-raising, training, and the active dissemination of the Code), communication, maintenance and practical implementation of the Code is the responsibility of the Registrar, with the support of the University leadership.

9. REVISION OF THE CODE

This Code will be reviewed every three years to ensure its relevance and alignment with a changing environment. Where necessary, this Code may be reviewed earlier than the above period when there are major changes and/or gaps identified.

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