
Code of Conduct

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Purpose

The reputation of Athabasca University is fundamental to its success. The University expects its employees and representatives to adhere to the highest ethical standards, including honesty, integrity, respect for others, fair dealing, diligence, and prudence and accountability in the use of University resources. Adherence to such standards not only serves to further the reputation of the University, it provides an essential foundation for excellence in education, and is vital to the development and maintenance of an environment in which employees are proud to work. The purpose of this Code is not to replace but to supplement existing policies. It will outline general principles intended to govern the conduct of University employees and representatives, and to provide overall guidance in matters of conduct.

Definitions

Code	The Code of Conduct established by this Policy
University	Athabasca University
University Community	All, executive, managerial, academic, professional and support staff of Athabasca University whether full time, part time, continuing or fixed term, tutors, visiting



and adjunct academics, academic coaches, other contractors and all volunteers who contribute to University activities or who act on behalf of the University with the exception of the Board of Governors of Athabasca University which has its own Code of Conduct.

Policy Statements

- 1.0 This Code applies to all members of the University Community.
- 2.0 This Code does not undermine or supersede the principles of intellectual, and academic freedom and freedom of speech. It acknowledges the centrality of intellectual, professional and academic freedom, debate and dissent to University culture. These rights are linked to the responsibilities of University staff and students to support the role of the University as a place of independent learning and thought where ideas may be put forward and opinions expressed freely. At the same time, this Code emphasizes that academic freedom imposes responsibilities upon the University community; members are expected to use this freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for and dissemination of knowledge and truth.
- 3.0 All members of the University Community are expected to respect and maintain the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct. In exercising their powers and discharging their duties to the University they shall act honestly and in good faith with a view to the best interests of the University and exercise due care, diligence and skill. In conducting University business, they must respect and comply with the relevant laws and regulations of Alberta and Canada and other jurisdictions in which the University conducts business.
- 4.0 Members of the University Community are expected to seek guidance in any case where there is a question about compliance with both the letter and spirit of this Code or other University policies and applicable laws.
- 5.0 The University is committed to providing a living, learning and working environment that is free of harassment or discrimination, and is supportive of productivity, academic achievement, and the dignity, self-esteem and fair treatment of all members of its community. Members of the University community are expected to:
 - promote a high standard of respect for and treat all students, employees and the general community with courtesy and fairness;
 - be responsive and prompt in dealing with other employees, students and the general community;
 - observe procedural fairness when engaged in decision-making;



- not discriminate against persons on such grounds as race, religious beliefs, colour, gender, sexual orientation, physical or mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income or family status ;
 - not engage in behaviour which may reasonably be perceived as harassment as defined in the Harassment Policy;
 - have respect for cultural differences; and
 - respect the privacy of others in the collection, use and disclosure of personal information while performing University duties or activities in accordance with the *Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
- 6.0 Members of the University Community must maintain the confidentiality of protected information to which they have access by virtue of their relationship with the University, except when disclosure is authorized or required by legislation or legal proceedings.
- 7.0 The University's resources and assets, including, but not limited to, physical assets, software, e-mail systems, paid working time, and information shall never be used for inappropriate or illegal purposes. Members of the University Community shall protect University assets and resources and shall ensure that resources are not wasted, abused, or used improperly or extravagantly. University resources are to be managed effectively and efficiently, with due attention to the principle of moral hazard.
- 8.0 Members of the University Community are prohibited from (a) taking for themselves directly or indirectly opportunities that properly belong to the University or which are discovered through the use of the University's property, information or position; (b) using the University's property, information or position for personal gain or self-aggrandizement; or (c) competing with the University.
- 9.0 Members of the University Community shall not take unfair advantage of anyone through manipulation, concealment, abuse of protected information, misrepresentation of material facts or any other unfair-dealing practice.
- 10.0 The University's accounting records are relied upon to produce reports for the University's management, students, creditors, government agencies, external auditors and the community in general. The financial statements and the records on which they are based must accurately reflect all transactions and conform to all legal and accounting requirements and internal controls.
- 11.0 Honest and accurate recording and reporting of information is critical to the ability of the University to fulfill its mandate and are relied upon to produce various reports. Members of the community must understand that, because the University is a publicly-funded institution, its records and communications of all types are subject to Freedom of Information requests and may become public through legal, regulatory or media investigation. Exaggeration, derogatory



remarks, legal conclusions or inappropriate characterizations of people and organizations shall be avoided. This applies to communications of all kinds, including email and informal notes or interoffice memos. Records are to be retained and destroyed in accordance with the University's Records Management Policy.

- 12.0 Members of the University Community have a responsibility to perform their duties to the best of their ability and to carry out duties in a professional manner. They should seek to achieve high standards in administration, teaching, research and community service, actively consider the health and safety of themselves and others when carrying out their duties, and act honestly and in good faith.
- 13.0 It is recognized that members of the University Community may sometimes enter into consensual and intimate relationships, including those sexual in nature, with persons who are, or may become, associated with the University, including students. A power imbalance exists when one of the parties to such a relationship is a student's professor, instructor, tutor or otherwise has direct input or decision making power over a student's academic progress, or where one member of the University Community has direct input or decision making power over the work performance, promotion, classification or compensation of another member (the "subordinate" member) of the University Community. Accordingly no member of the University Community shall enter into any intimate relationship with a student or a subordinate member in those circumstances. This prohibition applies even where it is the student or subordinate member who attempts to initiate the intimate relationship.
- 14.0 Where an existing intimate relationship exists or has existed in the previous year between a member of the University Community and a student of the University and the student enrolls in a course or program which would make the member their professor, instructor, tutor or otherwise give the member direct input or decision making power over that student's academic progress, the member must disclose the relationship or past relationship in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy and steps must be taken to ensure the member has no direct input or decision making power over that student's academic progress.
- 15.0 Where an existing intimate relationship exists or has existed in the previous year between a member of the University Community and another person who is or becomes member of the University Community and a change occurs by which one member would have direct input or decision making power over the work performance, promotion, classification or compensation of another member (the "subordinate" member) the member must disclose the relationship or past relationship in accordance with the Conflict of Interest Policy and steps must be taken to ensure the member has no direct input or decision making power over that subordinate member's work performance, promotion, classification or compensation.



16.0 While the purpose of this policy is to educate, it also acts to regulate behaviour. Conduct which falls below the standards outlined in the policy may result in discipline or, in the event of serious violation, dismissal. Any disciplinary action including dismissal shall be taken in accordance with and be subject to the provisions of the relevant collective agreement, where applicable.

Applicable Legislation and Regulations

[Post-Secondary Learning Act, S.A 2003, c. P-19.5](#)

[Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, R.S.A. 2000, c. F-25](#)

Related References, Policies, Procedures and Forms

[AUPE Collective Agreement](#)

[AUFA/AUGC Terms and Conditions](#)

[CUPE Collective Agreement](#)

[Animal Care Policy](#)

[Anti-Harassment Policy for Employees](#)

[Conflict of Interest in Research Policy](#)

[Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

[E-mail Policy](#)

[Employee Statement of Acknowledgement for Code of Conduct](#)

[Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Policy](#)

[Examinations for Athabasca University Staff Members Policy](#)

[Fraud – Reporting and Responding to Incidents of Fraud or Dishonesty Policy](#)

[Information Technology Electronic Data Security Policy](#)

[Ownership of Items Purchased from Research Grants and Contracts Policy](#)

[Policy on Fraud and Misconduct in Academic Research and Scholarly Activity](#)

[Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy](#)

[Protected Disclosure \(Whistleblower\) Policy](#)

[Protection of Privacy Policy](#)

[Records Management Policy](#)

[Sharing a Students Personal Information within Athabasca University Policy](#)

[Student Confidentiality Policy](#)

[Voice Mail Policy](#)

History

Approved, Governors of Athabasca University, June 7, 2013, Motion # 183-07