
Human Resources Policies and Procedures

5.22.01 Code of Professional Conduct for Academic Staff

Responsibility: Director Human Resources

Date approved: May 1988

Date last amended: November 2012

Date for next review: November 2014

Reference: Senate 28 November 2012 (S4/12)

1 Academic Freedom

- 1.1 Like other citizens, University staff and students must observe the laws of the State and must also follow the University statutes and rules.
- 1.2 Such obligations do not detract from the concept and practice of academic freedom, which the University supports and considers to be the foundation of teaching, research, scholarship and publication. Academic and research staff should be committed to principles of freedom of enquiry and are entitled to carry out such core activities independent of current opinion and free of institutional censorship, provided they adhere to accepted standards of scholarship and the appropriate professional codes. In their pursuit of knowledge and its dissemination, they have a right to honestly and responsibly examine and question social norms, values, belief and knowledge structures. However, the legitimate challenge of accepted ideas should not involve the defamation of others, and the right to academic freedom carries with it a corresponding obligation on the part of academic staff to use it responsibly and in an ethical way.
- 1.3 In like manner, students of the University are entitled to pursue their studies critically and responsibly in an atmosphere of freedom of enquiry, but with due regard to the rights and sensitivities of others.

2 General Responsibilities

Academic Staff should accept that they have a responsibility to:

- 2.1 acquire and advance knowledge within their respective disciplines;
- 2.2 transmit this knowledge to students and where relevant, to other members of their profession;
- 2.3 be diligent and effective in conducting research and teaching;
- 2.4 share in administrative duties as are compatible with the fulfillment of general responsibilities;
- 2.5 works in the interests of the countries of the University region.

3 Academic Staff and their Students

In dealings with students, academic staff should strive to:

- 3.1 continually improve their methods of explaining and presenting their subjects;
- 3.2 encourage students to think independently, to exchange ideas freely and to explore the frontiers of present knowledge;
- 3.3 examine students effectively, appraise their performance fairly, comment on their contributions constructively, and report back to the students promptly;
- 3.4 be scrupulously fair in giving due credit in publications to the research work of and other contributions from students under the member's supervision;
- 3.5 have due regard for the general welfare of students;
- 3.6 refrain from revealing confidential information about students, unless in a recognised official capacity;
- 3.7 avoid any situation where personal relationships with students could influence academic or professional decisions;
- 3.8 make themselves readily available for consultation by students.

4 Academic Staff and The University of the South Pacific

In dealings with the University, academic staff should

- 4.1 represent their scholarly competence truthfully;
- 4.2 not disclose confidential information on University matters without good cause;

- 4.3 participate usefully in the life and workings of the University;
- 4.4 abide by the terms of the agreed contract of employment unless there are extenuating and just circumstances to the contrary;
- 4.5 ensure that University facilities and equipment trusted to them are used with judicious care (i.e. to prevent misuse and enhance their preservation) and only in the conduct of their professional duties.

5 Academic Staff and their colleagues

In dealings with colleagues, academic staff should:

- 5.1 support colleagues' rights to academic freedom;
- 5.2 be scrupulous in giving due credit for the work of colleagues;
- 5.3 avoid acting in any way that would unfairly harm the reputation, work or prospects of colleagues;
- 5.4 have adequate regard for the welfare of colleagues;
- 5.5 avoid revealing confidential information on colleagues other than through proper channels.

6 Academic Staff and the Public

In dealings with the public or when supplying information for dissemination by the news media, academic staff must:

- 6.1 distinguish clearly between accepted facts and purely personal opinions;
- 6.2 act in their own name and not in that of the University and not purport to represent the views of the University, unless specifically authorised to do so;
- 6.3 acknowledge the extent of their competence to comment on any issue.

7 Academic Staff as Researchers

- 7.1 pursuit of scholarly knowledge;

- 7.2 enhancement of their teaching;
- 7.3 stimulation of students' interests;
- 7.4 fair and effective dissemination of results;
- 7.5 compliance with standards and ethics of their own professional discipline;
- 7.6 the conservation and development of the resources of the countries of the University region.

8 Academic Staff as Consultants

When acting in the role of consultants, academic staff should:

- 8.1 avoid undertaking amounts of consulting work that would interfere with the discharge of staff members' full quota of University responsibilities, or which would endanger their independence as academics;
- 8.2 undertake consulting work mainly with a view to enhance the quality of their teaching and research, and also to provide a service to the countries of the University region.

9 Academic Staff as Administrators

Academic staffs are expected to participate in administrative duties but not so as to unduly interfere with their teaching and research. Due recognition should be given to administrative work that is done.

10 Administrative Staff and Academic Staff

Fair, reasonable and wide consultation should be made in all decisions related to the above activities.

11 Academic Staff and Committees of the University

Staff members acting as representatives on University Committees must faithfully present the views of the body they represent. They must not present their own ideas or those of other individual or group unless specifically requested to do so. When representing more than one interest group they must make it clear the group to which the views they present are attributable.

