

University of Cape Town
The Council
Code of conduct

The Council has in terms of S 27(7E) (a) of the Higher Education Act, Act 101 of 1997 as amended, after consultation with the Institutional Forum, adopted the following code of conduct to which all members of the Council must subscribe annually.

The Council

The Council *governs* the University and must ensure effective institutional governance.

The Council is constituted and mandated by the Statute and the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No. 101 of 1997) as amended.

Subject to Senate's academic authority, the Council has responsibility for the affairs of the University.

The Council also determines the nature and scope of the University's social responsibilities, protects the institutional autonomy of the University, upholds the academic freedom of its members, and deliberates on the nature and role of the University.

In performing these tasks, the Council commits itself to:

- good governance, which includes transparency, responsiveness, and accountability, and preserving institutional autonomy;
- the vision, mission and stated values of the University;
- governing in such a way as to enable the members of the University to realise their full potential as academics, researchers, students, and support staff; and
- acting with the duty of care and skill that is owed to the University of Cape Town ('UCT', alternatively 'the University').

Council members undertake collectively and individually to:

- act always in the best interests of the University as a whole, and accept that this obligation precedes any duty a member may owe to the person or institution that elected or appointed him or her to the Council in all Council matters;
- act in good faith, honestly, truthfully and for proper purpose;
- exercise appropriate care and diligence in decision making;
- be diligent in performing Council responsibilities;
- not improperly use their position as Council members to gain an advantage for themselves or someone else;
- avoid conflicts of interests and comply with Council's policy on the disclosure of interests and recusal;

- maintain the confidentiality of Council deliberations, and of all proprietary, strategic and sensitive or valuable information of the University entrusted to them, except when disclosure is authorised or legally mandated; and
- preserve the dignity and respect of Council and respect and abide by its decisions.

All Council members should, to the best of their ability and knowledge:

- spend as much time as is required to perform their duties (this will normally mean devoting time over and above that required for attending Council meetings);
- attend and contribute to Council meetings, and meetings of committees of the Council on which they may serve;
- critically read all agenda documents before each meeting;
- critically review all proposals to the Council;
- maintain the confidentiality of confidential matters;
- act in a financially responsible manner;
- ensure their compliance with all matters prescribed by law; and
- commit themselves to this Code both in dealing with Council business and other Council members and also in dealing with the UCT community and persons interested in UCT's work.

Statements by Council members and social media

- This section of the Code is intended to assist Council members to make informed and appropriate decisions regarding the use of social media platforms such as blogs, wikis, social networking websites, podcasts, forums, message boards or comments on web-articles such as Twitter, Facebook, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn, and includes multi-media and business oriented social networking websites and all other internet usage. The absence of explicit reference to specific social media does not limit the extent of the application of this Code.
- Council acknowledges that social media is a powerful communication tool that has significant impact on institutional and professional reputations. Given that it may blur the line between personal and institutional voice, Council deems it necessary and appropriate to provide a guideline on how best to enhance and protect institutional and personal reputation when participating on social media platforms.
- Council trusts and reasonably expects Council members to exercise personal responsibility whenever they use social media platforms, which includes not violating the provisions of this Code or the trust of those with whom they are engaging.
- Council members are responsible for ensuring that their online activities do not interfere with the reputation of UCT or their ability to fulfil their obligations to Council.
- Since reputations are built on trust, Council members are urged to disclose their identity and affiliation to Council whenever discussing Council or UCT-related topics via social media channels, whilst safeguarding their rights of freedom of expression.
- Council members should be aware of their relationship to Council in all social media statements, communications and disclosures.
- In the interests of transparency and honesty, Council members are encouraged to use their real names in social media communications, and in cases where they have disclosed their relationship to Council and UCT, the use of pseudonyms and aliases is discouraged.
- If a Council member comments on, or shares an opinion regarding Council or UCT matters on social media platforms, this shall be accompanied by a disclaimer acknowledging their relationship to Council and stating that they speak, opine or comment in their personal

capacity; are not authorised to speak on behalf of Council and do not do so; and that their personal opinion does not necessarily reflect the opinion of Council.

- Council members should be respectful of every individual’s right to express their opinions, whether those opinions are complimentary or critical of Council and UCT.
- Council members are encouraged to represent the core values of Council whenever they make social media disclosures about Council- and UCT related topics.
- Council members should strive to add value to online conversations by advancing the dialogue in a constructive, meaningful way.
- Hate speech, harassment, threats, intimidation, ethnic slurs, personal insults, obscenity, sexist, racial or religious intolerance and any other form of behaviour that is prohibited in the UCT workplace is also prohibited on social media platforms.
- Council members who choose to make social media comments and disclosures about topics relevant to Council are reminded that their comments and disclosures are neither private nor temporary. Social media disclosures live online indefinitely, and members should be aware that they are visible to a broad audience and are susceptible to being read out of context.

Contravention of the Code

Where a contravention of the Code has been established by due process (to be determined by Council upon receipt of a written complaint), Council may issue a sanction in the form of a written or verbal warning, a suspension from attending Council or Committee meetings, or make a recommendation to the relevant institutional governance structure contemplated by s 26(2)(a)-(g) of the Higher Education Act, 1997, as amended, that the Council member concerned be disqualified as a member of Council or a member of a Committee of Council.

Subscribed to by(signature) (name)

Date

Revised May 2018

Appendices:

A: Vision and Mission Statement

B: Statement of Values

Vision and Mission, University of Cape Town, December 2016

Vision

An inclusive and engaged research-intensive African university that inspires creativity through outstanding achievements in learning, discovery and citizenship; enhancing the lives of its students and staff, advancing a more equitable and sustainable social order and influencing the global higher education landscape.

Mission

UCT is committed to engaging with the key issues of our natural and social worlds through outstanding teaching, research and scholarship. We seek to advance the status and distinctiveness of scholarship in Africa through building strategic partnerships across the continent, the global south and the rest of the world.

UCT provides a vibrant and supportive intellectual environment that attracts and connects people from all over the world.

We aim to produce graduates and future leaders who are influential locally and globally. Our qualifications are locally applicable and internationally acclaimed, underpinned by values of engaged citizenship and social justice. Our scholarship and research have a positive impact on our society and our environment.

We will actively advance the pace of transformation within our University and beyond, nurturing an inclusive institutional culture which embraces diversity.

Appendix B.

<p>A STATEMENT OF VALUES FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN AND ITS</p>

As a public university in Africa we fully embrace our African identity. We are committed to utilising our resources to widen educational and social opportunities, enhance the quality of life of individuals and communities, build an equitable social order based on respect for human rights, and advance the public good through knowledge generation, teaching and active engagement with key challenges facing our society – South African, continental and global.

The University is a community of scholars, teachers, students and staff. A community implies the adherence by its members to certain shared values. This statement of values provides a framework that proactively guides our actions. The statement also serves as the foundation for a range of University policies. As a community, the University commits itself, and expects all its members to commit to upholding these values in institutional and personal relationships, and in all aspects of University life.

VALUES

We commit ourselves to

Academic values

- excellence in research, teaching and innovation
- ensuring that research informs all our activities including teaching, learning and service to the community
- the importance of all types of research from basic to applied and creative
- advancing and disseminating knowledge that addresses the key challenges facing society - South African, continental and global
- protecting "curiosity driven research" and
- nurturing and valuing creativity in the arts including the performing and creative arts
- a high quality and holistic student experience
- a culture of learning and development, which is reflective and is supportive of students, scholars, teachers and PASS staff
- intellectual honesty, rigour in debate, openness to alternative ideas and respect for other views, ways of being, beliefs and opinions
- promote the academic interrogation of boundaries, knowledge traditions and power relations
- promote academic freedom, including the creation of spaces for the contestation of ideas
- advance knowledge about the African continent and academics on the continent as international thought leaders
- enable access for academically eligible students regardless of their financial circumstances

Institutional culture

- inclusiveness, embodying respect for cultural, religious, linguistic, political, and other differences and acknowledgement of the value of diversity in society
- fairness, consistency, and integrity in both academic and other work, and in all personal and institutional relationships
- build on the best of UCT's legacy, while interrogating the historical values and assumptions that inform our institutional culture and the academic project
- refrain from speech or conduct that demeans or humiliates people
- recognise the value of the role played by the professional and administrative support staff in supporting the academic project and the quality of the student experience
- advance the principle of collegiality, open governance and to be fully accountable for our actions, decisions, and the stewardship of the University's resources and mission

Environment, health and safety, institutional resources

- the protection and responsible use of the University's assets and resources, including access to its repositories of knowledge and the stewardship of intellectual property
- the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources
- the promotion of the health and wellbeing and personal safety of all members of the community