



Code of Conduct

Purpose

This policy outlines the standard of conduct required by Board members, staff and students of Victorian School of Commerce (VSC). It is designed to assist everyone to understand their responsibilities and obligations and provide guidance on expected behaviour in the workplace, or if faced with an ethical dilemma or conflict of interest in their work involving colleagues, students and VSC.

Scope

The policy applies to all Board Members of VSC, ex-officio members and all VSC staff, students and others who are invited to attend any meetings (Boards and Committees). Contractors and sub-contractors are expected to comply with the Code as a condition of their engagement with VSC.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest: is assessed in terms of the likelihood that staff members possessing a particular interest could be improperly influenced, or might appear to be improperly influenced in the performance of their duties.

Ethics: The guiding values, principles and standards that enable people determine how things should be done and how they should act. Ethics refers to the judgements that people make and the process that determines those judgements.

Members: all persons including Board Members, teaching and academic staff, administrative staff, students, contractors and sub-contractors.

Misconduct: is a dereliction of duty or unacceptable behaviour. This includes but is not restricted to:

- conduct which is an impediment to the satisfactory performance of the work of the employee or other employees in VSC;
- failure to comply with a reasonable instruction given by a person in the line management of the employee;
- behaviour that may be reasonably perceived as bullying, harassing, intimidating, overbearing or physically or emotionally threatening;
- an action of the employee which is prejudicial to the health or safety of other employees, students or members of the public;
- conduct of the employee that results in a conviction, sentence or other order imposed by a court which restricts the activities of an employee in a manner that constitutes an impediment to the employee carrying out their duties;
- deceptive behaviour of a minor nature related to research, learning and teaching



Policy

An ethical environment relies upon individuals having responsibility for their own professional behaviour. VSC has a responsibility to provide a safe, encouraging and supportive work environment that recognises and values staff diversity, abilities and contributions. All members of staff are entitled to be treated with respect and work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment, bullying, violence (or threats of violence) or vilification. Equally, staff have a responsibility to act with integrity, honesty, transparency and impartiality in their dealings with colleagues, students and members of the wider community.

Staff members are required to perform their duties in a safe and competent manner in accordance with relevant Occupational Health and Safety Legislation and VSC's policies and procedures. Staff must take care not to put themselves or other members of VSC community at risk or reduce their ability to carry out their duties through unsafe practices, inappropriate behaviours or the misuse of alcohol or drugs.

Standards of governance

- The member should act honestly, in good faith and in the best interests of VSC as a whole.
- The member has a duty to use care and diligence in fulfilling the functions of office and exercising the powers attached to that office.
- The member should use the powers of office for a proper purpose, in the best interests of VSC as a whole.
- The member should recognise that the primary responsibility is VSC as a whole but may, where appropriate, have regard for the interest of other stakeholders of the company.
- The member has an obligation to be independent in judgement and actions and to take all reasonable steps to be satisfied as to the soundness of all decisions taken by the board of directors.
- Confidential information received by the member in the course of the exercise of directorial duties remains the property of VSC from which it was obtained and it is improper to disclose it, or allow it to be disclosed, unless that disclosure has been authorised by that company, or the person from whom the information is provided, or is required by law.

Standards of behaviour

A member should:

- properly manage any conflict with the interests of the company;
- comply with any relevant legislative, industrial or administrative requirements, and all VSC rules, policies and procedures;
- act within delegated authority;
- be honest, open and transparent in their dealings;
- use their director /staff powers responsibly;
- avoid undertaking any activity that could potentially compromise the performance of their duties;



- report any improper conduct;
- accept responsibility for their decisions and actions;
- seek to achieve the best use of VSC resources with consciousness for social and environmental impacts
- submit themselves to appropriate scrutiny
- should demonstrate respect for colleagues, staff and students of VSC including treating them fairly and objectively;
- maintain a safe and healthy work environment
- ensure freedom from discrimination, harassment and bullying;
- maintain adequate records to support any decisions made; and
- use their views to improve outcomes for VSC on an ongoing basis.

Unacceptable behaviours

- The member should not make improper use of information acquired in their work.
- The member should not engage in conduct likely to bring discredit upon VSC. The member has an obligation, at all times, to comply with the spirit, as well as the letter, of the law and with the principles of this Code.
- The member should not take improper advantage of the position of director or role in the conduct of their work for VSC.

Breach of Code of Conduct by Staff

A breach of any part of this code of conduct by a staff will result in disciplinary action.

- Staff will be informed of the breach of Code of Conduct by Manager.
- Staff will be given an opportunity and time to respond to the allegations in writing.
- Manager may arrange a meeting with the staff in which they may bring a support person.
- The following disciplinary actions may be taken depending on the severity and nature of the breach:
 - a verbal warning,
 - a written warning,
 - counselling,
 - a period of probation,
 - termination of employment,
 - referral to appropriate law enforcement/government agencies.

If not satisfied with the outcome, staff has the right to appeal any disciplinary procedures. Appeals must be made according to the process outlined in the *Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

Breach of Code of Conduct by Student

Penalties for breaches of the Code of Conduct by students are determined based on the nature of the misconduct, and may include:

- A disciplinary meeting with the Course Coordinator or Dean
- A verbal warning or an official written warning
- Compulsory participation in education programs such as anti-discrimination or anti-sexual harassment and assault programs to avoid the incident recurring
- Compulsory consultation with the Student Support Officer to clarify expectations of student behaviour



- A penalty in accordance with the *Academic Integrity Policy* in instances of academic misconduct
- Restriction of access to facilities, e.g. suspension of online access to the student portal, student email or discussion forums
- Temporary suspension or exclusion from course

A Student has the right to appeal any disciplinary procedures if they are not satisfied with the outcome. Appeals must be made according to the process outlined in the *Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure*.

Related policy instruments

Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity Procedure

Acceptable Use of Resources Policy

Bullying, Discrimination and Harassment Prevention Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy

Delegations Policy

Equity and Diversity Policy

Facilities Resources and Infrastructure Policy

Health and Safety Policy (Staff and Students)

Human Resources Policy

Library Policy

Privacy Policy

Professional Development Policy

Records and Information Management Policy

Risk Management Policy

Scholarly Activity Policy

Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy

Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Student Complaints and Appeals Policy

Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure

Student Wellbeing and Support Policy

Student Wellbeing and Support Procedure

Teaching and Learning Policy



Related documents and legislation

Public Administration Act 2004

Victorian Education and Training Reform Act 2006

Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (from 1 August 2011)

Victorian Financial Management Act 1994

Victorian Freedom of Information Act 1982

Information Privacy Act 2000

Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004

Health Records Act 2001

Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001

Protected Disclosures Act 2012

Public Records Act 1973

Administration

Revision History

Version	Approval date	Approval body	Review date
0.1	18/02/2020	Board of Directors	
0.2	14/04/2020	Board of Directors	
1.0	18/06/2021	Board of Directors	30/06/2022