



University Code of Conduct

1. Preamble

1.1 The University is committed to providing a learning and working environment that is free of harassment, discrimination, and is supportive of productivity, academic achievement, and the dignity, self-esteem, and fair treatment of all its members. This Code of Conduct (“Code”) reflects the expectation that members of Saint Mary’s University will conduct themselves in a respectful and ethical manner consistent with generally accepted standards of behaviour. The Code sets the expectation that conduct is aligned with the core values and strategic direction of the University.

1.2 The Code is related to the University’s [Declaration of Respect](#), which reflects our commitment to treating all persons respectfully and equitably. Reference will be made to the Declaration of Respect to aid in evaluation of conduct.

2. Jurisdiction / Scope

2.1 The Code applies to:

- 2.1.1 Employees and independent contractors
- 2.1.2 all people who teach and conduct research at Saint Mary’s University regardless of whether they are Employees or independent contractors, and
- 2.1.3 volunteers who do work on behalf of the University (including members of the Senate, Board of Governors and Alumni Council).

2.2 Student conduct is addressed in the Code of Student Conduct (non-academic conduct) and in the University’s undergraduate and graduate calendars (academic conduct).

2.3 The Code applies to all University activities regardless of location.

2.4 If a conduct related situation arises that is not addressed in the Code, University Members are entrusted to use best judgement and consult with their supervisor or the Responsible Authority about how best to proceed.

2.5 This Code works in collaboration with, and does not replace or supersede other University policies, collective agreements, or applicable legislation.

3. Definitions

Conflict of Interest: conflict of interest exists when an employee is placed in a situation where their personal interest(s) conflicts, or can be perceived to conflict, with their responsibility

to the University and/or with the interests of the University. This includes, but is not limited to, acting in self-interest to influence decisions; hiring practices; reporting and management, directly or indirectly, of relatives and individuals with whom an intimate or personal relationship exists; and use of non-public University information for personal benefit.

Employee: every person who performs work and receives pay from the University, including all staff and faculty, whether permanent or casual, part-time or full-time, or students.

Responsible Authority: The Responsible Authority is the Associate Vice President, People & Culture or designate in consultation with the President and Vice Chancellor, and General Counsel as required.

Retaliation: taking or threatening to take unjustified action against an individual(s) for reporting a concern or participating in a process under this Policy. This may include changes to work-related duties and schedules, exclusion and/or disrespectful behaviours.

Supervisor: an individual who has a mandate to direct, supervise, evaluate, and mentor other member(s) within the University. Operationally a supervisor may be titled as: Manager, Director, Dean, Associate Dean, Chair, Associate Vice President, Vice President, President, etc.

University Member: a person to whom this Code applies pursuant to section 2.1.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 The President and Vice Chancellor has the overarching responsibility for establishing standards of conduct for University Members and supporting implementation of this Code.

4.2 University Members are accountable for their conduct, virtually and in-person, including words (written and spoken), actions, and inactions, regardless of intent.

4.3 University Members who serve in a leadership, management and/or supervisory role are responsible for:

4.3.1 modelling ethical, respectful, and inclusive behaviour,

4.3.2 providing guidance and support for others to enhance skills and expertise within the scope of their position,

4.3.3 engaging in respectful interactions to support anyone who reports a potential violation of the Code,

4.3.4 collaborating with University personnel as appropriate to address violations of the Code, and

4.3.5 ensuring people under their leadership are informed and comply with the Code.

4.4 The Associate Vice President, People & Culture or their delegate is responsible for implementation of the Code and will collaborate as needed should violation(s) occur.

4.5 The Associate Vice President, People & Culture or their delegate will collaborate with

Student Affairs and Services for student-involved Code violations when the student is the complainant.

4.6 The Associate Vice President, People and Culture is responsible for interpretation of this Policy and shall consult with the President, Vice Chancellor, and General Counsel as needed.

5. Standards of Conduct

5.1 Respect for Others

5.1.1 University Members are expected to treat all persons equitably and respectfully, including respecting the rights of others. Respectful conduct includes, but is not limited to:

5.1.1.1 Inclusivity: valuing diverse perspectives and ensuring everyone feels safe to express their views.

5.1.1.2 Politeness: using courteous language, maintaining a professional tone and engaging with others without interruption.

5.1.1.3 Empathy: acknowledging and being sensitive to others' feelings and experiences.

5.1.2 The University does not condone, ignore, or tolerate harassment, bullying, discrimination, retaliation, and other disrespectful and oppressive behaviour.

5.1.3 No one should take unfair advantage of anyone through illegal conduct, manipulation, concealment, abuse of privileged information, misrepresentation, or any other unfair conduct.

5.1.4 Within the University differing perspectives and opinions are accommodated and respected. Devaluing others to promote one's perspective or opinion is unacceptable. This includes, but is not limited to, behaviours such as:

5.1.4.1 Personal attacks: criticizing individuals rather than addressing the content of their ideas.

5.1.4.2 Dismissing contributions: ignoring or belittling others' viewpoints without thoughtful consideration.

5.1.4.3 Intimidation: using aggressive language or behaviour to assert dominance in discussions.

5.2 Fostering Psychological Wellbeing

5.2.1 People and Culture will collaborate with University Members to facilitate respectful workplace capacity building, inclusive of harassment prevention.

5.2.2 University Members in a leadership capacity must treat others fairly and afford them equality of opportunity, maintain open and honest communication, and ensure others understand expected performance standards.

5.2.3 All University Members share responsibility to positively contribute to a respectful and inclusive environment and refrain from conduct that is or can be perceived to be threatening or intimidating.

5.2.4 All University Members have a responsibility to exercise reasonable care to avoid causing harm and make efforts to promote the well-being of others.

5.2.5 University Members must refrain from making false, frivolous, or malicious accusations of others under the Code or any other University policy.

5.2.6 Retaliation, taking or threatening to take unjustified action against an individual(s) for reporting a concern or participating in a process under the Code is prohibited.

5.3 Personal Integrity

5.3.1 University Members will conduct themselves with honesty, fairness, and propriety, and in good faith while acting on behalf of Saint Mary's University.

5.3.2 University Members must maintain professional boundaries during interactions with others. This includes, but is not limited to, maintaining a professional manner, respecting privacy, avoiding conflicts of interest, not making disparaging comments, and respectful communication.

5.3.3 While there is no strict dress code, attire should be clean, aligned with the individuals' respective role, and free from obscene graphics and hate speech.

5.3.4 University Members involved in teaching and research must adhere to acceptable standards of academic integrity and should not engage in any form of academic fraud or interfering with the scholarship and research of others.

5.4 Compliance with Laws and Policies

5.4.1 University Members are expected to familiarize themselves and comply with University policies and procedures, provincial and federal legislation and regulations, as well as contractual and other legal obligations that are applicable to their respective role within the University.

5.4.2 University Members must familiarize themselves and adhere to legislation and University policies and procedures focused on physical and psychological safety, and of general application.

5.4.3 University members involved in research must abide by all applicable laws, policies, procedures, and regulations relating to conduct of research.

5.4.4 It is expected that employees will seek guidance from their supervisor, People & Culture, and/or the Responsible Authority if they have questions or need clarification about compliance with University policies and/or applicable legislation.

5.5 Conflict of Interest

5.5.1 University Members are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which will not place them or other employees in a position that could reasonably be construed as an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

5.5.2 University Members must refrain from making or participating in decisions affecting other persons with whom they have personal relationship or towards whom they have or could be perceived to have a bias.

5.5.3 It is a conflict of interest and abuse of power for an employee to have an intimate relationship with anyone over whom they have authority, whether in employment, teaching, supervisory, or other hierarchical relationship.

5.5.4 University Members are required to discuss with their supervisor, People & Culture, and/or the Responsible Authority within the University any situations which are in doubt with respect to an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest.

5.6 Protection of University Assets

5.6.1 University assets, tangible (e.g. building, furniture, supplies, tools, funds, etc.) and intangible (e.g. intellectual property, patents, brand, use of facility and services, work time, etc.) are to be used only for the benefit of the University. All employees have a duty and responsibility to protect University assets and to ensure they are used for University business and not for personal benefit.

5.6.2 Use of University assets for non-University business may occur only if approved by the appropriate University authority.

5.6.3 It is prohibited to remove University equipment or other property from campus except where this is necessary for a University activity and where permission has been granted in advance by the appropriate authority.

5.6.4 All employees must comply with the University's Enterprise Information Technology (EIT) Policies.

5.6.5 University Members authorized to use University assets and records must ensure they keep them properly secured and always protected.

5.6.6 University Members who cease employment or association with the University and/or are terminated must, at the time of termination, restore to the University all assets and records in their possession and control which belong to the University, including but not limited to technology, keys and access card.

5.7 Confidentiality

5.7.1 University Members may have access to and use personal information in the University's records (e.g. personal addresses and contact details, medical, registration, academic, financial, and employment records) consistent with the purpose for which it was gathered and only to the extent necessary to perform duties within the scope of their respective position; they must otherwise hold this information confidential.

5.7.2 Non-personal confidential information (e.g. confidential advice, plans that have not yet been made public related to management of University personnel and administration, information that has monetary value or could prejudice the economic interests of the University) cannot be used or disclosed without authorization by the appropriate University authority.

5.7.3 University Members are required to direct questions about the collection, use, disclosure, and disposal of University information to the Privacy Officer.

5.7.4 University Members are expected to comply with University policies of privacy, record keeping, and data governance.

5.8 Community Engagement and Public Communications

5.8.1 Employees may pursue paid work beyond the University if the secondary employment:

5.8.1.1 does not conflict with the individual's duties, responsibilities and hours of work at Saint Mary's University, and

5.8.1.2 is permitted under the terms of an applicable University collective agreement.

5.8.2 To identify and manage potential conflicts of interest, employees must inform their supervisor in writing if they have secondary employment that may adversely affect their duties and responsibilities at the University.

5.8.3 If secondary employment is adversely affecting an employee's duties and responsibilities at Saint Mary's University the individual's supervisor must consult with People and Culture to determine how to address the situation.

5.8.4 Employees may participate in community service and are free to engage in political, professional, interest group and charitable activity to the extent that participation does not create conflict of interest or impede the performance of the individuals' University duties.

5.8.5 University Members must adhere to the University's communications policies and provided they make it clear they are not speaking on behalf of the University, individuals have a right to express their opinion without fear of reprisal.

5.9 Academic Freedom

5.9.1 This Code recognizes that academic freedom is essential for the purposes of teaching, scholarship and research.

5.9.2 This Code does not undermine or supersede the principles of academic freedom as defined in applicable collective agreements.

5.9.3 This Code emphasizes that academic freedom imposes responsibilities upon individuals involved in teaching, scholarship, and research; University members must

5.9.3.1 use academic freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for and dissemination of knowledge.

5.9.3.2 recognize the rights of other members of the University community.

5.9.3.3 be respectful of differing perspectives and opinions.

5.9.4 Academic freedom does not confer legal immunity, nor does it diminish the obligation to meet employment duties and responsibilities.

6. Reporting

6.1 The Associate Vice President People & Culture, with the support of the University Secretary, shall annually provide a report to the Human Resources Committee of the Board of

Governors. The report will include a summary of the number, nature and disposition of all complaints and investigations made under this Policy. but will exclude personal information. This report, together with any recommendations, will be provided to the Board of Governors by the Human Resources Committee.

7. Relevant Legislation

- 7.1 [Human Rights Act](#), R.S., c. 214, s.1, as amended
- 7.2 [Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act](#), S.N.S., 1993, c. 5, s.1, as amended
- 7.3 [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), S.N.S., 1996, c. 7, s. 1, as amended

8. Related Policies, Procedures & Documents

- 8.1 [Code of Conduct Procedures \(Appendix A\)](#)
- 8.2 [Saint Mary's University Declaration of Respect:](#)
- 8.3 [Respectful and Inclusive Workplace Policy 6-2026](#)
- 8.4 [Sexual Violence and Harassment Policy:](#)
- 8.5 [Violence in the Workplace: Prevention and Response:](#)
- 8.6 [Saint Mary's University Safety Policy:](#)
- 8.7 [Employment Equity and Diversity Policy:](#)
- 8.8 [Safe Disclosure Policy](#)

Policy Number: 6-2027

Approving Authority: Board of Governors

Approved: January 31, 2025

Responsible Office: President and Vice-Chancellor

Responsibility: Associate Vice President, People & Culture

Revision Date(s):

Next Required Review: January 2028

Appendix A:

Code of Conduct Policy Procedures

1. Purpose

- 1.1 Create awareness of conduct expectation for all University Members.
- 1.2 Outline options, supports and resolution processes for complaints of misconduct.

2 Upholding the Code of Conduct

- 2.1 Standards of conduct as described in the Code are intended to provide reasonable guidance for University Members. Violations under the Code could consist of a single act, repeated acts or an established pattern of behaviour that may result in disciplinary measures, which for Employees may include up to termination of employment.
- 2.2 Maintaining standards of the Code is the responsibility of all University Members.
- 2.3 University Members who are involved in a situation that breaches University policies and procedures, or legislation, whether intentional or unintentional, must promptly inform their supervisor within ten (10) days of when the breach occurred.
- 2.4 University Members who are alleged and/or proven to be engaged in criminal conduct must promptly inform their supervisor and/or the Responsible Authority.
- 2.5 University Members who witness or become aware of a Code breach are encouraged to inform their supervisor and/or seek support from People and Culture.
- 2.6 All Saint Mary's University employees can seek support from People and Culture at any time if they have questions and/or need to consult about issues relating to the Code.
- 2.7 University employees can file a complaint about Code violation(s) as per Safe Disclosure Policy if it is not feasible to address the situation, or speak with a supervisor, or People and Culture.
- 2.8 Anonymous complaints of Code violation(s) will be assessed; procedurally fair follow-up will be done to the extent possible with the information provided.
- 2.9 Breaches of the Code of Conduct are to be taken seriously. Supervisors have an obligation to address the issue as aligned with University Policies, regulations, and legislative authority and to consult with People and Culture as needed.

3 Code Violation Process

- 3.1 If a supervisor becomes aware of a violation of the Code of Conduct, they must follow-up within ten (10) working days to address the issue.
- 3.2 The supervisor will:
 - 3.2.1 work collaboratively and respectfully with involved parties,
 - 3.2.2 determine if a violation of the Code has occurred,
 - 3.2.3 assess the severity of the Code violation,

- 3.2.4 collaborate as needed to address the breach,
- 3.2.5 inform Associate Vice President People and Culture if breach is conflict of interest,
- 3.2.6 provide guidance and support for University Members as needed to prevent ongoing issues.
- 3.3 The following factors, but not limited to, must be considered in assessing the severity of a breach of the Code:
 - 3.3.1 nature and extent of policy violation(s), including potential violation of other University policies, procedures, regulations, and legislation,
 - 3.3.2 conduct jeopardized health and safety of others and/or breach of legislative authority,
 - 3.3.3 willingness of involved University Member(s) to engage in efforts to address the breach; and
 - 3.3.4 reasonable efforts have been made but desired outcomes are not achieved to align with expectations as per Code.
- 3.4 If employee conduct violates multiple polices and/or is deemed severe, the supervisor must inform People and Culture - Labour Relations. Labour Relations will:
 - 3.4.1 collect and review information to determine if a violation of the Code and/or other policies, regulations and/or legislative authority has occurred,
 - 3.4.2 engage other supports, internal and external to the University, if needed to determine best options to remedy the situation,
 - 3.4.3 collaborate with employee's supervisor to make recommendation(s) about how to proceed to ensure a fair expeditious and, where possible, streamlined approach,
 - 3.4.4 collaborate with employee's supervisor and other supports as needed to implement restorative processes to minimize opportunity for ongoing issues.
- 3.5 Resolution of a Code violation will adhere to procedural fairness. It will be resolved in a timely manner, where possible, not exceeding sixty (60) calendar days.

4 Resolution of Code Violation

- 4.1 Resolution of Code violations will be determined based on the unique circumstances of the situation including, but not limited to:
 - 4.1.1 nature and severity of the breach
 - 4.1.2 frequency of the breach
 - 4.1.3 past conduct of the University Member(s)
- 4.2 Nondisclosure Agreements will not be required to obtain resolution or post-resolution for incidents involving sexual harassment, violence, and discrimination.
- 4.3 Disciplinary measures if warranted must be appropriate to the nature and severity of the breach, they are intended to promote positive conduct change and when possible, should be remedial and restorative.
- 4.4 Disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to:

- 4.4.1 verbal warning, no record on personnel file,
 - 4.4.2 participation in capacity building session as appropriate to the breach,
 - 4.4.3 written reprimand, record on employee personnel file,
 - 4.4.4 suspension with or without pay, record on employee personnel file,
 - 4.4.5 termination of employment.
- 4.5 If disciplinary measures are warranted that necessitate record on personnel file, suspension and/or termination of employment written notification will be provided to the employee.
- 4.6 Reports and documentation relating to Code violations that result in disciplinary measures will be securely maintained by People and Culture - Labour Relations in accordance with University policies of privacy, record keeping, data governance and legislation under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

5 Appeals

- 5.1 Appeal must be requested in writing to the Associate Vice President, People and Culture within ten (10) calendar days of receiving disciplinary measures and may be requested only if there is evidence of procedural error in determination of Code violation.
- 5.2 The Associate Vice President, People and Culture will review appeals based on fundamental procedural error and make determination aligned with the Code, collective agreements, and other University policies about how to proceed.
- 5.3 Disciplinary measures as directed by the Responsible Authority will remain in effect until appeal process is complete.