

WU Policy Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct for WU Employees



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1. Preamble

WU's Mission Statement already addresses a set of principles we strive to apply to performing our jobs. Based on these, this Code of Conduct is intended to summarize the rules for working at WU. It is a set of binding guidelines for interacting with colleagues and coworkers, students, and partners outside WU.

This Code of Conduct should be understood not just for orientation purposes, but also as a positive expectation for our own behavior. Adhering to professional and ethical standards is the responsibility of each and every individual. We trust that everyone at WU will always do what is right and appropriate in every situation, and this

Code of Conduct is intended to provide a compass to guide our day-to-day activities.

Violations of the Code of Conduct not only damage WU's reputation but may also have legal consequences, so please read it carefully.

We would like to thank you for your personal contribution to ensuring compliance with all applicable laws and regulations and maintaining high standards of responsible behavior at WU. Let's make sure WU remains an institution we can all be proud of.

Your Rector's Council

2. Scope

The Code of Conduct applies to all WU employees and external lecturers.



3. WU Code of Conduct

3.1. BASIC STANDARDS OF INTEGRITY

As WU employees and external lecturers at WU, we are conscious of the responsibilities associated with working for WU. We perform our duties to the best of our knowledge and belief.

We accept our responsibilities and fulfill the tasks assigned to us with commitment and loyalty. Honesty, fairness, and respect for the rights of others are our guiding principles.

We will refrain from slandering and/or making false and defamatory statements about WU or individuals employed at WU.

We uphold the basic ethical standards of scientific work at all times while respecting the principle of freedom in research. This excludes plagiarism, fraud, or the falsification of research results. In the case of joint publications, the names of all contributing authors must be given. Relevant regulations on this topic are in place at WU that everyone is expected to adhere to.

As teachers, we are committed to encouraging and supporting our students while recognizing the principle of freedom in teaching. This includes fulfilling our obligations to impart skills and qualifications and our obligation to provide quality teaching and to conduct examinations correctly. In the light of the experience gained during the pandemic, we recognize the importance of personal contact and face-to-face teaching for students to fully experience university life. This is why WU promotes traditional classroom teaching complemented by virtual and hybrid formats where appropriate or necessary.

We employ innovative technologies with competence and responsibility, fully mindful of their associated impacts, opportunities, and risks.

We should act as role models and work together to secure WU's good reputation. Communication in the social web attract media attention, and each of us is responsible for

the words and images we use to portray WU. Even when communicating as a private citizen, we can be considered a representative of the organization by others. For this reason, we choose our words and messages carefully to avoid damaging our university's reputation using WU's [Social Media Guideline](#) ↗.

3.2. DEALING WITH COLLEAGUES AND EXTERNAL PARTNERS

We treat each other, students, and partners from outside the university with consideration and show respect for others' personal integrity.

This includes avoiding any form of unobjective preferential treatment or discrimination. We also actively oppose any such behavior. We are committed to creating an environment where discrimination based on ethnic background, religion or world view, gender, sexual orientation, age, or disability will not be tolerated. We also actively oppose insults and any behavior that could be considered harassment, including continued aggravation, bullying, repeated refusal to communicate with an individual, etc.

Our day-to-day life should be characterized by respect and consideration for one another.

WU management and staff relations

Management staff are entitled to loyalty and the best possible performance from the employees who work for them (duty of fidelity).

Employees are equally entitled to loyalty and the best possible support from their supervisors (duty of care).

In conflict situations, both management personnel and employees are expected to work together in a positive way to find constructive solutions. Mediation is available in exceptionally difficult cases.

Contact with students and external partners

To the best of our ability, we are courteous, prompt, and reliable when communicating with students and external partners, and always attempt to deal with their requests in an appropriate manner.

3.3. SEXUAL HARASSMENT

At WU, mutual appreciation, tolerance for different ways of thinking, and respect for personal boundaries are considered to be prerequisites for a positive, motivating work and study environment.

Sexual and gender-based harassment will not be tolerated between employees/external lecturers, between employees/external lecturers and students, or in any other relationship arising from employment with WU. Any form of harassment will have legal and disciplinary consequences.

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Sexual harassment can be defined as behavior of a sexual nature that violates or is intended to violate a person's dignity, or which is unwelcome, inappropriate, degrading, humiliating, insulting, or offensive to the other person. Gender-based harassment can be defined as gender-based behavior that violates or is intended to violate a person's dignity, or which is unwelcome, inappropriate, degrading, humiliating, insulting, or offensive to the other person.

Because of the dependent and subordinate nature of an employee's relationship to his/her supervisor, particularly strict standards apply in these cases.

We also need to maintain an appropriate distance in relations between teachers and students. It is the teacher's responsibility to keep the dependent nature of the teacher-student relationship in mind at all times. In particular, personal invitations from teachers directed at individual students currently in a directly dependent relationship with the teacher are unwelcome.

Because this topic is particularly important to us, we make regular efforts to increase awareness of these issues. For more detailed information about harassment, applicable legal regulations, or available support services, please see the bilingual brochure [Say NO to Harassment](#). Our common goal is to make WU a harassment- and discrimination-free zone. Treating each other with respect contributes significantly to this goal.

3.4. CONFIDENTIALITY, DATA PROTECTION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

To fulfill its duties to the best of its abilities, WU must handle large amounts of data, including confidential personal data. The owners of this data trust WU's employees to treat this data in an appropriate and law-abiding manner.

Internal communications, information, and data, as well as information discussed in the various panels, commissions, and other working groups are also to be treated confidentially. Data protection is very important to us WU, and we are required by law to maintain confidentiality.

These obligations remain valid even after termination of the employment relationship or freelance contract with WU.

We also make sure that WU's intellectual property rights are protected. These include:

- › Trademark, design, and patent rights, and other copyrights
- › Third-party intellectual property rights and copyrights, e.g. licenses held by WU

We also make sure to avoid any violations of intellectual property rights held others.

3.5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Conflicts of interest are an inherent part of human coexistence. They occur in many forms, including in a professional context. If they are not handled transparently and carefully, they can have negative consequences for both the individuals involved and WU as an organization as a whole. Therefore, please disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

One possible context in which conflicts of interest may arise is secondary employment. Secondary employment is any paid activity WU employees perform outside their employment contract with WU. In the case of civil servants, secondary employment means any paid activity performed in addition to any secondary civil service duties.

A secondary employment held by WU employees may not conflict with WU's interests. We are required, both by law and by our contractual obligations, to report any secondary employment to the WU Personnel Office without delay, and to have this employment approved in advance if necessary. Any positions held on management, executive, and supervisory boards or other panels of legal entities operating for profit also have to be reported. If an employee's secondary employment is considered to be contrary to WU's vested interests, WU reserves the right to forbid the activity, and will also state the reasons for this decision.

WU employees and their companies do not provide any paid services to WU students unless they have been commissioned to do so by WU. Activities that are completely unrelated to the jobs performed by WU and us, its employees, are not included in this restriction.

For business contracts concluded between WU and individuals close to WU employees, transparency must be maintained and the arm's length principle applies.

3.6. ACCEPTING AND GRANTING BENEFITS

First and foremost, we need to be aware of the fact that as WU employees, we hold a public office. For this reason we need to be particularly careful of any possible influence on us as office holders. We may not offer or grant benefits to third parties, or demand or accept benefits from third parties – especially from students – if it would be reasonable to expect that these benefits could influence official proceedings (e.g. gifts or invitations). We must also not accept or request any benefits that exceed the standards of hospitality customary in the region, country, or business area in question, or if they are banned by any applicable laws.

The following are strictly forbidden:

- › Offering and accepting benefits for wrongful activities
- › Demanding benefits
- › Offering and accepting benefits intended to influence office holders in their activities

The following are permissible:

- › Accepting appropriate remuneration for teaching and research activities (if not provided to WU students)
- › Accepting donations or other monetary contributions made to an academic unit for funding research or teaching activities
- › Accepting benefits for commissioned research
- › Accepting benefits for third-party-financed basic research

3.7. MANAGEMENT OF FINANCES

We are expected to perform our duties according to the principles of legality, efficiency, practicality, economy, and transparency, and to always keep the public interest in mind. Cost awareness and responsible resource management are of key importance.

Accounting, cash management, reporting, document management, and taxation matters are always to be handled accurately and thoroughly, and documented in a clear and understandable manner.

3.8. USE OF WU RESOURCES

WU resources are provided for the university's use. These resources include:

- › IT and telecommunications services
- › Software and hardware
- › Databases
- › Spatial resources
- › Working hours and
- › labor of WU employees, external lecturers, and students

WU resources may be used for third-party financed contract or basic research if costs are reimbursed.

Using IT and telecommunications services, software, and hardware including email and internet programs for private purposes is acceptable to a certain degree. The same applies to the storage of personal data and files in folders indicated to be private.

Personal use is forbidden if it is abusive, impairs efficient working conditions, or represents a risk to the security and performance capacity of the available infrastructure.

E-mails and files remain accessible to WU and may be viewed for forensic purposes.

Under no circumstances may WU resources be used for the storage or distribution of pornographic, racist, violent, or otherwise offensive materials.

As WU employees, we take complete responsibility for any equipment or materials in our possession that are provided by WU (e.g. laptops or books, also when working at home).

3.9. IN CASE OF DOUBT OR INFRACTIONS

As WU employees, we need to obey not only the “letter of the law,” as laid down in this Code of Conduct, but also

the spirit of ethical and professional conduct it is based on.

In cases of ambiguity or doubt about the interpretation of the Code of Conduct, you can turn to your immediate supervisor or a member of the Rector’s Council.

You can find all WU directives, regulations, and guidelines online in the [regulations database](#) ↗.

WU set up a whistleblowing system based on national and EU legislation. This system allows for the (anonymous) reporting of internal misconduct on certain topics. It seeks to expose wrongdoing in order to improve our organization without wrongfully discrediting colleagues or intentionally providing false information.

4. Invalidation of previous regulations

This version replaces the Code of Conduct last updated in 2023.



5. Legal basis and other applicable documents

In addition to the Code of Conduct, further regulations relevant to the university apply, including the Universities Act (Universitätsgesetz), any employment-specific regulations like the Civil Service Employment Act (Beamten-Dienstrechtsgesetz), the Contractual Employees Act (Vertragsbedienstetengesetz), the

Collective Bargaining Agreement for University Staff (Kollektivvertrag für die ArbeitnehmerInnen der Universitäten), WU Operational Agreements, or provisions in individual employment contracts. Please be sure to comply with these as well as any WU inhouse regulations – see the [regulations database](#) ↗.



6. Quality control

The Code of Conduct will be reevaluated on or before December 31, 2028.



7. Document details

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