



Unveiling Excellence

# USTM

# Code of Ethics

*(Chapter - XXVI, University Policies & Guidelines)*



## **CHAPTER XXVI**

### **Code of Ethics**

*This Code of Practice for Ethical Conduct lays down norms of behavior for the more important contexts of life in a university. These guidelines, however, are not exhaustive. Any conduct that goes against the letter and spirit of these principles and norms will be considered a violation of this Code.*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The primary purpose of the University of Science and Technology, Meghalaya is to provide a learning environment in which faculty, staff and students can discover, examine critically, preserve and transmit the knowledge, wisdom and values that will help ensure the survival of present and future generations and improve the quality of life for all. The University seeks to help students to develop an understanding and appreciation for the complex cultural and physical worlds in which they live and to realize their highest potential of intellectual, physical and human development. It also seeks to attract and serve students from diverse social, economic, religious and ethnic backgrounds and to be sensitive and responsive to those groups which have been underserved by higher education.

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The University of Science & Technology Meghalaya is committed to upholding the highest standards of ethical conduct. Abiding by these standards promotes mutual trust and public confidence as we strive for excellence in our pursuit of knowledge. Our core values are the foundation of our academic institution and are essential to sustaining an environment where we can learn, teach, conduct research, work, and thrive. University faculty, staff, student and employees have a responsibility to work towards the fulfillment of the following values by conducting themselves ethically, with the highest level of integrity, and in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies:

#### **ADHERENCE TO THE HIGHEST ETHICAL STANDARDS**

An environment that encourages the highest level of integrity from its members is critical to the university. Adherence to the highest standards of ethical conduct is an integral part of the university's long-range goals of attracting quality students, faculty, and staff; ensuring proper stewardship of its resources; and attracting gifts, grants, and other forms of support.

Every member of the University shall, at all times, conduct his or her activities in accordance with the highest professional and community ethical standards.

#### **Honesty and Integrity**

Every member of the University shall demonstrate honesty and transparency in all communication and conduct while maintaining the highest level of integrity, uphold the values of this code and make decisions based upon the greater good conducting ourselves free

of personal conflicts, nepotism, self-dealing, using resources for personal benefit, or appearances of impropriety. The commitment must be to ethical standards is communicated through both instruction and example.

### **RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF OTHERS**

University of Science & Technology Meghalaya is committed to a policy of equal treatment, opportunity, and respect in its relations with its faculty, administrators, staff, students, and others who come into contact with the University. Every member of the University is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender and/or gender identity or expression, marital or parental status, national origin, citizenship status, veteran or military status, age, disability, and any other legally protected status; physically assaulting, emotionally abusing, or harassing anyone; and depriving anyone of rights in his or her physical or intellectual property, under University policy, or under laws of the country.

In the commitment to inclusiveness, diversity, and mutual respect for differences, all members should

- Demonstrate respect towards the rights and dignity of others
- Show concern for the welfare of others
- Avoid all forms of harassment, discrimination, threats, or violence
- Expect equality, impartiality, openness, and due process without reference to individual bias

### **RESPECT FOR AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW**

Every member of the University is expected to become familiar with those laws, regulations, and University rules which are applicable to his or her position and duties, and to comply with both their letter and spirit.

### **Conduct & Compliance**

Every member of the University is expected to utilize all resources and information entrusted to their care in a wise and prudent manner in order to achieve their educational mission and strategic objectives. All members will uphold civic virtues and duties by obeying laws and policies. Practicing good conduct includes:

- Using university property, equipment, finances, materials, electronic and other systems, labor, and other resources only for legitimate university purposes
- Preventing waste and abuse
- Promoting efficient operations
- Following sound financial practices including accurate financial reporting, processes to protect assets, responsible fiscal management, and internal controls
- Engaging in appropriate control and monitoring activities
- Promoting continuous education of laws, policies, and guidelines

### **Accountability and Responsibility**

Every member of the University is must take responsibility for his/her choices and actions by upholding accountability and not assigning or shifting blame or taking improper credit. There must be exercise of the utmost diligence in ensuring that all university operations adhere to appropriate business protocols and best practices. Every member of the University must act with responsibility by reporting instances where these standards may not have been upheld.

### **Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest**

The university members have an obligation to be objective and impartial in making decisions on behalf of the university. There must be disclosure of potential conflicts of interest and adhere to any management plans created to eliminate conflicts. It must be ensured that personal relationships do not interfere with objective judgment in decisions affecting university employment or the academic progress of a community member.

### **Reporting Ethics Policy Complaints and Violations**

The university is committed to an environment where open, honest communication is the expectation, not the exception. Employees are encouraged to submit reports relating to activities that involve unethical behavior or violations. It is ensured that reports are confidential and anonymous.

The Office of Internal Audit will review and investigate as appropriate all reports and, when warranted by the facts, require corrective action and discipline in accordance with policy and law. Employees who make a good faith report of suspected fraud, waste, or abuse are protected from retaliation.

### **Applicability**

This policy applies to all members of the university community including faculty, staff, and student employees, regardless of funding source.

Students taking courses, attending classes, or enrolled in academic programs are required to read and affirm the Student Code of Conduct.

### **PROMISE OF NO RETALIATION**

The University promises that there will be no adverse action, retribution, or other reprisal for the good faith reporting of a suspected violation of this Code, even if the allegations ultimately prove to be without merit. The University will, however, pursue disciplinary action against any member who is shown to have knowingly filed a false report with the intention to injure another.

The University reserves the right, at any time, and without notice, to amend this Code of Ethics in its sole, good faith, discretion. This Code does not form a contract.

## ***Definitions***

### **Accountability**

The obligations of an individual or group of individuals to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and disclose the results in a transparent manner.

### **Ethics**

A moral philosophy or set of standards practiced by a person or group of people.

### **Integrity**

Strict adherence to a moral code, reflected in transparent honesty and complete harmony in what one thinks, says, and does.

## **Responsibility**

### **Supervisors, Managers, University Leaders**

- Distribute a copy of the Ethics Policy to all direct reports.
- Reinforce the Ethics Policy in all university-related business to ensure compliance.
- Encourage and support efforts by employees to perform duties and responsibilities at the highest ethical standards.
- Report suspected violations through appropriate university offices.
- Address employee misconduct.

### **Faculty, Staff, Student Employees**

- Conduct university-related activities with the utmost integrity and ethical conduct.
- Comply with university policies governing conduct.
- Report suspected violations through appropriate university offices.

### **Internal Audit**

Investigate alleged policy violations; determine whether a violation has occurred and whether action is required.

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR STUDENTS**

### **Principles**

Students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the following general principles underlined in the cover document of Code of Ethics, and those principles should apply to their relations with (i) the governing body, management, academic and support staff and other organs of the institution, (ii) other students. In addition, persons who seek to be admitted to study are entitled to expect that the management and staff of USTM act fairly in the admissions procedure according to the legislation in force, the Rules of the university, and ethical principles. Also, the standard of ethical behaviour expected of students is also to be expected of any persons acting on their behalf, including parents and persons with similar status.

Model Code and main Rules

### **A. General Rights and Responsibilities of Students**

#### **Students of USTM have the right to:**

- a. be free from discrimination based on race, religion, ethnicity, political affiliation, age, sex, disability or any other matter of personal preference;
- b. have freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, with a condition that these freedoms do not hinder the effective conduct of classes, comply with the policies of higher education institution, other principles of ethical behaviour such as respect for the rights of others, as well as National laws;
- c. be free from harassment by any member of the University community;
- d. be heard in case when a decision is to be taken against him/herself;
- e. be notified on a timely manner on disciplinary proceedings or actions;
- f. report any alleged non-compliance with the legislation in force or the ethical principles to the relevant authority in confidence without adverse personal consequences.

#### **Students of USTM have the following responsibilities:**

- a. become familiar with the provisions of this Code and all the other policies of the University;
- b. in relation to any person or group within or external to the institution, must not offer or accept any bribe or other unlawful financial consideration, or seek or accept any other personal favour, which may influence them in their studies, or influence others in their work;
- c. must immediately report any attempt to seek bribes or personal favours to the relevant authority;
- d. must not misuse the resources of the institution, or personal or commercial information held by it, including intellectual property, for personal gain or that of any other person or group;
- e. must behave towards the governing board, managers, academic and support staff and fellow students in a respectful way, upholding the general principles of ethical conduct, and contribute positively and constructively to the academic work of the institution;
- f. when participating in study or research activities, must not engage in plagiarism as defined in the Rules of the institution, fail to cite or attribute the work of others, pass off others' work as their own work, or falsify results, and must abide by ethical principles in relation to protection of personal data, and other specific principles in defined subject areas according to the Rules of USTM (for example sociological research);
- g. when participating in an examination or other form of assessment, must not cheat, copy others' work, either individually or as part of a group, or attempt to gain any advantage by offering any form of inducement, or knowingly permitting any other person to offer any form of inducement on their behalf.

## **B. Disciplinary Measures and Sanctions**

Disciplinary measures should be based on the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and timely notice. Violations of the Code and other Rules of the institution may result in the following disciplinary measures:

- a. Oral warning to the student, depending on the severity of the violation;
- b. Warning of the violation in writing;
- c. Reduction of the academic grade, depending on the severity of the violation;
- d. Failure of the course;
- e. Dismissal of a student from the institution.

The rights for taking disciplinary measures vary depending on the measure: course related issues (measures a. through d.) might be imposed by academic staff, while suspension and dismissal shall be imposed by managerial staff of the institution, namely deputy rector and rector, if not otherwise prescribed in the legal regulations of the institution and the Republic of Armenia laws.

In case of imposing measures (c) or (d), academic staff shall consult Programme chair, or the dean, if not otherwise prescribed in the Rules of the institution.

## **C. Appeal**

**Students have the right to appeal the decision of the mandated unit on the determination of the disciplinary measure.**

When disciplinary measures are in writing, the student appeal should be in writing;

When filing an appeal Students shall refer up, if not otherwise prescribed in the appeal policy and procedures of the institution.

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR ACADEMIC STAFF**

### **Principles**

Members of academic staff appointed by USTM are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the general principles of ethical conduct underlined in the cover document of Codes of Ethics, and those principles should apply to academic staff relations with (i) the governing body, management and other organs of the institution, (ii) other academic and support staff, (iii) students, and (iv) any other persons or groups having a contractual or other relationship or interest in the work of USTM.

### **A. General Rights and Responsibilities of Academic Staff**

**Academic staff of USTM has the right:**

- a. to freedom of expression and freedom of inquiry;
- b. to be judged as a scholar and a teacher on the basis of intellectual and professional criteria and not on their political and religious views, or other matters of personal preference;
- c. to decide on the content of the courses they teach in line with the requirements of the curricula;
- d. to grade student performance and achievements according to the grading policies of the university and pre-set grading criteria;
- e. not to accept any instruction to act or refrain from acting in a particular way from any individual except a higher authority, or from any political party, trade union or religious group, except as permitted by legislation in force;
- f. to report any alleged non-compliance with the legislation in force or the ethical principles to the relevant authority in confidence without adverse personal consequences.

**Academic staff of USTM has the responsibility:**

- a. to place the interests of the institution above their own interests, and should not seek to profit from their positions otherwise than as provided by the legislation in force;
- b. in relation to any person or group within or external to the institution, not to solicit or accept any bribe or other unlawful financial consideration, or seek or accept any other personal favour, which may influence them in their work, and must immediately report any attempt to bribe or offer personal favour to the relevant authority
- c. to declare in writing to the Chancellor where they or any member of their immediate family have any personal interest in issues affecting their work -human resources (including staff appointments and promotions), financial , contractual or other relevant matters;
- d. not to misuse the resources of the institution, or personal or commercial information held by it, including intellectual property, for personal gain or that of any other person or group;
- e. to conduct themselves according to the general principles of ethical conduct when participating in appointment, promotion or other commissions affecting academic staff, and when participating in commissions or other bodies concerned with admission, assessment, examination and other actions relating to students, and in individual and group activities with students;
- f. to respect the students of the university and avoid any exploitation or harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students;
- g. to respect the diversity of students including, but not limited to, their political and religious beliefs;
- h. to protect academic freedom of students;
- i. not to engage in plagiarism, fail to cite or attribute the work of others, falsify results, and abide by ethical principles in relation to protection of personal data, and other specific principles in defined subject areas according to the Rules of the institution (for example in medical and veterinary sciences, and sociological research) when participating in research activities;
- j. not to discriminate against or harass colleagues and to respect the diversity of opinions and free expression;
- k. to ensure that all persons under their authority are made aware of the relevant legislation and rules and the consequences of non-compliance, and to promote ethical conduct;

**B. Disciplinary Measures and Sanctions**

Disciplinary measures should be based on the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and timely notice.

- a. Complaints on the violation of the code of practice for academic staff ethical conduct should be in writing to the respective departmental/institutional unit of the University mandated with the responsibility to consider and decide on alleged violation of the ethical conduct;
- b. The mandated unit has to decide (i) whether the complaint has reasonable basis for identifying the violation, (ii) whether the facts featuring the alleged violation constitute a breach of ethical conduct of the academic staff;
- c. Parties to the case should be notified in writing in accordance with the University's relevant policy highlighting procedures for timely notifications.
- d. Sanctions possibly imposed could be: (i) warning; (ii) and dismissal;



### **C. Appeal**

**Academic staff has the right to appeal the decision of the mandated unit on the determination of the disciplinary measure.**

- a. Appeal must be made to the higher body of the institution than the mandated unit and it must be within time-bound period after the notification of determination;
- b. Appeal must be in writing and state the grounds for appeal;
- c. No further appeal can be available within the University.

## **CODE OF ETHICS FOR ADMINISTRATORS**

### **Principles**

Members of governing bodies and administration appointed according to the provisions of the USTM are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the general principles of ethical conduct. Those principles should apply to governors and administrators of USTM relations with (i) the governing and managerial units of the University, (ii) the academic and support staff, (iii) students, and (iv) any other persons or groups having a contractual or other relationship or interest in the work of the institution.

### **Governing bodies**

In pursuance of the general principles of ethical conduct, USTM adopts a Code of Conduct for members of governing bodies and administration which as a minimum incorporates these principles and provides sanctions for non-compliance.

#### **A. General Rights and Responsibilities of USTM governing body**

- a. Members of institution governing bodies have the right to report any alleged noncompliance with the legislation in force or the ethical principles to the relevant authority in confidence without adverse personal consequences.

#### **The Governing Body of USTM has the following responsibilities:**

- a. should place the interests of the University above their own interests, and should not seek to profit from their positions otherwise;
- b. should not accept any mandate to act or refrain from acting in a particular way from the organisation or body which has appointed them, or accept any instruction from any individual, or from any political party, trade union, religious or other external source;
- c. should declare at the start of a meeting where they, or any member of their immediate family, have any personal interest in any item on the agenda for discussion, including human resources (including staff appointments and promotions), financial, contractual or other relevant matters, and should withdraw officially from the meeting if any such matters are discussed;
- d. must not solicit or accept any bribe or other financial consideration, or seek or accept any other personal favour, which may influence them in the decision-making process;
- e. must immediately report any attempt to bribe or offer personal favour to the relevant authorities;
- f. in exercising their collective authority, or personal delegated authority to make or enforce rules for the governance and management of the institution, ensure that such rules comply with rules in force and the ethical principles set out;
- g. should adopt internal audit and risk management processes which enable members to be satisfied that the financial and other affairs of the institution are being conducted fairly, transparently, efficiently and effectively;

## **Administrators**

Also in pursuance of the general principles of ethical conduct, USTM adopts a Code of Conduct for administrators, including the Vice Chancellor, Pro-Vice Chancellor, Deans of Faculty, Heads of Department and holders of equivalent or similar titles, and members of the administrative staff with management authority, which as a minimum incorporates these principles and provides sanctions for non-compliance in accordance with the rules in force.

### **B. General Rights and Responsibilities Administrators**

The rights and roles of the university executive body, other than the Vice Chancellor, are described in the internal policies and regulation of the institution.

a. Administrators of USTM have the right to report any alleged non-compliance with the rules in force or the ethical principles to the relevant authority in confidence without adverse personal consequences

The administrators of USTM have the following responsibilities:

a. in carrying out their functions and duties, should place the interests of the institution above their own interests, and should not seek to profit from their positions otherwise than as provided by the legislation in force and their respective contract of employment;

b. should not accept any instruction to act or refrain from acting in a particular way from any individual except a higher authority, or from any political party, trade union or religious group;

c. should declare in writing to the Vice Chancellor or to the Chair of the governing body) where they or any member of their immediate family have any personal interest in issues affecting human resources (including staff appointments and promotions), financial , contractual or other relevant matters;

d. must not solicit or accept any bribe or other financial consideration, or seek or accept any other personal favour, which may influence them in their work;

e. must immediately report any attempt to bribe or offer personal favour to the VC (or the Chair of the governing body);

f. must not misuse the resources of the institution, or personal or commercial information held by it, for personal gain or that of any other person;

g. should ensure that all persons under their authority are made aware of the relevant legislation and rules and the consequences of non-compliance, and to promote ethical conduct;

### **C. Disciplinary Measures and Sanctions**

Disciplinary measures should be based on the principles of fairness, confidentiality, and timely notice, and should be in line with the legislation in force.

a. Complaints on the violation of the code of practice for governing body and managers ethical conduct should be in writing according to the institution Code of Conduct developed for the respective actors. The important principles is that in the absence of a special steering committee on Ethical Conduct, or relevant regulation, considerations and decisions on alleged violation of the ethical conduct should be referred up;

b. The mandated unit has to decide

(i) whether the complaint has reasonable basis for identifying the violation,

(ii) whether the facts featuring the alleged violation constitute a breach of ethical conduct of the academic staff

(iii) whether the Unit has the mandate to consider the case;

c. Parties to the case should be notified in writing in accordance with the University relevant policy highlighting procedures for timely notifications.

d. Sanctions possibly imposed should be in line with the rule in force and the university internal policies and regulations:

(i) warning;

(ii) condemnation;

(iii) suspension;

(iv) filed request for self-dismissal/termination of employment/dismissal.

