

Ethical Behaviour Policy

The University of Otago Ethical Behaviour Policy outlines expectations for *“ethical interactions between members of the University community and to provide an environment of safety, respect and dignity so members can participate fully in all aspects of University life”*.

The Ethical Behaviour Policy gives examples of unethical behaviour including (but not limited to) harassment, discrimination and bullying. It also covers relationship conflicts of interest within the University community. Examples include: a lecturer teaching a family member, partners working in the same department or a staff member being in a relationship with a student. The latter is discouraged, with guidelines in the policy for when this might be deemed “unethical”. Also, the Ethical Behaviour Policy covers remedies available to anyone who feels the Policy has been breached.

What you should consider about the Ethical Behaviour Policy

- Are you aware of the Ethical Behaviour Policy and the requirements the policy places on all members of the University community?
- Have you discussed the policy with your staff?
- How can you ensure staff maintain an ongoing awareness of the Policy and, in particular, remedies available to them if they feel the policy has been breached?

Ethical Behaviour Policy - Conflict of Interest

- Are you aware of the conflict of interest provisions in the Ethical Behaviour Policy?
- How do you manage/monitor any conflict of interest (relationship) within your department e.g. staff member teaching a family member or staff member working with a partner?
- What steps do you take to ensure all staff are aware of the conflict of interest provisions in the Policy and also the provision about unethical intimate personal relationships?
- Are your staff aware that failure to disclose a conflict of interest could be a disciplinary matter?
- Who should you contact to discuss any issues arising from the Ethical Behaviour Policy?

General considerations - culture and communication within the Department

Departmental Culture

- What do you consider is a healthy departmental culture?
- How would you describe the current culture of your department?

- Are you aware of concerns raised about the culture of your department either in the recent past or currently e.g.
 - Ongoing conflict between staff
 - Allegations of unethical treatment (eg bullying, discrimination) between staff
- If concerns have been identified what steps have you taken, or are you intending to take, to address these concerns.

Communication within the Department

- How would you describe the level of communication within your department and what options are there to ensure effective communication e.g.
 - How frequently do you have staff meetings?
 - How frequently do you have individual meetings with key members of staff?
 - Is there good information sharing within your department e.g. from top down and vice versa? How do you know it is good?
- How do you respond when conflict or tension arises between staff members?
- Who do you rely on for support when working out how to manage staff conflict?

Useful resources

- [Ethical Behaviour Policy](#)
- [Ethical Behaviour Committee](#)
- [Conflict Resolution and Mediation Services](#)
- Human Resources

Email: mediation@otago.ac.nz