

# IIS Code of Conduct

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is the Code of conduct that applies to all students and staff at IIS. All aspects of it apply to students except where specifically indicated that they are for staff only. Do please read the code, and, if you have any questions about this code or its applicability to you, please ask Kate Holt, Student Services manager in the first instance.

### 1.1 Purpose of the code

This code is designed to be used by everyone connected with the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

Everyone is encouraged to read this code and consider how its principles can be applied to them and their role, as well as their interactions with all others associated with either Institute.

The purpose of this code is to provide clear guidelines on how all employees are expected to conduct themselves at work across a wide variety of different areas where experience has shown that such guidance can be helpful to all concerned.

The Institute strives to maintain a conducive work environment for all employees, consultants and volunteers as well as a suitable and sensible learning environment for all students in which honesty, integrity and respect for fellow employees, students and the customers/clients of the Institute are constantly reflected in personal behaviour and standards of conduct. As a consequence, the Institute therefore expects full adherence to the principles enshrined in this code from everyone, failing which, the Institute may take disciplinary action which may result in dismissal of employees or the termination of learning agreements.

For some policies, line managers have specific roles or tasks. These are outlined when they are appropriate.

Hereafter, the term 'Institute', refers to The Institute of Ismaili Studies (IIS).

### 1.2 Governance

This code applies to all employees, consultants, volunteers, contractors and visitors to or of the Institute – as well as to all students. Everyone is expected to abide by the principles contained here. Managers have particular responsibilities which are outlined where appropriate.

This code has been formally endorsed by the Governors of the IIS. It is reviewed annually. If you feel that elements of the code are impractical or need

to be adjusted, please advise the HR Department of your concerns so that they can be considered when this code is reviewed.

### **1.3 Structure of the code**

This code introduces a number of concepts which are outlined in general terms and then developed in more detail in subsidiary policies which are available on the IIS online staff handbook equivalent (available through the relevant links on [www.iis.ac.uk](http://www.iis.ac.uk)) and the printed IIS student handbooks. Details of these links are given in the relevant section. A full list of such policies is provided at Appendix A. Where there is any conflict between this document and the policies it refers to, it is those policies listed in Appendix A that take precedence.

Most policies address employees or students as 'you'. Some policies also contain additional guidance for managers on their specific role in supporting the application of policies in the work or learning environment.

This code also introduces some general policies which are only in this document (section 3) and not elaborated elsewhere.

### **1.4 Principles underlying the code**

- a) The Institute is committed to fostering an inclusive culture which promotes equality, values diversity and maintains a working, learning and social environment in which the rights and dignity of all its staff and students are respected.
- b) The Institute embraces diversity amongst its members and seeks to achieve equity in the experience, progression and achievement of all students and staff through the implementation of transparent policies, practices and procedures and, where appropriate, the provision of effective support. IIS is a faith-based educational organisation and respects the varied faith and faith-related practices of all its employees and students and expects all students, employees, contractors, volunteers and visitors to similarly support and respect these practices by not engaging in religious preaching, proselytising or activities counter to the IIS *raison d'être* including disrespecting the practices of students and/or employees.
- c) The Institute recognises that equality should be embedded in its activities and where appropriate will seek to promote awareness of equality and foster good practice.
- d) The Institute does its day-to-day business, and expects everyone associated with it to do business through the medium of the English language, unless expressly agreed by all parties otherwise (other than in language classes and training).
- e) The Institute is based in London in the United Kingdom. It draws its staff and students from many countries across the world, and this code therefore offers a common standard and framework for guidance for everyone. What follows in this code is based on this principle.
- f) Where there is any doubt in any situation, the Law of England applies. It is recognised that IIS is a private institution and not part of the UK HEI

structure, and aspects of UK legislation specific to such public sector organisations do not apply.

### **1.5 Training on the application of the code**

All employees will be trained on the concepts in this policy and their application in the workplace. All employees who join the Institute after the roll-out of this general training will have this policy outlined as part of their general induction to the organisation by the Human Resources Department and it will form part of their contract of employment.

### **1.6 Guidance on the application of the code**

Employees should seek guidance on the application of these policies, if they require such, initially from their line manager or Head of Department. If that does not resolve the issue, they both should then jointly contact the Human Resources Department.

## **2. SPECIFIC POLICIES**

### **2.1 Dignity at Work**

Employees have a responsibility to help create and maintain an inclusive work environment for everyone, free of bullying and harassment. Everyone can help to do this by:

- being aware of how your own verbal or non-verbal behaviour may affect others and changing it, if necessary; for example, you can still cause offence even if you are 'only joking';
- not influencing colleagues, students, externals about your own political or religious beliefs, or seeking to force them on others;
- treating colleagues with dignity and respect;
- taking a stand if you think inappropriate jokes or comments are being made;
- Not taking sexual harassment lightly. If you think you are being sexually harassed by an individual or a group, do not accept it as a joke. Do not encourage the harasser by smiling, laughing at his/her jokes, or flirting back. Let the harasser know that you do not enjoy and do not want this type of attention
- making it clear to others when you find their behaviour unacceptable;
- intervening, if possible, to stop harassment or bullying of others and giving support to recipients;
- Encouraging the recipient of bullying and/or harassment to talk about it and to take immediate action to stop it. You should bring the matter to the attention of your line manager immediately.
- making it clear that you find harassment and bullying unacceptable;
- reporting harassment or bullying to your manager or Human Resources and supporting the Institute in the investigation of complaints;

Managers have a particular responsibility to:

- set a good example by their own behaviour;
- ensure that there is a supportive working environment;

- make sure that staff know what standards of behaviour are expected of them;
- intervene to stop bullying or harassment;
- report any discriminatory jokes, posters, graffiti, emails and photos to the Human Resources Department;
- Report promptly to the Human Resources Department any complaint of bullying or harassment, or any incident of bullying or harassment witnessed by them.

This policy is explained in more detail in the IIS Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work Policy.

## **2.2 Relationships with other members of staff, students and other clients and customers of the Institute**

The Institute recognises that employees who work together may form personal friendships and in some cases personal relationships. While it does not wish to interfere in these areas, it is necessary for the Institute to ensure that all employees behave in an appropriate and professional manner at work. The following principles have therefore been devised, and apply to all employees regardless of their job or level of seniority.

- Any employee who is involved in a close personal relationship with a colleague, student, contractor, client, customer or supplier must not allow that relationship to influence his/her conduct while at work. Intimate behaviour during work time, for example kissing, touching or holding hands, is expressly prohibited (except for greetings). This rule applies during all working time, whether at the normal workplace, or when carrying out duties outside premises.
- Any employee who embarks on a close personal relationship with a colleague working in the same department/section must declare the relationship to his/her manager. If the relationship is between a manager/supervisor and an employee whom he/she supervises, the relationship should be declared to the Head of Department or a senior manager. The information declared will be recorded on the personal files of both employees and treated in strict confidence. Failure to do so may be a reason for disciplinary action against either or both employees.
- In order to avoid a situation in which an employee has managerial authority over another with whom he/she is having a close personal relationship, the Institute reserves the right to elect to transfer one or both of the employees involved in the relationship to a job in another department/section. In these circumstances, the Institute will consult both of the employees and seek to reach a satisfactory agreement regarding the transfer of one or both of them.
- In such a situation, if it is not possible to transfer at least one of the employees into another department for example if no suitable vacancies exist, or if an employee refuses to transfer, the Institute reserves the right to dismiss one or both employees (with notice in accordance with the employee's contract, or pay in lieu of notice). Dismissal would, however, be undertaken only as a last resort in circumstances where no other mutually acceptable course of action was reasonably open to the Institute.

- Similar principles apply to an employee who begins a close personal relationship with a student, client, customer, contractor or supplier. If the employee's job allows him/her authority over the student, client, customer, contractor or supplier (for example if the employee has the authority to decide to whom to award contracts), the relationship must be declared to the employee's manager. In these circumstances, the Institute reserves the right to transfer, or as a last resort to dismiss, the employee following consultation with him/her. Students should also advise the Student Services manager if they begin a personal relationship with a member of staff.

The IIS's policy on Staff and Student Relationships is outlined in more detail in the policy of the same name.

### **2.3 Dealing and misuse of drugs and alcohol**

The Institute is committed to achieving and maintaining a safe work environment that is free from the effects of the misuse of alcohol, drugs and other substances which may affect individual performance, service delivery, or the health and safety of the employees.

It is a disciplinary offence to be on the Institute's premises and/or carrying out official duties when dealing in or under the influence of alcohol or non-medically prescribed drugs.

It is a criminal offence to be in possession of, use or distribute an illicit substance. If any such incidents take place on the Institute's premises, or at an institutional event (including social events organised by the Institute), they will be regarded as serious, will be investigated by the Institute, and may lead to disciplinary action and possible reporting to the police.

No employee or other person under the Institute's control shall, in connection with any work-related activity:

- report, or endeavour to report, for duty having consumed drugs or alcohol likely to render him/her unfit and/or unsafe for work;
- consume or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty
- store drugs or alcohol in personal areas such as lockers and desk drawers; or
- Attempt to sell or give drugs or alcohol to any other employee or other person on the Institute's premises.

Employees must inform their line manager about any prescribed medication that may have an effect on their ability to carry out their work safely, and must follow any instructions subsequently given. Non-medically prescribed drugs that cause or may cause drowsiness should not be used whilst at work.

Any employee suffering from drug or alcohol dependency should declare such dependency, and the Institute will, where appropriate, subsequently provide reasonable assistance, treating absences for treatment and/or rehabilitation as any other sickness absence.

Where an employee's unsatisfactory or deteriorating work performance could be associated with the effects of drinking alcohol or the use of other drugs, the Institute may take appropriate action under its disciplinary procedures.

Any employee or line manager who suspects that a colleague has a drinking/alcohol or drugs problem that is affecting his/her work should consult the Human Resources Department for guidance and advice.

Further information is available in the Alcohol and Substance Misuse policy at the IIS. The Disciplinary policy at the IIS is described in the Policy of the same name.

## **2.4 Bribery, Corporate Entertainment and the Acceptance of Gifts**

Employees are not permitted to accept gifts in cash or in kind from vendors, suppliers, students, other employees, or any other persons/institutions, for services rendered, or on the basis of professional/business relationships developed.

'Gifts' will not refer to flowers and eatables like chocolates etc. often given by students to employees in the department as a whole or to institutional/commercial giveaways of nominal value. Thus, small gifts that are genuinely given as tokens of appreciation are acceptable, provided the recipients do not subsequently treat the sender of the gift more favourably than other students, vendors, clients, customers, employees, suppliers or contractors.

Employees should, as far as possible, politely decline the offer of gifts and communicate that they are not permitted to accept gifts as an institutional policy. However if the presenter is insistent, the employee should inform him/her that the gift will not be retained but will be donated to a charity.

Any persons desiring to give expensive gifts should be encouraged to make a donation to the Institute of the equivalent amount in lieu, and be guided to the Finance Department.

If, in the opinion of the employee's line manager, a gift clearly constitutes a bribe or other inducement, the employee will be asked to pass it to the Human Resources Department who will return it to the sender with a suitable letter explaining the Institute's policy and asking the sender to comply with the policy in future. The IIS's Anti-Bribery policy is covered in the policy of the same name.

If the Institute discovers a supplier or contractor has been used wholly or mainly because of the incentive of a free gift and, as such, the employee has not acted in the best interests of the Institute, this will also constitute a disciplinary offence and will be dealt with in accordance with the Institute's disciplinary procedure. Depending on the gravity of the offence, it may be treated as gross misconduct and could render the employee liable to summary dismissal.

The receipt of all gifts will be closely monitored by the Institute, and is covered in more detail in the policy of the same name.

Occasionally, employees may need to entertain on behalf of the Institute. This can include the provision of meals and sometimes the giving of gifts. The Institute will not pay towards the cost of alcohol at any time. On all occasions, employees should gain the agreement of their Head of department and Head of Finance to confirm the proposed expenditure, and refer to the Finance procedures for guidance on the amounts that can be spent on Institute sponsored meals.

## **2.5 Malpractice**

The Institute does not condone malpractice of any sort – all employees are expected to abide by this code of conduct, the policies contained therein and specific policies outlined here. In the case where employees believe that other employees are deliberately not following various aspects, the Institute's Whistleblowing policy applies and should be consulted.

## **2.6 Confidentiality, data protection and computer mis-use**

The Institute applies a policy of strict confidentiality to the data it holds on employees, former employees, students and other others with whom it has had any sort of relationship and whose data it holds. The Institute fully respects the confidentiality and integrity of all data relating to individuals in whatever form (electronic or written) in which it exists. Further details are given in the Institute's Data Protection Policy and its Computer and Internet Mis-use policy.

# **3. GENERAL POLICIES**

## **3.1 Political Activity in the workplace**

The Institute recognises the right of every individual to hold political opinions and to take part in political activity in his/her own time and it also recognises that politics is a subject on which individuals hold many different views. It is therefore the Institute's policy that employees may not take part in any type of political activity while at work. The Institute aims to provide a working environment in which all staff feel comfortable and in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Political activity, in particular expressing strong political views in the workplace, can be seen as acting against the achievement of this aim.

In addition, it would be inappropriate for the Institute to take sides politically or be seen to support a particular political party. The Institute's policy is therefore that our employees, students, course participants, contributors, lecturers, etc. should exercise care and reasonable judgement when discussing their political views at any and all times.

During the course of employment, employees are prohibited from:

- political campaigning on the institute's premises or while on institute business;
- handing out written material, e.g. leaflets containing information about political parties;
- sending political material/information to anyone via the Institute's email system or posting such material on the Institute's intranet;

- using the Institute's resources to assist with political activity, e.g. use of the Institute's printers, faxes, photocopiers or mobile phones to print, copy or transmit political leaflets or messages;
- expressing political views to customers or suppliers (whether done verbally, by email or in writing);
- arguing with suppliers or customers about any aspect of politics;
- attempting to coerce others into holding any particular political opinion or trying to persuade them to engage in political activity;
- putting notices that contain information about political parties or state political views on any of the Institute's noticeboards;
- doing or saying anything that suggests or implies that the Institute supports a particular political group/party or holds any particular political opinion; or
- Acting against colleagues in a way that could amount to harassment or bullying, for example mocking a colleague's political opinions, exposing him/her to extreme political views or taking steps to try and foist political beliefs on him/her.

This includes times when employees are at their normal place of work, working on customers' premises or anywhere else. It also includes break times if the employee remains at the workplace.

The Institute does not wish to interfere with what employees do outside work in their own time, but it is important that employees do not conduct themselves in a way that could be detrimental to the Institute, its relationships, or its image or reputation.

Employees are free to engage in political activity outside work, provided that this activity is carried out only outside working hours and in their own time and away from the Institute's premises, and provided also that the activity does not:

- interfere in any way with the work of any employee of the Institute;
- bring, or risk bringing, the Institute's name into disrepute;
- take place on any premises owned or occupied by the Institute; or
- Involve any criminal activity or behaviour.

If, outside work, an employee chooses to express a political opinion, whether during discussions with other people, via email or on any social networking website, the employee must not:

- mention the Institute's name alongside any political statement or opinion;
- state or imply that the Institute endorses any particular political opinion; or
- Say or write anything that might bring the Institute's name into disrepute.

All employees are required to adhere to this policy. Employees should note that any breaches of this policy may lead to disciplinary action and in serious cases, for example incidents of harassment or intimidation of colleagues, may lead to summary dismissal.

Any employee who is offended by, or concerned about, a colleague's behaviour in relation to political activity or the expression of political opinions at work should raise the matter with the relevant line manager, and/or raise a formal complaint via the Institute's grievance procedure.













