



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization



Integrity
 Confidentiality
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Standards of Conduct for the
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United Nations

2014



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Standards
of **Conduct** for the
International
Civil Service

2014

Foreword

The present *Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service* were revised by the International Civil Service Commission and approved by the United Nations General Assembly in 2013.

The Standards of Conduct apply to all staff members, i.e. international civil servants, as defined in the Staff Rules and Regulations. In addition, these Standards of Conduct also provide guidance and apply to all staff designated as employees of UNESCO but who do not enjoy the status of international civil servants.

The intention of the *Standards of Conduct* is to reflect the overarching ideals of behaviour and conduct of the international civil service. They set out basic principles that form the ethical and philosophical underpinnings of the international civil service. These guiding principles are **integrity, loyalty, independence, impartiality, tolerance, understanding, freedom from discrimination, gender equality and dignity.**

Whilst continuing to affirm the basic principles of the international civil service, the revised standards introduce new provisions or reinforce existing ones, such as **accountability, abuse of authority, conflicts of interest, use of the resources of United Nations organizations, post-employment restrictions and respect for different customs and cultures.** This new version continues to emphasize existing standards, such as impartiality, tact and discretion, the duty to cooperate with audits, disclosure of information and staff-management relations.

The Standards of Conduct should inspire and guide you, as international civil servants, in your professional activities as well as in your personal conduct.

**Bureau of
Human Resources Management**



The last chapter of this brochure contains a series of questions and answers that explain, with the help of examples, how these standards of conduct apply to staff at UNESCO (conduct at UNESCO, disclosure of information, conflicts of interest and external relations).

Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service

*“The integrity of men is
to be measured by their conduct,
not by their professions.”*

Junius

English political author

➤ Introduction

1.

The United Nations and the specialized agencies embody the highest aspirations of the peoples of the world. Their aim is to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to enable every man, woman and child to live in dignity and freedom.

2.

The international civil service bears responsibility for translating these ideals into reality. It relies on the great traditions of public administration that have grown up in member States: competence, integrity, impartiality, independence and discretion. But over and above this,

international civil servants have a special calling: to serve the ideals of peace, respect for fundamental rights, economic and social progress, and international cooperation. It is therefore incumbent on international civil servants to adhere to the highest standards of conduct; for, ultimately, it is the international civil service that will enable the United Nations system to bring about a just and peaceful world.

➤ Guiding principles

Rights of men and women

3.

The values that are enshrined in the United Nations organizations must also be those that guide international civil servants in all their actions: fundamental human rights, social justice, the dignity and worth of the human person and respect for the equal rights of men and women and of nations great and small.

4.

International civil servants should share the vision of their organizations. It is loyalty to this vision that ensures the integrity and international outlook of international civil servants; a shared vision guarantees that they will place the interests of their organization above their own and use its resources in a responsible manner.

Integrity

5.

The concept of integrity enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations embraces all aspects of an international civil servant's behaviour, including such qualities as honesty, truthfulness, impartiality and incorruptibility. These qualities are as basic as those of competence and efficiency, also enshrined in the Charter.

Tolerance

6.

Tolerance and understanding are basic human values. They are essential for international civil servants, who must respect all persons equally, without any distinction whatsoever. This respect fosters a climate and a working environment sensitive to the needs of all. To achieve this in a multicultural setting calls for a positive affirmation going well beyond passive acceptance.

Loyalty

7.

International loyalty means loyalty to the whole United Nations system and not only to the organization for which one works; international civil servants have an obligation to understand and exemplify this wider loyalty. The need for a cooperative and understanding attitude towards international civil servants of other United Nations organizations is obviously most important where international civil servants of several organizations are serving in the same country or region.

The following examples are contrary to the concept of integrity: theft, falsification of official documents, falsification of the amount of medical expenses or school fees, false statements of travel expenses, false statements in reference to a family situation, establishment of contracts for fictitious temporary assistance or for the benefit of close family members, personal use of extra-budgetary funds, misappropriation of funds, manipulation of the rules and procedures governing purchases and corruption.

In dealing with outside official bodies, international civil servants should not contradict the official position of the Secretariat.

An international civil servant must never favour nationals from his/her country of origin, for example, when awarding temporary assistance contracts.

Impartiality

8.

If the impartiality of the international civil service is to be maintained, international civil servants must remain independent of any authority outside their organization; their conduct must reflect that independence. In keeping with their oath of office, they should not seek nor should they accept instructions from any Government, person or entity external to the organization. It cannot be too strongly stressed that international civil servants are not, in any sense, representatives of Governments or other entities, nor are they proponents of their policies. This applies equally to those on secondment from Governments and to those whose services have been made available from elsewhere. International civil servants should be constantly aware that, through their allegiance to the Charter and the corresponding instruments of each organization, member States and their representatives are committed to respect their independent status.

Tact and discretion

9.

Impartiality implies tolerance and restraint, particularly in dealing with political or religious convictions. While their personal views remain inviolate, international civil servants do not have the freedom of private persons to take sides or to express their convictions publicly on controversial matters, either individually or as members of a group, irrespective of the medium used. This can mean that, in certain situations, personal views should be expressed only with tact and discretion.

An international civil servant should be extremely careful when creating, sharing and exchanging information and ideas, including on social media networks.

International outlook

10.

This does not mean that international civil servants have to give up their personal political views or national perspectives. It does mean, however, that they must at all times maintain a broad international outlook and an understanding of the international community as a whole.

Independence

11.

The independence of the international civil service does not conflict with, or obscure, the fact that it is the member States that collectively make up — in some cases with other constituents — the organization. Conduct that furthers good relations with individual member States and that contributes to their trust and confidence in the organizations' secretariat strengthens the organizations and promotes their interest.

12.

International civil servants who are responsible for projects in particular countries or regions may be called upon to exercise special care in maintaining their independence. At times they might receive instructions from the host country but this should not compromise their independence. If at any time they consider that such instructions threaten their independence, they must consult their supervisors.

An international civil servant must refrain from contacting his/her Permanent Delegation or other authority of his/her country so that it intervenes on his/her personal/administrative issues.

13.

International civil servants at all levels are accountable and answerable for all actions carried out, as well as decisions taken, and commitments made by them in performing their functions.

Respect for diversity

14.

An international outlook stems from an understanding of and loyalty to the objectives and purposes of the organizations of the United Nations system as set forth in their legal instruments. It implies, *inter alia*, respect for the right of others to hold different points of view and follow different cultural practices. It requires a willingness to work without bias with persons of all nationalities, religions and cultures; it calls for constant sensitivity as to how words and actions may look to others. It requires avoidance of any expressions that could be interpreted as biased or intolerant. As working methods can be different in different cultures, international civil servants should not be wedded to the attitudes, working methods or work habits of their own country or region.

Gender equality

15.

Freedom from discrimination is a basic human right. International civil servants are expected to respect the dignity, worth and equality of all people without any distinction whatsoever. Assumptions based on stereotypes must be assiduously avoided. One of the main tenets of the Charter is the equality of men and women, and organizations should therefore do their utmost to promote gender equality.

If a woman applies for a post for which she has all the requisite qualifications, she cannot be excluded from the selection process on the grounds that she is pregnant or has young children.

› Working relations

Mutual respect

16.

Managers and supervisors are in positions of leadership and it is their responsibility to ensure a harmonious workplace based on mutual respect; they should be open to all views and opinions and make sure that the merits of staff are properly recognized. They need to provide support to them; this is particularly important when staff are subject to criticism arising from the performance of their duties. Managers are also responsible for guiding and motivating their staff and promoting their development.

17.

Managers and supervisors serve as role models and they have therefore a special obligation to uphold the highest standards of conduct. It is quite improper for them to solicit favours, gifts or loans from their staff; they must act impartially, without favouritism and intimidation. In matters relating to the appointment or career of others, international civil servants should not try to influence colleagues for personal reasons.

Supervisors must never subject their subordinates to humiliating reprimands. Comments on work accomplishments should always be presented in a constructive manner.

Staff members must not hire an individual lacking the proper qualifications simply because that person is known to them. Nor should a contract be renewed if the services provided prove to be less than fully satisfactory.

During the recruitment process, panel members must make their recommendations based solely on the basis of a candidate's qualifications and competencies and not on personal considerations.

Sharing of information

18.

Managers and supervisors should communicate effectively with their staff and share relevant information with them. International civil servants have a reciprocal responsibility to provide all pertinent facts and information to their supervisors and to abide by and defend any decisions taken, even when those do not accord with their personal views.

19.

International civil servants must follow the instructions they receive in connection with their official functions and, if they have doubts as to whether an instruction is consistent with the Charter or any other constitutional instrument, decisions of the governing bodies or administrative rules and regulations, they should first consult their supervisors. If the international civil servant and supervisor cannot agree, the international civil servant may ask for written instructions. These may be challenged through the proper institutional mechanisms, but any challenge should not delay carrying out the instruction. International civil servants may also record their views in official files. They should not follow verbal or written instructions that are manifestly inconsistent with their official functions or that threaten their safety or that of others.

A possible disagreement does not allow a staff member to refuse or delay the implementation of the written decision/instruction, or to criticize it in public.

20.

International civil servants have the duty to report any breach of the organization's regulations and rules to the official or entity within their organizations whose responsibility it is to take appropriate action, and to cooperate with duly authorized audits and investigations. An international civil servant who reports such a breach in good faith or who cooperates with an audit or investigation has the right to be protected against retaliation for doing so.

➤ Harassment and abuse of authority

21.

Harassment in any shape or form is an affront to human dignity and international civil servants must not engage in any form of harassment. International civil servants have the right to a workplace environment free of harassment or abuse. All organizations must prohibit any kind of harassment. Organizations have a duty to establish rules and provide guidance on what constitutes harassment and abuse of authority and how unacceptable behaviour will be addressed.

UNESCO HR Manual Item 18.3 defines "retaliation" as "any direct or indirect detrimental action recommended, threatened or taken because an employee reported or provided information concerning acts of misconduct or wrongdoing, or has cooperated with audits, investigations or other inquiries".

Retaliation constitutes serious misconduct.

Harassment, in any shape or form, is not tolerated at UNESCO.

UNESCO defines harassment as "Any deliberate, offensive or undesired conduct, incompatible with the Standards of Conduct, in the workplace or in connection with work, that can be reasonably perceived as such, and has the purpose or effect of: (a) an affront to the identity, the personality, the dignity or the physical integrity of an employee/a group of employees; or (b) the creation of an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive work environment". (see HR Manual Item 18.2)

22.

International civil servants must not abuse their authority or use their power or position in a manner that is offensive, humiliating, embarrassing or intimidating to another person.

Conflict of interest

23.

Conflicts of interest may occur when an international civil servant's personal interests interfere with the performance of his/her official duties or call into question the qualities of integrity, independence and impartiality required the status of an international civil servant. Conflicts of interest include circumstances in which international civil servants, directly or indirectly, may benefit improperly, or allow a third party to benefit improperly, from their association with their organization. Conflicts of interest can arise from an international civil servant's personal or familial dealings with third parties, individuals, beneficiaries, or other institutions. If a conflict of interest or possible conflict of interest does arise, the conflict shall be disclosed, addressed and resolved in the best interest of the organization. Questions entailing a conflict of interest can be very sensitive and need to be treated with care.

A staff member must not influence his/her supervisor, peers and/or subordinates to engage the services of a company in which the staff member has a private interest or for which one of his/her relatives or friends works.

Disclosure of information

24.

International civil servants should avoid assisting third parties in their dealings with their organization where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment. This is particularly important in procurement matters or when negotiating prospective employment. At times, international civil servants may, owing to their position or functions in accordance with the organization's policies, be required to disclose certain personal assets if this is necessary to enable their organizations to make sure that there is no conflict. The organizations must ensure confidentiality of any information so disclosed, and must use it only for defined purposes or as authorized by the international civil servant concerned. International civil servants should also disclose in advance possible conflicts of interest that may arise in the course of carrying out their duties and seek advice on mitigation and remediation. They should perform their official duties and conduct their personal affairs in a manner that preserves and enhances public confidence in their own integrity and that of their organization.

An international civil servant who might deal in his/her official capacity with any matter involving a company, partnership, or other business in which he/she has an interest shall disclose the nature and measure of that interest to the Director-General. He/she should always refrain from any decision-making process or activity, which could represent a conflict of interest.

Use of the resources of United Nations organizations

25.

International civil servants are responsible for safeguarding the resources of United Nations organizations which are to be used for the purpose of delivering an organization's mandate and to advance the best interests of the organization. International civil servants shall use the assets, property, information and other resources of their organizations for authorized purposes only and with care. Limited personal use of the resources of an organization, such as electronic and communications resources, may be permitted by the organization in accordance with applicable policies.

Post-employment restrictions

26.

After leaving service with organizations of the United Nations system, international civil servants should not take improper advantage of their former official functions and positions, including through unauthorized use or distribution of privileged or confidential information; nor should international civil servants, including those working in procurement services and as requisitioning officers, attempt to unduly influence the decisions of the organization in the interest or at the request of third parties with a view to seeking an opportunity to be employed by such third parties.

› Role of the secretariats (Headquarters and field duty stations)

To assist the governing bodies 27.

The main function of all secretariats is to assist legislative bodies in their work and to carry out their decisions. The executive heads are responsible for directing and controlling the work of the secretariats. Accordingly, when submitting proposals or advocating positions before a legislative body or committee, international civil servants are presenting the position of the executive head, not that of an individual or organizational unit.

To serve the interest of the organization 28.

In providing services to a legislative or representative body, international civil servants should serve only the interests of the organization, not that of an individual or organizational unit. It would not be appropriate for international civil servants to prepare for Government or other international civil service representatives any speeches, arguments or proposals on questions under discussion without approval

of the executive head. It could, however, be quite appropriate to provide factual information, technical advice or assistance with such tasks as the preparation of draft resolutions.

29.

It is entirely improper for international civil servants to lobby or seek support from Government representatives or members of legislative organs to obtain advancement either for themselves or for others or to block or reverse unfavourable decisions regarding their status. By adhering to the Charter and the constitutions of the organizations of the United Nations system, Governments have undertaken to safeguard the independence of the international civil service; it is therefore understood that Government representatives and members of legislative bodies will neither accede to such requests nor intervene in such matters. The proper method for an international civil servant to address such matters is through administrative channels; each organization is responsible for providing these.

➤ Staff-management relations

Freedom of association

30.

An enabling environment is essential for constructive staff-management relations and serves the interests of the organizations. Relations between management and staff should be guided by mutual respect. Elected

staff representatives have a cardinal role to play in the consideration of conditions of employment and work, as well as in matters of staff welfare. Freedom of association is a fundamental human right and international civil servants have the right to form and join associations, unions or other groupings to promote and defend their interests. Continuing dialogue between staff and management is indispensable. Management should facilitate this dialogue.

31.

Elected staff representatives enjoy rights that derive from their status; this may include the opportunity to address the legislative organs of their organization. These rights should be exercised in a manner that is consistent with the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the international covenants on human rights, and does not undermine the independence and integrity of the international civil service. In using the broad freedom of expression they enjoy, staff representatives must exercise a sense of responsibility and avoid undue criticism of the organization.

32.

Staff representatives must be protected against discriminatory or prejudicial treatment based on their status or activities as staff representatives, both during their term of office and after it has ended. Organizations should avoid unwarranted interference in the administration of their staff unions or associations.

› Relations with member States and legislative bodies

Neutrality

33.

It is the clear duty of all international civil servants to maintain the best possible relations with Governments and avoid any action that might impair this. They should not interfere in the policies or affairs of Governments. It is unacceptable for them, either individually or collectively, to criticize or try to discredit a Government. At the same time, it is understood that international civil servants may speak freely in support of their organizations' policies. Any activity, direct or indirect, to undermine or overthrow a Government constitutes serious misconduct.

34.

International civil servants are not representatives of their countries, nor do they have authority to act as liaison agents between organizations of the United Nations system and their Governments. The executive head may, however, request an international civil servant to undertake such duties, a unique role for which international loyalty and integrity are essential. For their part, neither Governments nor organizations should place international civil servants in a position where their international and national loyalties may conflict.

Staff members attending conferences, even in their personal capacity, must not criticize the Government policy of UNESCO's Member States.

Staff members must also refrain from engaging in public activities that might be interpreted as criticizing the Government policy of one of the Organization's Member States.

› Relations with the public

Public information

35.

For an organization of the United Nations system to function successfully, it must have the support of the public. All international civil servants therefore have a continuing responsibility to promote a better understanding of the objectives and work of their organizations. This requires them to be well informed of the achievements of their own organizations and to familiarize themselves with the work of the United Nations system as a whole.

36.

There is a risk that on occasion international civil servants may be subject to criticism from outside their organizations; in keeping with their responsibility as international civil servants, they should respond with tact and restraint. It is the obligation of their organizations to defend them against criticism for actions taken in fulfilment of their duties.

37.

It would not be proper for international civil servants to air personal grievances or criticize their organizations in public. International civil servants should endeavour at all times to promote a positive image of the international civil service, in conformity with their oath of loyalty.

Staff members must refrain from criticizing the action of the United Nations system or UNESCO because it might undermine the image of the Organization and constitute a violation of their oath of loyalty.

› Relations with the media

Transparency

38.

Openness and transparency in relations with the media are effective means of communicating the organizations' messages. The organizations should have guidelines and procedures in place for which the following principles should apply: international civil servants should regard themselves as speaking in the name of their organizations and avoid personal references and views; in no circumstances should they use the media to further their own interests, to air their own grievances, to reveal unauthorized information or attempt to influence their organizations' policy decisions.

› Use and protection of information

Confidentiality

39.

Because disclosure of confidential information may seriously jeopardize the efficiency and credibility of an organization, international civil servants are responsible for exercising discretion in all matters of official business. They must not divulge confidential information without authorization. International civil servants should not use

Confidential information to which staff members have privileged access must not be divulged to any person (e.g. political considerations or a staff member's personal data).

information to personal advantage that has not been made public and is known to them by virtue of their official position. These obligations do not cease upon separation from service. Organizations must maintain guidelines for the use and protection of confidential information, and it is equally necessary for such guidelines to keep pace with developments in communications and other new technology. It is understood that these provisions do not affect established practices governing the exchange of information between the secretariats and member States, which ensure the fullest participation of member States in the life and work of the organizations.

➤ Respect for different customs and culture

40.

The world is home to a myriad of different peoples, languages, cultures, customs and traditions. A genuine respect for them all is a fundamental requirement for an international civil servant. Any behaviour that is not acceptable in a particular cultural context must be avoided. However, if a tradition is directly contrary to any human rights instrument adopted by the United Nations system, the international civil servant must be guided by the latter. International civil servants should avoid an ostentatious lifestyle and any display of an inflated sense of personal importance.

International civil servants must show the utmost respect for cultural diversity in the context of their duties and in their personal conduct. They must, in particular, adapt to the local customs of the country to which they are assigned, while respecting United Nations system norms and standards.

➤ Security and safety

41.

While an executive head assigns staff in accordance with the exigencies of the service, it is the responsibility of organizations to ensure that the health, well-being, security and lives of their staff, without any discrimination whatsoever, will not be subject to undue risk. The organizations should take measures to protect the safety of their staff and that of their family members. At the same time, it is incumbent on international civil servants to comply with all instructions designed to protect their safety.

➤ Personal conduct

42.

The private life of international civil servants is their own concern and organizations should not intrude upon it. There may be situations, however, in which the behaviour of an international civil servant may reflect on the organization. International civil servants must therefore bear in mind that their conduct and activities outside the workplace, even if unrelated to official duties, can compromise the image and the interests of the organizations. This can also result from the conduct of members of international civil servants' households, and it is the responsibility of international civil servants to make sure that their households are fully aware of this.

Staff members must honour their private obligations such as child support, rental payments, loan reimbursements or payment of maintenance allowances.

Respect for local law

43.

The privileges and immunities that international civil servants enjoy are conferred upon them solely in the interests of the organizations. They do not exempt international civil servants from observing local laws, nor do they provide an excuse for ignoring private legal or financial obligations. It should be remembered that only the executive head is competent to waive the immunity accorded to international civil servants or to determine its scope.

44.

Violations of the law can range from serious criminal activities to trivial offences, and organizations may be called upon to exercise judgement depending on the nature and circumstances of individual cases. A conviction by a national court will usually, although not always, be persuasive evidence of the act for which an international civil servant was prosecuted; acts that are generally recognized as offences by national criminal laws will normally also be considered violations of the standards of conduct for the international civil service.

A staff member who owns a vehicle with a K or diplomatic number plate must observe the Highway Code, and in particular, parking regulations, when using the vehicle. If faced with fines for offences, the staff member has the obligation to pay them.

➤ Outside employment and activities

45.

The primary obligation of international civil servants is to devote their energies to the work of their organizations. Therefore, international civil servants should not engage, without prior authorization, in any outside activity, whether remunerated or not, that interferes with that obligation or is incompatible with their status or conflicts with the interests of the organization. Any questions about this should be referred to the executive head.

46.

Subject to the above, outside activities may, of course, be beneficial both to staff members and to their organizations. Organizations should allow, encourage and facilitate the participation of international civil servants in professional activities that foster contacts with private and public bodies and thus serve to maintain and enhance their professional and technical competencies.

47.

International civil servants on leave, either with or without pay, should bear in mind that they remain international civil servants in the employ of their organization and remain subject to its rules. They may, therefore, accept employment, paid or unpaid, during their leave only with proper authorization.

Staff members shall not engage in any regular outside professional activities. However, occasional remunerated activities, including teaching activities or publications, may be engaged in, subject to prior authorization of the Director-General.

Political activities

48.

In view of the independence and impartiality that they must maintain, international civil servants, while retaining the right to vote, should not participate in political activities, such as standing for or holding local or national political office. This does not, however, preclude participation in local community or civic activities, provided that such participation is consistent with the oath of service in the United Nations system. It is necessary for international civil servants to exercise discretion in their support for a political party or campaign, and they should not accept or solicit funds, write articles or make public speeches or statements to the press. These cases require the exercise of judgement and, in case of doubt, should be referred to the executive head.

49.

The significance of membership in a political party varies from country to country and it is difficult to formulate standards that will apply in all cases. In general, international civil servants may be members of a political party, provided its prevailing views and the obligations imposed on its members are consistent with the oath of service in the United Nations system.

Staff members must not accept responsibilities within a political party, as their potential visibility might interfere with their duty of discretion and neutrality.

› Gifts, honours and remuneration from outside sources

50.

To protect the international civil service from any appearance of impropriety, international civil servants must not accept, without authorization from the executive head, any honour, decoration, gift, remuneration, favour or economic benefit of more than nominal value from any source external to their organizations; it is understood that this includes Governments as well as commercial firms and other entities.

51.

International civil servants should not accept supplementary payments or other subsidies from a Government or any other source prior to, during or after their assignment with an organization of the United Nations system if the payment is related to that assignment. Balancing this requirement, it is understood that Governments or other entities, recognizing that they are at variance with the spirit of the Charter and the constitutions of the organizations of the United Nations system, should not make or offer such payments.

When a staff member is approached by an outside body (local, national or international) with a view to accepting an honour, decoration, favour, gift or prize, he/she must request authorization before accepting any such distinction or gift.

› Conclusion

52.

The attainment of the standards of conduct for the international civil service requires the highest commitment of all parties. International civil servants must be committed to the values, principles and standards set forth herein. They are expected to uphold them in a positive and active manner. They should feel responsible for contributing to the broad ideals to which they dedicated themselves in joining the United Nations system. Organizations have the obligation to implement these standards through their policy framework, including rules, regulations and other administrative instruments. For their part, member States are expected, through their allegiance to the Charter and other constituent instruments, to preserve the independence and impartiality of the international civil service.

53.

For these standards to be effectively applied, it is essential that they be widely disseminated and that measures be taken and mechanisms put in place to ensure that their scope and importance are understood throughout the international civil service, the member States and the organizations of the United Nations system.

54.

Respect for these standards assures that the international civil service will continue to be an effective instrument in fulfilling its responsibilities and in meeting the aspirations of the peoples of the world.

Basic standards of conduct

1. A staff member fails to respect his or her obligations to pay support for a spouse and/or child(ren), notwithstanding a court order to do so. Does this violate the standards of conduct?

Yes. Staff members must not use their privileges and immunities to avoid discharging their private/legal obligations or observing local laws (see Staff Regulation 1.8).

2. A staff member fails to comply with domestic violence laws or a court order regarding visitation rights. Does this violate the standards of conduct?

Yes. Staff members are required to comply with the law, including laws against domestic violence. This includes physical assault and violent acts or the threat of violence to those in the staff member's household. It is not UNESCO's intention to intervene in the private life of staff members. It is, however, in its interest to

protect its image and reputation as an international organization and to ensure that its staff members do not: abuse the immunities accorded to them; subject their household members to abuse; or violate court orders. Staff members should conduct themselves at all times in a manner befitting their status as international civil servants (see Staff Regulation 1.4).

3. You have a personal blog or Twitter account on which you express your opinions or tweet in a personal capacity, but which indicates that you work for UNESCO. Using your personal page, are you free to express your opinions and ideas?

Even if expressing yourself through a personal page, you shall at all times bear in mind the discretion and tact incumbent upon you due to your status as an international civil servant. You therefore should not air personal grievances or criticize your Organization on social media, for example.

Conduct at UNESCO

4. Your daughter is at a university abroad and you occasionally send her e-mails from the office. Is this a violation of the standards of conduct?

No, provided that such communications are limited and brief. The primary purpose of electronic mail (e-mail) facilities is for official communication. The personal use of e-mail facilities at Headquarters is permitted as long as this does not encroach on work time, overburden the electronic network or involve extra expense for UNESCO. With regard to the use of Internet facilities in general, staff members must not consult sites whose content does not correspond with UNESCO's values.

Use and disclosure of information

5. You are an expert on water resources and would like to write an article in a newspaper regarding a national hydrological project. May you do so?

Yes, but you must request prior authorization from the Bureau of Human Resources Management through the Division of Public Information (ERI/DPI). HRM will examine the issues covered and the context in which the article is being written. It will consider, in particular, whether the author is identified as a UNESCO staff member; whether the article could reasonably be expected to have an adverse effect on UNESCO's policies or activities; and whether the project would have a significant impact on UNESCO's relations with the country in question (the presumption is that it could be a significant issue).

6. One of your fields of expertise (acquired outside UNESCO) is the protection of children; a local journalist would like to interview you on the topic. Could you accept the interview?

Yes. However, you must ensure that:

- you are interviewed in your personal capacity and your name is not associated with UNESCO;
- you avoid commenting directly on controversial national policy issues (if you intend to address controversial issues, you should submit your comments to HRM through ERI/DPI for prior authorization);
- you do not mention UNESCO's name, use its logo or refer to your post at UNESCO; and
- no reference to your function is made by anyone involved in the interview (see Staff Rule 101.6).

7. You work in an administrative unit and you have a financial interest in an office supply company. May you order supplies from the company?

No. You must not be involved in the process of ordering supplies from this company as you would be considered as benefiting from the business transaction, which is

a conflict of interest. Your decision would be perceived as biased by your personal interests, and could result in a conflict of interest. You must disclose in advance any/all possible conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of your duties.

Working relations

8. Your supervisor frequently gives you instructions and decisions you think are inappropriate. You disagree with his/her views and you would make different choices if you were in charge.

You must follow the instructions received in connection with your official functions. Even if you disagree with them, you cannot refuse or delay the implementation of written decisions or instructions, or criticize them in public.

Should a disagreement concerning a verbal decision or instruction arise, you may request written confirmation.

If the disagreement concerns a matter you consider to be important, you may request an appointment with the manager of your supervisor and/or you may express to him/her in writing your opinion on the decision or instruction.

Harassment and abuse of authority

9. Your supervisor has repeatedly asked you to do personal tasks for him/her, such as mailing letters, making personal hotel/travel arrangements. These tasks interfere with your work. What should you do?

You should discuss the issue with your supervisor. If the problem persists, you should inform the manager of your supervisor, who should ensure that the behavior ceases.

10. Your supervisor demeans you in front of colleagues. He/she hides documents and fails to disclose information relevant

and/or critical to your work. He/she has insulted you on several occasions. You are not invited to meetings directly related to your functions, and you feel isolated in the workplace. What should you do?

You should address the situation directly with your supervisor.

If you find it difficult, you may consider consulting a third party (such as the Mediator) and seek advice, information and guidance. You may also ask the third party to approach – confidentially – your supervisor or to mediate, i.e. by bringing you and your supervisor together to address the matter.

Alternatively, you may designate any staff member of your choice to act as a third party.

If you see no improvement, you might consider filing a formal complaint against your supervisor (see HR Manual Item 18.2 Anti-Harassment Policy).

11. A colleague has, on several occasions, invited you to dinner. He/she often makes physical contact with you and makes jokes of a sexual nature. What should you do?

If you believe that you are being subjected to improper behaviour, you should, whenever possible, attempt to put a halt to the unwelcome behaviour as early as possible by making it clear orally and/or in writing to the perceived offender that his/her behaviour is inappropriate and should cease immediately.

If the offensive behaviour continues despite these actions, you may consider filing a formal complaint against your colleague (see HR Manual Item 18.2 Anti-Harassment Policy).

Conflicts of interest

12. You are engaged in a discussion with a potential contractor for a UNESCO project. The invitation to tender has just

been issued. At the end of the discussion, the contractor invites you to lunch in a restaurant. Should you accept the invitation?

No. As the competitive bidding process has not yet been completed, it would be inappropriate to accept the invitation as that could give the impression that you might be influenced in your choice.

13. You learn through your brother-in-law, who works for a printing company, of new software produced by the company that may be of interest to UNESCO. Are you permitted to arrange a meeting between the business and representatives of UNESCO?

Yes, providing that you discuss with your supervisor the nature of your relationship with the potential contractor and any/all conflicts of interest that might arise. You should refrain from influencing UNESCO's decision in any way with regard to purchasing the software

or otherwise using the firm's products, as that would be a clear case of conflict of interest.

14. UNESCO established relationships with an NGO, and your spouse is currently working with/for the NGO. What should you do?

You must be transparent and inform your supervisor as soon as possible about the situation.

You must abstain from any decision-making process involving this NGO.

15. You are member of a recruitment panel and you discover that one of the candidates is the son of a former colleague with whom you have good relations. What should you do?

You must immediately inform the Chair of the panel and HRM. You should not be involved in the process, otherwise it could be considered as biased or partial, because of personal considerations.

16. You are invited to a demonstration meeting on a new software product. You are being offered a license for your personal computer. Can you accept?

Accepting a gift may give the impression that your further decisions may be influenced by the person and/or the company offering you the gift. If in doubt, you must inform your supervisor. You can keep gifts with a value of up to US\$ 250 without declaring them.

Outside employment and activities

17. You have been invited by a university to teach a course on educational planning, for which you will be paid. Can you accept the invitation?

You may accept the invitation, provided that:

- you receive prior approval from your supervisor(s) and HRM with regard to both your participation and the proposed remuneration;

- you provide details on the course content; and
- the work, including preparation, is done in your spare time and does not interfere with your official duties (see Staff Rules 101.6 and 101.8).

18. You own an apartment that you rent out. Are you obliged to report this fact to UNESCO to avoid violating the rules on outside activities?

No. You may rent your property without prior authorization from UNESCO, as long as your real estate activities do not become a regular external activity run as a business.

19. Can you participate in a lawful public demonstration on an issue not closely related to the work of UNESCO, for example, immigration policy, without prior authorization?

Yes, provided that you do not make your UNESCO status public. If, however, you intend to make a public statement on a question of

national policy, prior authorization is required.

20. Can you join and participate in the activities of a non-governmental organization (NGO) of an environmental, religious or civic nature?

You may join both formal and informal clubs and non-governmental organizations if you can do so without making your UNESCO status public, associating your name with the Organization, causing embarrassment to UNESCO or adversely affecting its interests. You should conduct yourself at all times in a manner befitting your status as an international civil servant (see Staff Regulation 1.4).

21. Can you sign a petition supporting a political candidate or endorse a candidate for elected office in your country?

Yes, under certain conditions. You may sign a petition supporting a political candidate or endorse a candidate for elected office in the

country in which you are qualified to vote, or join a political party, if you can do so without making your UNESCO status public and without causing embarrassment to UNESCO or adversely affecting its interests.

22. Your former university invites you to receive an honorary degree in recognition of activities and services that are not connected with your current duties at UNESCO. Can you accept it?

Yes, under certain conditions. Staff Regulation 1.6 stipulates that no staff member should accept any honour, decoration or other favour from an external source. However, under certain circumstances, the Director-General may authorize a staff member to accept such a distinction. A prior request for authorization should always be submitted to HRM.

23. You work part-time at UNESCO. You wish to become a teacher in your free time to increase your income. What should you do?

You must request authorization for external employment. Your work as a teacher must not interfere with your job at UNESCO.

24. You are on Special Leave without Pay and you are offered a job in your area of expertise. Can you accept this offer?

Although on Special Leave without Pay, your status as an international civil servant remains in force. Therefore, you must request authorization from HRM before accepting this offer.

Use of the resources of United Nations Organizations

25. The Organization provided you with a mobile phone. Can you use it for personal calls?

UNESCO provides a mobile telephone to specific staff members for their professional needs, with fixed thresholds. Therefore, personal calls made using the UNESCO mobile phone,

will be deducted from the staff member's salary, as set out in the Administrative Manual. In addition, it should be noted that although calls to landlines and mobiles in France are unlimited, calls to special numbers, international calls, MMS, data roaming, streaming, etc. are not. These can also result in a salary deduction.

26. Working in a Field Office, you have a car provided by the Organization with a dedicated driver. Can you use the services of the driver for your personal matters (e.g. to pick up your children from school or to go shopping)?

The car is provided to serve the interests of the Organization. You may not use your work car for your

personal affairs unless you are specifically authorized to do so or if you are in a situation where your security and the security of others is at risk.

27. You are currently working on your thesis during your spare time, in the evenings and on weekends. Once it is finished, you plan to print it at UNESCO (more than 500 pages), during your working hours. Are you allowed to do so?

You are allowed to use the Organization's resources for personal reasons in very limited quantities, and as long as it does not affect your work and that of others. Printing an entire thesis would be an inappropriate use of the Organization's resources.

Gifts, honours and remuneration from outside sources

28. During a recent mission or event, you were given a present by official counterparts. You felt it was not possible to refuse, but now you are uncertain as to whether you are allowed to keep the present. What should you do?

If you are not sure whether the value of the gift exceeds US\$250, which is the threshold amount for acceptable gifts, you should report it to the Director of HRM, who will decide whether you can keep the gift or whether it should be the property of the Organization.

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