Introduction and Purpose

The highest standards of ethical conduct are essential to the success of any great institution. It is the people who work at and serve the University of Alberta who are integral to its success. University staff have a long history of collegiality. They reach their full potential when there is a shared commitment to high ethical standards, mutual respect and civility. Academic freedom, open inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge, which form the foundation of an institution of higher learning, depend on this shared commitment.

This Statement applies to representatives of the University including executive officers, faculty, staff, post-doctoral fellows, professors emeriti, visiting academics, student employees, contractors when specified in the terms of the contract, members of the Board of Governors, Senate, Alumni Council and others acting on behalf of the University.

This Statement is intended to provide an overview of the standards and aspirations for ethical conduct that representatives of the University of Alberta community strive to uphold and to serve as a reference for University-wide policies and supporting documents that address ethical conduct.

This Statement is meant to be read in conjunction with the Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy and other policies referenced in the Statement. The Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy says, in part:

“All representatives of the University of Alberta shall maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct, in which their actions and behaviours uphold the principles of integrity, respect and accountability, supported by awareness of and compliance with relevant University policies and procedures, staff agreements, government legislation and relevant professional standards.”

–Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy, approved by the Board of Governors of the University November 2, 2007.

Communications

We understand that our communications must reflect high ethical standards, mutual respect and civility. We are accountable for our practices and statements involving communications media of any sort. This applies to any use of University information and communication technologies.

We recognize that the University’s computing and network resources are to be used primarily for activities related to the mission of the University.

See: Administrative Information Systems Security Policy (UAPPOL)
     Information Technology Security Policy (UAPPOL)
     Information Technology Use and Management Policy (UAPPOL)

Compliance with Association Agreements

We recognize that the University’s agreements with its Associations, including AASUA, NASA, GSA and PDF, constitute an essential component of the effective operation of the University and we comply with them in all instances.

Agreements with the staff Associations can be found at http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/Agreements/

1 This Statement does not apply to students except when they are in an employment relationship with the University. See the Code of Student Behaviour (GFC) for expectations of students of the University.
**Compliance with Professional Standards**

If our role as employees of the University of Alberta (e.g. health professionals, engineers, accountants) requires membership in a professional governing body, we will comply with the University’s professional standards as well as with the external professional organization’s codes and standards.

See: [Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy](#) (UAPPOL)

[Conflict Policy - Conflict of Interest and Commitment and Institutional Conflict](#) (UAPPOL)

**Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment**

We understand that our position as representatives of the University may put us into conflict situations, in which our own interests may diverge from the interests of the University. We realize that the best test for this is to ask whether an impartial observer might reasonably question whether our actions or decisions could be unduly influenced when we are in such a situation.

We know that it is not possible to eliminate all conflict situations. We therefore disclose such situations so they may be assessed and, if the conflict is determined to be permissible, managed in a way that is compliant with legislation and considers, protects and serves the interests, integrity and reputation of the University, and withstands the test of reasonable and independent scrutiny.

See: [Conflict Policy - Conflict of Interest and Commitment and Institutional Conflict](#) (UAPPOL)

**Acceptance of Gifts by Employees**

In our role as employees of the University of Alberta, we may not accept fees, gifts or other benefits that are connected directly or indirectly with the performance of our university responsibilities or our university position from any individual, organization or corporation (except the University – see Gift Expenditure Procedure), other than: the normal exchange of gifts between friends; tokens of appreciation; gifts exchanged as part of protocol; or the normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.

See: [Gift Expenditure Procedure](#) (UAPPOL)

**Discrimination and Harassment**

We strive to foster and protect a respectful environment for work, study, and living that supports the dignity and equity of all members of the University of Alberta. We are committed to a work, study, and living environment that is free of discrimination and harassment, and one which ensures that the University of Alberta will meet both its obligations under law and its ethical responsibilities as an institution of higher learning. These legal and ethical responsibilities include the duty to accommodate and the provision of opportunities to persons who require accommodation based on a protected ground.

See: [Discrimination, Harassment and Duty to Accommodate Policy](#)

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(Revised 19 February 2015)
Financial Accountability

In our handling of financial resources we are fully aware of our roles and accountabilities and follow all relevant institutional policies and procedures.

We are responsible for the effective and efficient use of resources and comply with applicable legislation and principles of financial reporting. We follow the agreed-upon conditions of our donors and sponsors.

When purchasing goods and services on behalf of the University, we comply with applicable legislation, other related University policies, and established University procedures. We operate in a timely, efficient and ethical manner and follow fair, open and transparent processes.

See:  Donation Acceptance Policy (UAPPOL)
  Banking Policy (UAPPOL)
  Contract Review and Signing Authority Policy (UAPPOL)
  Financial Management and Practices Policy (UAPPOL)
  Supply of Goods and Services Policy (UAPPOL)

Fraud and Irregularity

We do not engage in fraudulent activity, deliberately or unlawfully deceiving, misrepresenting or concealing facts in order to secure advantage, benefit or gain and/or cause loss to another.

We understand that fraud encompasses a range of actions, including misrepresentation of material facts, concealment of material facts, bribery, undeclared conflict of interest, theft of money or property, theft of intellectual property, theft of identity, breach of fiduciary duty, and statutory offences.

We understand that the University does not tolerate financial or procedural irregularity, including questionable accounting or auditing matters, or any activity that deliberately disregards University regulations or procedures.

This section is limited to activities related to, or funds or property owned by, or in the care of, the University of Alberta.

See:  Fraud and Irregularity Policy (UAPPOL)

Health, Safety and the Environment

We integrate health, safety and environmental considerations into all our practices when conducting our daily affairs on behalf of the University. We follow relevant acts, codes, guidelines, regulations and University policies and procedures. We understand that we are responsible and accountable for working in a manner that will not put ourselves, our coworkers, students, clients, visitors or the general public at risk of injury or illness.

As administrative heads and supervisors, we accept responsibility, as far as it is reasonably practicable, for making work areas safe and for ensuring that staff members are aware of the health and safety and environmental requirements of their work activities.

See:  Environment, Health and Safety Policy (UAPPOL)
Integrity, Respect and Accountability

We act with integrity, respect and accountability in all our dealings with each other, with students, visitors, government, associates, vendors and others within and outside the University community.

- Acting with integrity, we are committed to truth, fair dealing, honesty and sincerity.
- Acting with respect, we show consideration for more than one point of view and we treat others with due regard, courtesy and civility.
- Acting with accountability, we are prepared to give account of, and answer for, the manner in which we conduct ourselves as representatives of the University of Alberta.

See: Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy (UAPPOL)

Privacy of Information

We understand it is the policy of the University of Alberta to provide access to information that is in its custody or under its control. We realize this must be balanced against the protection of personal privacy of individuals and we are, therefore, compliant with the Alberta Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, other applicable provincial and federal privacy legislation, and University policies.

See: Student Records: Contents, Access, Use and Protection (GFC 109)
Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Policy (UAPPOL)
Records Management Policy (UAPPOL)
Student Concerns and Complaints Policy - Records and Privacy (UAPPOL)
Research Policy (UAPPOL)
Public Interest Disclosure Act

Research

When we conduct research as representatives of the University: we ensure that human research participants are treated safely and with respect; we ensure that teaching and research activities with animals are done in compliance with national animal care standards; we are dedicated to supporting and developing research and scholarship through prudent resource management; and we ensure our research is compatible with established University policies and procedures, and comply with the terms and conditions agreed upon with granting agencies and donors.

See: Research and Scholarship Integrity Policy (UAPPOL)
Human Research Ethics Policy (UAPPOL)
Animal Ethics Policy (UAPPOL)
Eligibility to Apply for and Hold Research Funding Policy (UAPPOL)
Research Policy (UAPPOL)
Conflict Policy -Conflict of Interest and Commitment and Institutional Conflict (UAPPOL)

(Revised 19 February 2015)
Violations and Reporting

When we violate the University’s ethical standards

We understand that failing to comply with the University’s stated standards regarding ethical conduct may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment and prosecution if appropriate.

See: Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy (UAPPOL)

Reporting Suspected Violations

We understand that we are encouraged to report violations of the University’s stated expectations regarding ethical conduct, and in certain cases, such as those involving fraud, we have an obligation to report to the appropriate University authority.

We realize that we should only report situations in which we have a reasonable belief that a violation has occurred, and we are aware that the University does not tolerate reports that are malicious, frivolous or vexatious. We are aware that the University has an obligation to provide a safe environment for us to make a report and will not tolerate any act of retaliation against us by anyone accused of a violation.

See: Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Policy (UAPPOL)
See: Ethical Conduct and Safe Disclosure Procedure (UAPPOL)

Agreements with the staff Associations can be found at http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/Agreements/
See: Office of Safe Disclosure and Human Rights