

The Ethics Code
London School of Economics and Political Science
Illustrative Draft for consultation Lent Term 2012

Preamble

The London School of Economics was established "to organize, promote and assist research and the advancement of science and learning in the various branches of knowledge dealt with by the institution...[and]...to provide opportunities and encouragement for pursuing a regular and liberal course of education of the highest grade and quality in the various branches of knowledge dealt with by the institution..."¹.

As a university, our goals are outstanding teaching; outstanding research; and good citizenship, both individual and collective, beginning in our classrooms and communities and extending on to the global stage.

To reach these goals, we are committed to a Statement of Principles, encompassing the Nolan Principles of Public Life, our Strategic Plan Values and Commitments, our Court of Governors' Fundamentals, and our obligations as a charitable entity.

We have devised an Ethics Framework to embed our Principles in actual practice. The Ethics Framework covers eight areas relating to teaching and learning, student recruitment and admissions, the student experience, staff, research, commercial relations, grants and donations, and leadership and governance. Staff should develop and maintain specific policies in these areas in line with this Code.

Together the Statement of Principles and the Ethics Framework comprise the Ethics Code of the London School of Economics and Political Science.

[Adopted by Academic Board 6 June 2012 and by Council 19 June 2012]

Director

Chairman of Court and Council

General Secretary of the Students' Union

Vice-Chairman of the Academic Board

¹ LSE Memorandum of Association, objects A(III) and A(IV).

Purpose and Use

The purpose of the Ethics Code is to provide guidance to members of the School community on best practice in the consideration of ethical issues arising from all areas of the School's work. It applies across all of the School's activities, including its commercial activities, participation in the University of London International Programmes, summer schools, and any collaborative activities entered into with other institutions.

The Ethics Code is intended to encompass legal and regulatory requirements affecting School activities. Where legal or regulatory requirements on School activities are less stringent than the conditions set out by this Code, the standards of the Code nevertheless apply.

It is not possible to devise a Code to cover every possible ethical dilemma which members of the School community may face in the course of their day-to-day activities. The Code should be used as a guide to the exercise of judgement, to highlight the areas in which ethical considerations should apply, and on the understanding that issues of particular difficulty may be referred to the Ethics Committee for advice. Specific guidance on research ethics and on the acceptance of grants of donation can be sought from the Research Ethics Committee and from the Ethics (Grants and Donations) Committee.

The first Ethics Code has been produced by the Ethics Code Consultation Group established by Council in January 2012, in consultation with stakeholders across the School community. Going forward, the new Ethics Committee is committed to regular and meaningful engagement with the community as it works continually to monitor and update the Code and its implementation. In this sense the Ethics Code is a living document.

The Council retains ultimate responsibility for the Ethics Code as a matter of fundamental importance to the educational character and mission of the School.

Statement of Principles

[Note: The Consultation Group envisages that the finished version of this section will be considerably briefer than the illustrative version here, containing just the core principles which emerge from the consultation].

In all that we do as a university...

...we will follow the Nolan Principles of Public Life:

- Selflessness: Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.
- Integrity: Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- Objectivity: In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- Accountability: Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.
- Openness: Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- Honesty: Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.
- Leadership: Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

...we will uphold our 'fundamentals':

- To protect theoretical and blue skies research while at the same time promoting the dynamic engagement of the social sciences with the wider concerns of society. The ability to combine the highest standards of intellectual rigour with the vigour of the School's contributions to the development of public, private and voluntary sector policy is seen as a defining characteristic of the LSE.
- To be a challenging, pioneering university, restlessly enquiring into the issues of society and the social sciences, thus acting as a beacon for international debate.
- To be a university in which conservatism and radicalism effectively co-exist to the benefit of teaching and research.

- To provide opportunities for the most able students to study the social sciences, whatever their origins, background and circumstances, within the constraints of the overall size and mix of the School's student body and its resources.
- To maintain a global, as opposed to a primarily regional, national or solely European outlook, in terms of academic standards, scope of research, the focus of policy engagement, and recruitment of the best students and staff.
- Actively to encourage research and teaching which pushes the boundaries between the social sciences and other disciplines. At the same time the School maintains strength in all the core social science subjects, and in the important interdisciplinary relationships between them².

...we will hold to our values and commitments:

- Integrity: We will develop new procedures to uphold the highest standards of ethics and conduct. **[Note: this is a commitment in the latest version of the Strategic Plan: obviously this document is part of the development process].**
- Intellectual Freedom: We will defend and promote the right of all staff, students and the wider LSE community to express their views freely in the pursuit, advancement and dissemination of knowledge in a spirit of mutual respect.
- Excellence in Education: We aim to cultivate graduates of distinctive quality with a breadth and depth of knowledge, the capacity for independent critical thinking and an awareness of global economic and political issues.
- Excellence in Research: We aim to be a world-leading centre of social science research, both in terms of fundamental academic outputs and associated public benefits.
- Engagement: We will promote interaction with the wider world so that the insights of the social sciences are disseminated as widely as possible for the improvement of society.
- Supporting the LSE community: We are committed to involving and encouraging our 102,000+ alumni in almost every country of the world and LSE Alumni Groups and Contact Networks in 74 countries to take an active part in the spread of LSE values and in the development of the School.
- Respect for the environment: We will manage the School's resources in ways that meet the needs of the present without compromising the options of future generations.
- Equality and diversity: We will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds. We will uphold a culture free of discrimination on the basis of race, disability, gender, age, religion, belief, or sexual orientation.

² LSE Court of Governors "Fundamentals", 2005.

- Participation: We will encourage the involvement and collaboration of staff, students, alumni and governors in the development of the School as an essential part of our organisational culture.
- Good governance: We will continue, through the Court of Governors and the Council, to aspire to the highest quality of governance, fully complying with the standards required of universities³.

...we will follow the letter and the spirit of the law.

- Under the terms of the Charities Act 2006 we are legally obliged to use our resources solely for the pursuit of our charitable objects. In addition, we are obliged to deploy our resources in the most efficient manner consistent with those objects, and to accept such additional resources (such as financial donations) which may become available provided that acceptance is consistent with those objects and with our wider legal obligations.
- As a UK public body we are bound by the Human Rights Act, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights.

³ LSE Strategic Plan 2011-16, p6.

Ethical Framework

The Ethical Framework explains how the School's Principles are translated into practice. It draws together but does not supersede the individual policies and procedures referred to throughout the text.

The Ethical Framework covers the following policy 'areas':

- [1. Teaching, Learning and Assessment](#)
- [2. Student Recruitment and Admissions](#)
- [3. The Student Experience](#)
- [4. Staff](#)
- [5. Research](#)
- [6. Commercial Relations](#)
- [7. Grants and Donations](#)
- [8. Leadership and Governance](#)

1. Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Relevant Policies

- [Student Charter](#)
- [Academic Programme Specifications](#)
- Codes of Good Practice for [Undergraduate](#), [Taught Masters](#), and [Research](#) Students
- [General Academic Regulations](#)
- [Guidance on Personal Relationships at Work](#)
- [Plagiarism Regulations](#)
- [Regulations on Assessment: Offences Other than Plagiarism](#)
- [Student Complaints Procedure](#)

1.1. Staff involved in teaching, supporting student learning, and the assessment of student work will ensure that high standards are set, monitored, and maintained, in order to uphold the School's commitment to outstanding education.

1.2. Teaching staff should be free to demonstrate creativity and independence in the development and implementation of courses and teaching methods, within the overall framework for the award of qualifications set by the School.

1.3. Staff involved in the assessment of student work will ensure it is fair, rigorous, and transparent in line with published guidelines.

1.4. To ensure transparency and fairness in the application of its standards, the School will maintain procedures for the handling of student complaints and appeals.

1.5. Students should be rewarded only for work genuinely their own. To this end, the School will maintain policies on plagiarism, and staff involved in assessing student work will ensure that students are made aware of these, and that they are enforced.

1.6. To guard against perceived or actual conflicts of interest in the processes of teaching, learning and assessment, the School will maintain a policy on consensual personal relationships between students and staff. Students and staff should be equally responsible for complying with this policy.

2. Student Recruitment and Admissions

[Note: This section is incomplete, even from an illustrative perspective. Further materials are being gathered on best practice in the Higher Education Sector].

Relevant Policies

- [Academic Programme Specifications](#)
- [General Academic Regulations](#)
- [Student Charter](#)

2.1. Staff involved in admissions decisions will follow a clear, fair, and transparent admissions process, in line with publicly available procedures and through the consideration of publicly declared criteria.

2.2. Staff involved in admissions decisions should consider criteria other than evidence of a student's past academic record solely in determining the student's motivation and capability to complete a programme of study, and only in addition to, never instead of, the achievement of core academic requirements.

2.3. Staff involved in admissions decisions will follow admissions procedures fairly, courteously, consistently and efficiently. They will keep information about applicants confidential.

2.4. Staff engaged in student recruitment activities will market courses in a manner which accurately reflects their educational content.

3. The Student Experience

Relevant Policies

- [Disciplinary Regulations for Students](#)
- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [General Academic Regulations](#)
- [Harassment Policy \(Students\)](#)
- [Rules Relating to Student Activities](#)
- [Single Equality Scheme](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Student Complaints Procedure](#)

3.1. The School will provide clear guidance to all students on what is expected of them and what they can expect of the School in the form of a Student Charter and associated regulations.

3.2. The School will be a place where students are respected as individuals, and a fair and equal environment in which our diversity is celebrated as a strength.

3.3. The School will work to ensure that no student feels unsafe on campus by maintaining and enforcing a policy to combat harassment and bullying.

3.4. The School will provide appropriate support mechanisms for students and should ensure information about how to access these is widely available. The School makes information about academic study and support services accessible to students via the LSE website, documentation, LSE for You and Moodle, our virtual learning environment.

3.5. A clear set of rules and regulations governs student conduct. The School will ensure its rules and regulations are applied fairly, evenly and transparently.

3.6. The School will ensure that students are kept fully engaged with the ongoing debate over ethical issues.

3.7. The School will work with the LSE Students Union to better support the student experience.

4. Staff

Relevant Policies

- [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Freedom of Information Guide](#)
- [Harassment Policy](#)
- [Single Equality Scheme](#)

4.1. The School will be a place where staff are respected as individuals, and a fair and equal workplace in which our diversity is celebrated as a strength.

4.2. The School will work to ensure that no member of staff feels unsafe on campus by maintaining and enforcing a policy to combat harassment and bullying.

4.3. The School will operate a fair and just rewards policy and should ensure that opportunities are made available for staff to develop their skills.

4.4. Confidentiality for individual staff, students, and governors, and for institutional relationships with outside bodies, will be respected and protected. The School will maintain policies and procedures to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

4.5. Staff must be pro-active in declaring possible conflicts between personal interests and School business at the earliest possible opportunity.

4.6. Staff must not, either individually or on behalf of the School, offer or accept bribes, or favours that might be construed as being intended as a bribe (e.g. money, gifts or hospitality disproportionate to the relevant circumstances).

4.7. All members of the School community should be mindful of the potential value of association with the LSE brand to outside parties. No association should be entered into with any outside party without a clear academic rationale and without consideration of any risk of complicity in unethical conduct.

5. Research

Relevant Policies

- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Guidance on the Assessment of Grants and Donations](#)
- [Research Ethics Policy](#)

5.1. The School will maintain the right of staff and students to research and publish research findings without let or hindrance (subject to legal restrictions on, for example, hate speech and defamation). In some extraordinary circumstances, the School may agree publishing restrictions with an individual, for example a requirement to refrain from non peer-reviewed publication for an agreed period of time.

5.2. The School will maintain a discrete Research Ethics Policy and Research Ethics Committee to ensure the ethical conduct of research.

5.3. Staff must disclose potential conflicts of interest in the conduct of research to the relevant Head of Department or Research Centre Director. Department Heads or Centre Directors should report potential conflicts to the Pro-Director (Research and External Relations).

5.4. Staff must take care to ensure the independence of academic research activities from the perceived or actual undue influence of external donors or funding agencies.

5.5. Staff must be aware of the School's obligation to operate transparent procurement procedures in developing collaborative research agreements and awarding paid research contracts.

6. Commercial Relations

Relevant Policies

- [Environmental Policy](#)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Guidance on the Assessment of Grants and Donations](#)
- [Socially Responsible \(Ethical\) Investment Statement](#)

6.1. This Code applies to all LSE commercial activities and subsidiaries.

6.2. Staff and governors must declare private and commercial interests which may lead to perceived or actual conflicts of interest in the course of their duties at the School. The School should maintain a register of interests for the purposes of monitoring potential conflicts, and should ensure a proper procedure exists for such potential conflicts to be subject to regular review.

6.3. It may be necessary from time to time to employ confidentiality agreements in the course of the School's business activities, provided informed consent is given by all involved. Such occasions should be minimised and the presumption should be one of openness and transparency.

6.4. The School will maintain procurement policies and procedures designed to deliver value for money and demonstrate socially and environmentally responsible behaviour.

6.5. The School should work to minimise its negative environmental impact and will to this end maintain and apply an Environmental Policy.

6.6. The School will maintain a socially responsible investment policy. This policy should strike a balance between the School's obligation as a charity to make the most efficient use of its resources, and its obligation to do so without compromising its core values. The application of this policy should be transparent and accountable to the School community.

6.7. The School should manage its estate in a manner consistent with this Code.

6.8. The School shall maintain honest, fair and transparent dealings with its contractors, suppliers, and other partners.

7. Grants and Donations

Relevant Policies

- [CASE Europe: Ethical Principles Behind the Acceptance of Gifts](#) (external)
- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [Guidance on the Assessment of Grants and Donations](#)

7.1. Research funding and philanthropic gifts received by the School must be subject to ethical review by the Director of Research Division or the Director of ODAR in accordance with the School's policy on the ethical review of inbound funds, and under the auspices of the Ethics (Grants and Donations) Committee.

7.2. Grants and donations from sources that conflict with the School's core values or legal obligations will not be accepted.

7.3. To this end, members of the LSE community must not ask for a grant or donation, or begin negotiations with the intention of asking for a grant or donation, without first gaining approval from the Director of Research Division or the Director of ODAR.

7.4. The School will apply the 10 Case Europe principles behind the acceptance of gifts.

[Note: The interim procedure for the review of grants and donations is based on the CASE Europe principles. Once the Ethics Code is finalised, a permanent grants and donations procedure will be implemented].

8. Leadership and Governance

Relevant Policies

- [Financial Regulations](#)
- [CUC Governance Code of Practice and General Principles](#) (external)

8.1. The School will maintain and apply financial controls appropriate to the its status as a recipient of public funding and as a charity.

8.2. The School will communicate honestly with all interested stakeholders. Staff should take advice from the External Relations Division when engaging in activities that might be regarded as representing the School's institutional policies, achievements, and prospects.

8.3. The School may, from time to time, take institutional positions on matters of public policy which directly affect the operation of its day-to-day activities. It must not, under the provisions of the Charities Acts, take institutional political positions which do not directly relate to its day-to-day activities.

8.4. The School must take care to preserve its integrity and to protect its institutional reputation when engaging with potential academic and business partners, contractors, and suppliers, which do not meet the ethical standards set down in this Code. In particular, the School should not enter into financial relationships with states, individuals, or organisations known to be engaged in illegal activity or to fail to uphold basic human rights, and should take care that its own values are not compromised in the course of any non-financial engagement.

8.5. There should be a discrete entry in the strategic risk register covering reputational risks, and a system in place for monitoring the School's links with states, organisations, and individuals of potential concern.

8.6. The School should collaborate and compete with other higher education institutions in a fair, honest, and appropriate manner.