

Policy 6000: Standards of Employee Conduct and Conflict of Interest

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and standards of conduct required of all employees at Selkirk College.

This policy fulfills the following purposes:

1. To outline employee responsibilities toward students and colleagues.
2. To outline expectations of professional conduct and communication in the workplace.
3. To define conflict of interest.
4. To distinguish between gifts and remuneration that may be accepted and those whose acceptance would lead to conflict of interest.
5. To remind employees of their obligation toward appropriate confidentiality.
6. To prohibit association of private speech with College-sanctioned positions.
7. To describe remedies pursuant to this policy.

B. SCOPE/ LIMITS

This policy applies to all Selkirk College employees, subject to rights and obligations specified in current collective agreements or terms and conditions of employment. The requirement to comply with these standards is a condition of employment.

C. PRINCIPLES

All employees have a responsibility to be respectful and dedicated to Selkirk College and are accountable for their actions in this regard. Employees must conduct themselves in such a way as to instill public confidence and trust in the College, and shall not intentionally bring the College's reputation into disrepute.

All employees are expected to align their work with students and each other with the values of the College: respect, quality, inclusivity, curiosity, service, collaboration, and accountability. A link to the values of the College can be located at the end of this policy.

D. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

"Conflict of interest" is defined as allowing another interest, especially a pecuniary interest, to interfere with responsibilities owed to the College. This includes self-interest, any interests of a close friend, extended family member or business associate, corporation, partnership, or a person owed an obligation.

1. Compromising Situations
 - a) Employees should not place themselves in situations where they are obligated or obliged to any person or organization who might benefit from, or seek to gain, special consideration or favour. The honesty and impartiality of employees must be above suspicion.
 - b) Employees have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a way that does not compromise or undermine the ability of the College to accomplish its mandate nor undermine the public's confidence in the employee's ability to fulfill their responsibilities properly.

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- c) A supervisor will require employees working under supervision to act in accordance with this Code, and will report any known violation.
2. Conflict between Job Responsibilities and Employees' Private Affairs.
 - a) Employees are expected to keep their roles as private citizens separate and distinct from their responsibilities as Selkirk College employees and to avoid conflict-of-interest situations.
 - b) Employees shall arrange their private affairs in a manner that will prevent any conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest from arising.
 - c) Employees shall not participate in the decision making where there may be a conflict of interest unless it is approved by the supervisor in charge. They shall not give preferential treatment to relatives, or friends, or to any organization in which they or their relatives have an interest, financial or otherwise.
 - d) Employees shall exercise care in the management of their private affairs so as not to benefit, or be perceived by the public to benefit, from the use of information acquired solely by reason of their appointment or employment.
 - e) Any College transaction, which involves decisions over which employees have influence, such as appointments, promotions, investments, borrowings, purchases, sales, contracts, grants and regulatory or discretionary approval should be declared.
 - f) Full and voluntary disclosure enables employees at Selkirk College to review and resolve unclear situations and provides an opportunity to dispose of the conflicting interest prior to any difficulties arising.
 - g) Use of College resources for personal use is unacceptable. However, occasional use may be permitted to a specific activity that minimizes disruption of College business while attending to necessary personal affairs. Incidental use is defined as any personal use of College-owned resources that:
 - i. does not cause any additional expense to the College;
 - ii. is infrequent and brief;
 - iii. does not have a negative impact on overall employee productivity;
 - iv. does not interfere with the normal operations of an employee's department;
 - v. does not compromise the College in any way; and
 - vi. does not contravene any elements of this policy.

E. ACCEPTANCE OF GIFTS AND OTHER COMPLIMENTARY ITEMS

An employee shall not accept a personal gift, prize or benefit that arises out of their employment with the College, other than:

1. The exchange of hospitality between persons doing business together.
2. The normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions.
3. The normal exchange of gifts between friends.
4. Tokens exchanged as part of protocol, unless the protocol gift has value (over \$250), in which case it is to be relinquished to the College.
5. Where the employee has purchased a ticket or was otherwise eligible to receive a prize.

All materials provided to staff that support teaching or other activities (e.g. textbooks, software) at the College remains the College's property and must only be used for College-related activities and will be returned to the College upon exit.

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F. OUTSIDE REMUNERATION

Employees may engage in employment with another employer, carry on a business, or receive non-College funds for personal activities, provided that:

1. It does not interfere with the performance of their duties as public service employees.
2. It does not bring the College into disrepute.
3. It does not represent a conflict of interest as stated in these policies.
4. It does not have an advantage derived from their employment as College employees.
5. It is not performed in such a way as to appear to be an official act or to represent College opinion or policy.
6. It does not involve the use of College premises, services, equipment, information or supplies, except as provided in this policy.
7. It does not compromise workload plans and service delivery associated with performance of duties.

Employees seeking outside employment should also consult their respective collective agreements or terms of agreement within their employee group and have a discussion with their supervisor and Director, Human Resources to ensure there is no conflict of interest.

G. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT, COMMUNICATION and WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS

1. It is expected that employees will conduct themselves and communicate in the workplace with a standard of professionalism appropriate to their role at the college.
2. Relationships with Students:
 - a) In all dealings with students, employees shall ensure that their own behaviour is consistent with all aspects of this policy.
 - b) Employees in positions that have influence, input or decision-making power over a student's marks, academic interests or other matters shall not become involved in a business or personal relationship with a student for the duration of the professional relationship or evaluative role.
 - c) In situations where a relationship with a student existed prior to the existence of an educational relationship the student is expected to disclose the relationship that falls under these circumstances to the Registrar and the employee is required to disclose the relationship to the Director Human Resources.

3. Relationships with Co-workers

Employees are expected to treat others with dignity and respect in all their communications and behaviours. They are expected to contribute to a positive working environment.

4. Reporting Relationships

Employees who would normally be supervised by a spouse or family member will have an alternate supervisor assigned. The alternate supervisor will be responsible for the evaluation and overall supervision of the employee. Employees are expected to disclose relationship with another College employee that falls under these under these circumstances to the Human Resources Director.

5. Acceptable conduct regarding employees alcohol and drug use

Employees are permitted to consume alcohol on College property that is in compliance with the British Columbia Liquor Control and Licensing Act. Employees will adhere to the terms and conditions of Policy 4310: Serving and Consumption of Alcohol. No cannabis or products containing the active ingredient tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) may be consumed on Selkirk College property.

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H. CONFIDENTIALITY

1. As a public institution, Selkirk College is subject to the Freedom of Information/Protection of Privacy Act of BC. Employees are not to give out information, including post-employment, received through their position or office that is not available to the general public, unless prior authorization is given, as per College Policy 6550: Protection of Privacy.
2. Authorization should be requested from the Vice President, College Services or his/her designate (for employee information) or the Registrar/VP Student Advancement or his/her designate (for student information).
3. The proper handling and protection of confidential information is applicable both within and outside the College and continues to apply after the employee's employment with the College ends.
4. Employees shall notify their immediate workplace supervisor if they have reason to believe that confidential information has been lost, stolen, issued or improperly disclosed. If for any reason, the employee is not comfortable disclosing their concern to their supervisor, then such disclosure shall be made to the Director, Human Resources or the President.

I. POLITICAL ACTIVITY

1. Selkirk College employees are free to participate in political activities including belonging to a political party, supporting a candidate for elected office and actively seeking elected office. Employees' political activities, however, must be clearly separated from activities related to their employment. If engaging in political activities, employees must be able to retain the perception of impartiality in relation to their duties and responsibilities.
2. Employees must not engage in political activities during working hours or use College facilities, equipment, or resources in support of these activities. The posting of material on College property that may reasonably be considered as supporting a specific political party or candidate is strictly prohibited. Nothing in this paragraph is intended to preclude employees from engaging in private, informal discussions regarding political issues.

J. LEGAL PROCEEDINGS

1. Employees must not sign affidavits relating to facts that have come to their knowledge in the course of their duties for use in court proceedings, unless the affidavit has been prepared by a lawyer acting for Selkirk College. The requirement does not apply in circumstances where the employee, or their accredited bargaining agent, is a party to the legal proceeding in question.
2. Employees are obliged to cooperate with lawyers defending Selkirk College's interest during legal proceedings. This requirement does not apply in circumstances where the employee, or their accredited or bargaining agent, is a party to the legal proceeding in question.
3. Written opinions prepared on behalf of Selkirk College by legal counsel are subject to solicitor/client privilege and are therefore confidential. Employees who are permitted to review legal opinions prepared for the College shall not disclose these opinions to any other person without the prior written consent of the College.

K PUBLIC COMMENT, UNAUTHORIZED REPRESENTATION or ASSOCIATION

1. Employees have the right to free speech and free association.
2. The College's name must not be associated with an expression of private opinion. In a public or private presentation or protest, unless authorized to do so, employees are not to leave the impression that they are speaking on behalf of the College, or that their position at the College lends validity to their private opinions.
3. In a hearing, forum, debate or protest, employees are to make a disclaimer between their opinions and the position of the College.

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4. Departments, school and programs of the College are to request prior approval from the President before entering an association with a special interest group.
5. Employees are not to use College letterhead or forms for private use.

L. DISCLOSURE AND REPORTING

1. If an employee becomes involved in a conflict-of-interest situation, or a situation which could be perceived as a conflict of interest, the employee must discuss the matter with his/her supervisor as soon as possible. If, for any reason, the employee is not comfortable disclosing their concern to their supervisor, then such disclosure shall be made to the Director, Human Resources or the President.
2. Employees shall not knowingly be associated with information that is false or misleading, whether by statement or omission.
3. Employees who have reason to believe that there exists an alleged contravention of the law, a waste of public funds or assets, or a danger to public safety, should bring the matter to the attention of the Vice President, College Services/CFO, either directly or through normal supervisory channels. Where an allegation involves the President, the matter should be brought directly or through normal supervisory channels to the Board of Governors. Employees will not be subject to discipline or reprisal for bringing forward, in good faith, allegations of wrongdoing in accordance with this policy directive.

M RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Employees have a responsibility to become familiar with and abide by the College's policies and procedures and can discuss any questions or concerns they may have with the policy or the application of the policy with their supervisor, or Human Resources.
2. The College has a responsibility to ensure that employees are advised of the required standards of conduct and understand the consequences of non-compliance.
3. Supervisors and managers have a responsibility to assist staff in the resolution of conflict of interest. They must also ensure that confidential information obtained as a result of fulfilling their duties under this policy is handled with caution and discretion, and in accordance with applicable legislation.

N REMEDIES AND DISCIPLINE

1. Failure to comply with the terms of this policy may result in disciplinary action that could progress from a verbal warning, written warning, verbal or written reprimand, suspension of privileges, suspension, up to termination. Notwithstanding the above, the President or designate may order any disciplinary action deemed just and appropriate under the circumstances. Where the violation is determined to be of a criminal nature, the matter may also be referred to appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Other relevant policies

[SELKIRK COLLEGE VALUES](#)

[4310: Serving and Consumption of Alcohol](#)

[6030: Sexual Violence Prevention and Response](#)

[6010: Human Rights, Harassment & Discrimination](#)

[6550: Protection of Privacy](#)

[6560: Employment of Relatives](#)

[6570: Exit Interviews](#)

[9200: Acquisition of Goods and Services](#)

[6005: Responsible Use of College Email](#)

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Key Words: conflict of interest; outside remuneration; political activities; workplace relationships; relationship with students; public comments; gift acceptance; responsibility to disclose

Responsibility, Recommendation and Approval Dates

Executive Responsibility: President

Administrative Responsibility: Director of Human Resources

Recommended by Policy Review Committee: 2019-02-20

Recommended/Approved by Education Council: n/a

Approved by President: 2019-02-20

Linkage to Board Policy: EL 50, 90, & 130; E 10, 20, & 30; BPR 10 & 20