



# ECU Student Guild

## Code of Conduct

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## 1 FORWARD

In order to achieve core objectives and exercise authority in a transparent and accountable way, the Guild has three clear divisions of operation:

1. Student Representation
2. Operational Advocacy and Support
3. Operational Administration

The Senate, elected annually by ECU students, is ultimately responsible for ensuring the responsible management of all areas of the Guild, this comes with extensive responsibilities. In the event of organisational failure, the Senate may be answerable to its members, University Council, State Parliament (inclusive of the Corruption and Crime Commission); and the Department of Commerce.

The Senate is primarily responsible for the engagement of, and representation of, its members.

Additionally, it is accountable for determining and overseeing the strategic direction of the organisation; compliance with regulations governing the organisation; ensuring operational integrity; defining organisational culture and ethics and ensuring service and support delivery are in-line with the organization's core values.

Salaried employees, under the management of the CEO, ensure operational outcomes can be achieved in line with strategic goals set by the Senate, through assigned authority by using sound business judgement to make decisions on behalf of the Senate in accordance with approved Guild Policy, thereby preserving the principle of "Student Control of Student Affairs".

Effective operational management is fundamental to the delivery of member support services; as well as, the ongoing sustainability and viability of the Guild by ensuring best practices are followed in maintaining relevance to our membership and the broader University community.

The Code of Conduct is integral in assisting and guiding elected Officers and Employees in determining appropriate and acceptable ethical standards of behavior to apply in various circumstances and needs to be referenced when negotiating decisions by setting limits designed to preserve the professional integrity and transparency of the ECU Student Guild.

The Code of Conduct is the measure by which elected Officers and Employees can perform their relevant duties with propriety and respect for others at all times. The standards set are high and compliance is expected at all times.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### WHY DO WE NEED A CODE OF CONDUCT?

A university's student population is as diverse as the range of individual interests of those students, resulting in service delivery expectations varying from one student to another; the Guild is no different. The Code of Conduct is integral to the professional and consistent manner in which those service needs are met.

It defines the benchmark as to how elected Officers and Employees should conduct themselves when dealing with members. It also serves as the foundation of how we fairly and equitably develop relationships with all other stakeholders, both internally and externally, by upholding the ethos that all of our transactions are for the gain of our collective membership and not individual reward.

The Code of Conduct complements common law and statutory rights; obligations and requirements prescribed in relevant legislation, and Guild policies and procedures.

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It is designed to provide guidance by clarifying how situations, where the ethical aspects of public duty may not always be clear, should be managed by the individual.

## **WHO DOES IT APPLY TO?**

The Code of Conduct is relevant to all elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, and any contractors or consultants engaged to provide member services on behalf of the Guild.

## **WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ELECTED OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES?**

Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild serve members and the wider ECU community; therefore, it is essential our thought processes and actions are in the best interests of those stakeholders. Consistent standards of behavior must be applied to meet those expectations.

Elected Officers and Employees are bound by the principles of ethical behavior stated in the Code of Conduct; as well as, standards defined in the Guild's Rules and Regulations, and policies and procedures.

## **3 PERSONAL BEHAVIOUR**

Appropriate behaviour is conduct that is courteous, polite, professional and respectful when communicating with other elected Officers, Employees, members and other Guild stakeholders at all times.

As such, we commit to understand our roles and duties by continually staying informed about the role and purpose of the Guild and its statutory and regulatory governance obligations and all other relevant issues and activities affecting it.

This commitment is exercised by placing members' interests first, ahead of our own personal and pecuniary interests, and to act ethically with integrity and in good faith, and not bring the Guild into disrepute by:

1. Discharging our duties in the best interests of the Guild and its members;
2. Making decisions fairly, impartially and promptly in consideration of all relevant information, including but not limited to, legislation, rules and regulations, and policies and procedures;
3. Being accountable and transparent in all dealings;
4. Carrying out our roles with due care and diligence, as efficiently and effectively as possible;
5. Not harassing, bullying or discriminating against elected Officers, Employees, members and other stakeholders;
6. Maintaining and contributing to a harmonious, safe and productive work environment;
7. Understanding the consequences of misconduct and actions that may be taken if we do not comply with the Code of Conduct and other associated regulatory documents;
8. Attending all required meetings or, if we cannot attend, submitting an apology as per the relevant rules and, ensure we are prepared by reading and considering papers circulated with meeting agendas;

9. Actively participate in meetings and, where necessary, express our concerns if we believe decisions or actions may be contrary to the Guild's Code of Conduct and other regulatory documents; and
10. Work collaboratively and cooperatively with fellow elected Officers and Employees to achieve common goals.

## 4 COMMUNICATION AND OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION

### CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

11. Maintain confidentiality and not divulge information deemed confidential or sensitive, other than as required by law or where proper authorisation is given. If we are unsure we will seek direction from the President and CEO;
12. Not make improper use of the information obtained in the course of carrying out our duties or use this information for direct or indirect personal or commercial gain, or to do harm to other people, or the Guild;
13. Respect confidential information and observe any restrictions defined by rules and policies;
14. Respect the privacy of individuals and the security of personal information;
15. Protect intellectual property; and
16. Raise concerns of improper communications or use of information with the President and CEO.

### COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC COMMENT

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

17. Adhere to rules and regulations, policies and other directives regarding communication to our members, the University and media;
18. Only make public comment on behalf of the Guild to the media or outside organisations, when authorised to do so by the President and/or Senate; and
19. Adhere to relevant policy and procedures in regards to the use of social media.

## 5 FRAUDULENT OR CORRUPT BEHAVIOUR

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

20. Not engage in any fraudulent or corrupt behaviour;
21. Report any information about any actual or potentially fraudulent, corrupt or illegal activities to the President and CEO;
22. Report any breaches of the Code of Conduct to the President and CEO; and
23. Abide by the Guild's risk management policy and other accountability requirements defined in policy.

## 6 USE OF GUILD RESOURCES

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

24. Use funds and equipment effectively and economically, and only for Guild business;

25. Not engage in activities which may impact on your ability to execute your duties or which could conflict with the interests of the Guild;
26. Comply with applicable legislation, rules and regulations, policies and procedures when using Guild resources;
27. Not use Guild resources for personal financial gain or work unrelated to the Guild;
28. Generate and save all Guild related documents on Guild provided IT infrastructure;
29. Immediately report any damage to, or loss of, property or equipment to the CEO; and
30. Ensure that any requests by an external party, excluding clubs and societies, to use Guild facilities is referred to the Senate and CEO for prior approval.

#### **INCURRING EXPENDITURE**

As Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

31. Not approve our own expenditure for travel claims, credit card payments, telecommunications subsidies or similar; these are to be approved in accordance with the Guilds Schedule of Delegation & Authority;
32. Only expend funds within the parameters of the pre-approved budget; and
33. Follow all regulation, rules and policy around the allocation of unbudgeted funds.

#### **CORPORATE CREDIT CARDS**

The distribution of corporate credit cards is determined by the Financial Controller in consultation with the Senate and CEO.

As Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

34. Only use the credit card for approved and official purposes
35. Not use the credit card:
  - a) To withdraw cash
  - b) For private purchases
  - c) When there is an option to open a credit account or have the ability to do an electronic funds transfer

## **7 RECORD KEEPING AND USE OF INFORMATION**

The Guild is bound by the State Records Act 2000; consequently, Elected Officers and Employees are responsible for creating and managing records appropriately.

#### **DOCUMENTING DECISIONS**

As Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild we will:

36. Follow procedures to accurately document decisions, events and transactions;
37. Prepare and retain minutes for all official meetings, including the recording of any objection or dissent; and
38. Be familiar with, and stay informed on the processes detailed in the Guild's Record Keeping Plan.

#### **SECURITY OF INFORMATION**

As Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

39. Ensure recorded information under our control, in both soft and hardcopy, is kept in a secure environment;

40. Be diligent in the handling of sensitive, in confidence documents; not leaving them in view of others;
41. Not discuss confidential Guild business in public places where there is a likelihood of being overheard;
42. Dispose of duplicate confidential information in line with the Guild procedures, and
43. Archive records in line with the Guild's archiving procedures.

#### **PRIVACY COMPLIANCE**

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

44. Be conversant with and abide by the 13 privacy principles detailed in the Privacy Act;
45. Be conversant with and abide by the Guild's Privacy Compliance procedures;
46. Ensure the personal information held is accurate, complete, up to date and not misleading; and
47. Avoid unsubstantiated personal opinions in official documents.

#### **AMENDMENT OR FALSIFICATION OF CURRENT RECORDS**

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will not:

48. Falsify, destroy, alter or damage any record; and
49. Back-date information or remove files from any medium they are held in.

#### **PUBLICALLY ACCESSIBLE MINUTES, RESOLUTIONS, DECISIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS**

As elected Officers and Employees of the Guild, we will:

50. Make the meeting minutes of Senate, Secretariat and all other Guild Bodies publically accessible through the Guild's website;
51. Make the Policy Manual publically accessible; and
52. When a general or financial member comes into the Guild to request access to any of the minutes from any of the Guild Bodies, the responsible Executive Officer will provide them and answer any questions that may arise.

## **8 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND GIFTS AND BENEFITS**

Elected Officers and Employees of the Guild have an obligation to perform their official duties in the interest of members and not to use their position for personal gain or to the detriment of others. This includes identifying, declaring and appropriately managing conflicts of interest.

Conflicts of interest arise where there is conflict between the performance of public duties and personal interests. Conflicts may involve personal, financial or political interests and may be actual, perceived or potential. It is not wrong to have a conflict of interest, as it is unavoidable – but what is important is that it is managed correctly.

It is vital that an individual considers the public perception of a conflict of interest, regardless of whether it actually exists. A poorly managed perceived conflict of interest can be just as damaging to reputation as a poorly managed actual conflict of interest. When there is any doubt about an actual or perceived conflict of interest, it must be declared so the relevant Guild Body will assess its validity and magnitude, and then determine whether the conflicted person can continue in the decision making process or not as defined in the Constitution.

#### **CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

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As elected Members and Employees of the Guild, we will:

53. Keep our private commercial or organisational affiliations separate from our official Guild duties;
54. Openly declare to the Chairperson, President or CEO any matters relating to a private interest that may conflict, or be perceived to conflict, with our Guild duties;
55. Follow the Guild's procedures in relation managing the conflict of interest, which may involve removing ourselves from the discussion and decision making process on the matter; and
56. Ensure that the declaration as well as the management of the conflict is documented so it is transparent and capable of review.

## **GIFTS AND BENEFITS**

As part of the Guild's normal business there will be times when gifts and benefits may be offered to elected Officers and Employees by members and by third parties (including those within the University). The Guild recognises that this is accepted business practice and can enhance relationships in some instances.

As elected Members and Employees of the Guild, we will:

57. Carefully consider any offers of gifts, benefits or hospitality and ensure any decision to accept is done openly, placed on the record and all conflicts of interest are considered.
58. Not accept gifts, benefits or hospitality:
  - a) Likely to place the Guild under an actual or perceived financial or moral obligation to other organisations or individuals;
  - b) If they could reasonably be seen by the public, knowing the full facts, as intended or likely to cause us to act in particular way or deviate from our Guild duties;
59. Maintain a register of gifts accepted, and ensure these are of token value only; and
60. Not use our public position for personal profit or gain or to cause detriment to others.

## 9 CODE OF CONDUCT DECLARATION

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name)

declare that I am either an elected Officer, Employee, consultant or contractor of the ECU Student Guild. I acknowledge that I have read the Code of Conduct and understand and agree to be bound by it.

Signature:

Position:

Date: