



## **NWU ETHICS POLICY**

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<b>Policy Owner</b>	Registrar
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## NWU ETHICS POLICY

### Preamble

Against the background of the vision to discover new frontiers and opportunities that benefit society, advancing our relevance and impact, the council of the North-West University (“NWU”, “university”) has adopted this policy on 13 July 2024.

### 1 Interpretation and application

This policy must be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with the –

- 1.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- 1.2 Higher Education Act, 101 of 1997;
- 1.3 King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2016;
- 1.4 Statute of the North-West University;
- 1.5 NWU 2024 and beyond strategy;
- 1.6 NWU value statement;
- 1.7 NWU Code of Ethics; and
- 1.8 NWU policies and rules aimed at instilling an ethical culture, including the –
  - 1.8.1 NWU Policy and Rules on Academic Integrity;
  - 1.8.2 NWU Policy on the Prevention of Bribery, Corruption and Fraud and on Whistleblowing;
  - 1.8.3 NWU Policy and Rules on Conflict of Interest, and the Declaration of Interests and of Gifts;
  - 1.8.4 NWU Policy on Environmental Sustainability;
  - 1.8.5 NWU Policy on Community Engagement;
  - 1.8.6 NWU brand policy;
  - 1.8.7 NWU Alumni Relations Policy; and
  - 1.8.8 NWU Stakeholder Engagement Framework.

### 2 Definitions

In this policy and for the purposes of promoting an ethical culture at the NWU –

“**ethics**” in the organisational context refers to ethical values applied to decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the university, its stakeholders and the broader society<sup>1</sup>;

“**stakeholders**” refers to relevant groups of individuals who could reasonably be expected to be significantly affected by the university’s activities, outputs or outcomes, or whose actions could reasonably be expected to affect the ability of the university to create value over short-, medium- and long term<sup>2</sup>;

“**university members**” means a non-exhaustive list that includes permanent, temporary and fixed-term employees, fellows, students, council and council committee members, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, sponsors, agents of any other person associated with the University and any of its related entities.

### 3 Policy Statement

It is the policy of the NWU to be a responsible corporate social citizen that is morally and ethically bound to the principle of public accountability in the establishment of an ethical culture, and therefore the university –

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<sup>1</sup> From King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> From King IV Report on Corporate Governance for South Africa, 2016.

- 3.1 is committed to providing a governance framework to enable the highest standards of integrity (scientific, scholarly and professional) in service of the role that the NWU must fulfil as socially responsible corporate citizen;
- 3.2 provides for a framework in which the NWU's expectations on ethical standards are set out in terms of the following matters:
  - 3.2.1 staff and student conduct;
  - 3.2.2 the fair treatment of staff and students with respect and care;
  - 3.2.3 sustainability; and
  - 3.2.4 the links with the local and regional communities in which NWU campuses are situated;
- 3.3 puts measures in place to account for the ethical, social and environmental issues that could arise from activities of the NWU;
- 3.4 ensures that the suite of policies aimed at achieving the above-mentioned objectives are sufficient and up to date; and
- 3.5 establishes a management environment in which the pursuit of an ethical culture is enabled and sustained.

## **4 Scope of the policy**

To ensure the pursuit of the establishment of an encompassing organisational culture where ethical values are ensured to be consistently applied in decision-making, conduct and the relationship between the university, its stakeholders and the broader society, this policy covers the following domains:

- 4.1 Linking possible ethical issues with and ensuring coverage thereof in –
  - 4.1.1 the implementation of relevant pieces of legislation or directives from statutory bodies; and
  - 4.1.2 the drafting and implementation of NWU strategy, policies, rules, guidelines and plans.
- 4.2 The implementation, monitoring of and recording of the following codes of conduct:
  - 4.2.1 the approved set of values as contained in the NWU 2024 and beyond strategy;
  - 4.2.2 the NWU Code of Ethics; and
  - 4.2.3 relevant codes of conduct developed to guide the relationship between the NWU and its stakeholders.
- 4.3 Assurance that displays NWU's commitment to create a university environment that –
  - 4.3.1 is safe, healthy and that promotes the wellbeing of the members of the university;
  - 4.3.2 is carbon responsible;
  - 4.3.3 when entering into partnerships or accepting sponsorships and donorships, these emanate from responsible employment practices, sustainable environmental practices and proper governance structures; and
  - 4.3.4 when services and products are acquired, these adhere to the accepted principles and practices of fairtrade.

## **5 Roles, responsibilities and accountability**

### **5.1 Council and the Social and Ethics Committee of Council (SEC)**

- 5.1.1 The NWU Council takes overall responsibility for the establishment of an appropriate ethical culture at the university and for governing and monitoring of the effectiveness and efficiency of measures aimed at establishing an ethical culture at the NWU.
- 5.1.2 In governing these matters, the council delegates authority, sets limits of acceptable behaviour through relevant codes of conduct, and adoption of policies.
- 5.1.3 In accordance to its mandate, the SEC receives reports from the University Management Committee and other structures on the status and progress of the inculcation of an ethical culture and related matters at the NWU.

5.1.4 The SEC reports these matters on a regular basis to the NWU Council.

## 5.2 University Management Committee

5.2.1 The UMC is responsible for instilling a management environment which promotes overt “ethical culture formation” at the NWU, implementing this policy, and to provide assurance to the Council on the effectiveness and efficiency of these management actions.

5.2.2 In relation to the above, the UMC must –

5.2.2.1 promote a culture of ethical, professional, transparent, and honest management in decision-making and business processes;

5.2.2.2 make rules and establish procedures and standards to ensure compliance with the NWU policies and rules aimed at giving effect to the purpose and scope of this policy;

5.2.2.3 create awareness of the NWU's obligation to instil an organisational culture that pursues ethical conduct in all its endeavours; and

5.2.2.4 ensure sufficient implementation, monitoring of and regular reporting on the management of ethics at the NWU.

## 5.3 Vice-Chancellor and UMC portfolios

The role and scope of the Vice-Chancellor and relevant portfolios within UMC on ensuring that the full scope of the policy is implemented, are defined as follows –

5.3.1	Interdependencies of the NWU with its environment – international, national, provincial, local	Office of the Vice-Chancellor Office of the DVC teaching and Learning (TL) Office of the DVC research and innovation (R&I) Office of the DVC community engagement (CE) Offices of Campus DVCs
5.3.2	Environmental management and the impact on the university society	Office of the DVC CE Office of ExDir Finance and Facilities (F&F)
5.3.3	Value creation for stakeholder communities	Office of ExDir Corporate Relations and Marketing (CRM) Offices of DVCs TL and R&I Office of ExDir People and Culture (P&C) Office of ExDir Student Life (SL) Office of ExDir F&F Offices of Campus DVCs
5.3.4	Ensuring role fulfilment of the NWU as responsible corporate citizen, such as the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring sustainable and integrated development of the NWU through a dynamic model relating to the economy, society and the natural environment;</li> <li>• The TL strategy in service of national goals, student enrolments in realisation of the goal in service of the NDP;</li> <li>• Alignment of the Annual Performance Plan with strategic goals;</li> <li>• Investor relations and access to capital;</li> <li>• Establishment of an appropriate policy framework at the NWU;</li> <li>• The governance and management of the NWU's reputation;</li> </ul>	Office of the DVC Planning Office of the DVC CE Office of the DVC TL Office of the DVC R&I Office of ExDir P&C Office of ExDir F&F Office of ExDir CRM Office of the Registrar

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding the NWU's social licence to operate;</li> <li>• Employee recruitment, retention and motivation</li> </ul>	
5.3.5	<p>Sustainability:</p> <p>The NWU's response to global and national sustainability demands (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals, ESG)</p>	<p>Office of the DVC Planning</p> <p>Office of the DVC CE</p> <p>Office of the Vice-Chancellor</p>
5.3.5	<p>The management of ethics and the inculcation of the NWU value set</p>	<p>Office of ExDir P&amp;C</p> <p>Office of ExDir SL</p> <p>Office of ExDir CRM</p>

#### 5.4 Members of senior and middle management

Members of senior and middle management must ensure –

- 5.4.1 the effective implementation of the ethics KPI as part of the performance-management process; and
- 5.4.2 that ethics awareness and regular ethics talks are implemented in relevant departmental structures.

#### 5.5 Members of the university

- 5.5.1 University members are required to understand, embrace and display the NWU's set of values, its codes of conduct, the relevant policies and guidelines in daily activities.
- 5.5.2 All university members must avoid any activity that might lead to or suggest a breach of this policy and the guidelines, rules and measures implemented to guide the establishment and maintenance of an ethical culture at the NWU.

### 6 Reporting and disclosures

- 6.1 It is the responsibility of university members to report any suspected unethical behaviour that could contravene the principles of this policy and matters relevant to this policy.
- 6.2 Reporting and disclosures are done in accordance with the UMC guidelines and rules referred to in para 5.2.2.3

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<sup>i</sup> The Ethics Institute. 2020. **Codes of Ethics Handbook**. (URL: <https://www.tei.org.za>) [Accessed: 2024.02.10]