

CITY OF GALWAY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEE



Code of Ethics

Introduction

The City of Galway VEC has adopted this Code of Ethics for Staff and Members of the Committee on 26th April 2005. The Code takes account of the implications of the Ethics in Public Office Acts, 1995 and 2001.

A copy of the Code will be available upon request and be placed on the VEC's website.

Intent and scope

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to the Chairperson, Members and Staff of the City of Galway VEC in performing their duties.

Objectives

The objectives of the Code are

- To set out an agreed set of ethical principles
- To promote and maintain confidence and trust in the Committee and staff of the City of Galway VEC
- To promote the development and acceptance of ethical practices
- To promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of the City of Galway VEC
- To promote compliance with best current management practice in all the activities of the City of Galway VEC.

General Principles

It is the policy of the City of Galway VEC to maintain its high reputation for ethical behaviour and fair dealing in the conduct of its business.

It is not possible to provide for every situation in the Code of Ethics. If there is doubt about the probity of any particular situation, the Chairperson of the Committee must be consulted in the case of Members and the CEO/ HR Manager in the case of staff, by the individual concerned.

The Staff and Members of the Committee are required to observe the following fundamental principles, as set out under the following headings:

- **Integrity**
- **Confidentiality**
- **Obligations**
- **Disclosure of Interest**
- **Loyalty**
- **Fairness, and**
- **Consideration for work/external environment.**

INTEGRITY

- Members and Staff of the City of Galway VEC are required to disclose outside employment/ business interests that they consider may be in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of City of Galway VEC
- Management and Staff of the City of Galway VEC will not be involved in outside employment/ business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of City of Galway VEC
- Members and Staff of the VEC will refrain from giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits that might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions
- The City of Galway VEC will collaborate vigorously, energetically, ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services
- The City of Galway VEC is committed to conducting its purchasing activities of goods/ services in accordance with public policy and best business practice and its purchasing regulations reflect this
- The City of Galway VEC is committed to ensuring that its engagement of consultancy and other services is in compliance with public policy guidelines
- The City of Galway VEC is committed to ensuring that the accounts/reports accurately reflect its performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading
- Staff and Members of the Committee are required to avoid the use of City of Galway VEC resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the VEC, its institutions or

activities

- The City of Galway VEC is committed to acquire information or business secrets by proper means only.

INFORMATION

- The City of Galway VEC is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public.
- Members of the Committee and staff are required to respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by The City of Galway VEC. This would constitute material such as:
 - personal information;
 - information received in confidence by The City of Galway VEC;
 - any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of The City of Galway VEC;
 - any other material, release of which might constitute an unlawful or unethical act.
- The City of Galway VEC will observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.
- The City of Galway VEC will comply with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. Data Protection Acts, 1988 and 2003, and the Freedom of Information Act, 1997) in accordance with the regulations when issued.
- Members of the Committee will observe the strictest confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Committee.

OBLIGATIONS

- The City of Galway VEC will fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on it by the Vocational Education Acts, 1930 to 2001, and other relevant legislation
- The City of Galway VEC will comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure
- The City of Galway VEC is introducing controls to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to levels

of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure including expenses for business travel

- Members will make every reasonable effort to attend all Committee meetings
- It is acknowledged that the acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by a VEC can give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns. The City of Galway VEC will also ensure that any procedures that it may put in place in this regard are monitored and enforced.

LOYALTY

The Committee members and staff of the City of Galway VEC acknowledge:

- the responsibility to be loyal to the City of Galway VEC and to be fully committed to all its activities while mindful that the VEC itself must at all times take into account the interests of its students and funders including tax payers
- the duty of all to conform to highest standards of business ethics

FAIRNESS

The City of Galway VEC

- is committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation
- is committed to fairness in all business dealings
- values its students, staff, suppliers, and customers and treats all its students, employees, suppliers and customers equally.

WORK/EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

The City of Galway VEC

- places the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its staff and students
- will ensure that community concerns are fully considered in its activities and operations
- will minimise any detrimental impact of its operations on the environment.

RESPONSIBILITY

The City of Galway VEC

- will circulate this Code of Ethics (and a policy document on disclosure of interests) to all Members of the Committee and Staff for their retention
- will ensure that all members of the Committee and Staff receive a copy of the Code and understand its contents
- will provide practical guidance and direction as required on such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations, which arise routinely.

REVIEW

- The City of Galway VEC will review this Code of Ethics annually.
- Any proposed revisions to this Code must be considered and approved at a meeting of the Committee and submitted to the Minister for approval.

NOTE

In the case of Committee Members, breaches of the Code of Ethics will be notified to the Audit Committee and to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and may be notified to the Minister for Education and Science with the annual accounts and report.

In the case of Staff, breaches of the Code of Ethics will be regarded as a breach of discipline and will be dealt with, in accordance with the disciplinary code, by the Chief Executive Officer or by the delegated officer, as appropriate.

Obligations regarding personal information

You must ...

1. Obtain and process the information fairly
2. Keep it only for one or more specified and lawful purposes
3. Process it only in ways compatible with the purposes for which it was given to you initially
4. Keep it safe and secure
5. Keep it accurate and up-to-date
6. Ensure that it is adequate, relevant and not excessive
7. Retain it no longer than is necessary for the specified purpose or purposes
8. Give a copy of his/her personal data to any individual, on request.

From Data Commission Web site, 2004: <http://www.dataprivacy.ie/3c.htm>