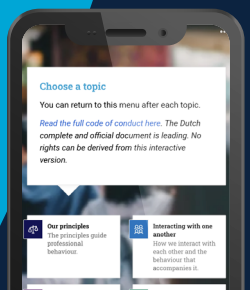
TU Delft Code of Conduct

TU Delft

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Version
August 2026

Development of the Code of Conduct
This Code of Conduct has been developed with and for the TU Delft community through a carefully conducted process of interviews and consultation, in collaboration with various representatives and consultative bodies within the university.

Although this document has been compiled with care, no rights may be derived from its contents.

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This TU Delft Code of Conduct document is the authoritative version. No rights may be derived from any differences between this document and the interactive version. In the event of any discrepancies, the content of this document shall prevail.

Dutch and English version
This is a translation of the Dutch version of the Code of Conduct. In case of a conflict between the English and Dutch version of the Code of Conduct, the Dutch version will prevail and will be binding.

Contents

Foreword 4

About the code of conduct 6

Our principles 8

Our standards 13

Interacting with one another 14

Vested interests 18

Academic integrity 22

Financial resources, equipment and facilities 23

Data, information confidentiality 26

Private conduct 30

On campus 32

Have you experienced or seen something? 33

Actions and sanctions 36

Key roles 37

Foreword

Building an ethical and socially safe community together

This is our Code of Conduct. It belongs to and is for everyone who is part of TU Delft.

We can be proud of it, not only because of the content, but also because of the way it was developed. Hundreds of students and staff members contributed to it. As a result, this is not a Code of Conduct from a small group, but a document that our community shaped together.

This code of conduct sets out what we stand for as a university, the behaviour we expect from one another, and the principles and standards that guide us. Describing these principles and standards is important, but they only truly gain meaning through our daily actions, the way we treat one another, and the conversations we have about them.

We are a community of driven, inventive and curious people. People who are eager to learn, push boundaries and develop solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. This requires courage and confidence. It requires space to explore, to ask questions, to make mistakes and to learn from them. That space is essential for a university, just as clear boundaries are essential to define and protect it.

TU Delft is deeply connected to society. It brings together people with different backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, beliefs and opinions. We will not always agree with one another, nor should we. Our differences add great value to education, research and innovation. A cohesive community does not mean that we all think alike. It means that we value our differences, remain curious about one another and work towards mutual understanding.

For that, people need to feel the space to speak up: to share ideas and concerns, ask questions, acknowledge mistakes or put forward a different perspective. We know that not everyone experiences that space in the same way and that they cannot always rely on it being there. It is important to recognise this. We want to be a university where people feel free to speak out, develop their talents and be themselves. A place where people feel heard, valued and trusted for what they can contribute.

When we talk about behaviour, many situations seem quite straightforward. Yet everyday practice is not always black and white. When dealing with sensitive topics or differing perspectives, people may experience the same situation very differently. What feels entirely normal to one person may feel uncomfortable or vulnerable to another. It is precisely in these grey areas, where our experiences and perspectives differ, that shared principles can help guide us. Our code of conduct provides a shared compass for how we interact with one another and make decisions.

Rather than trying to creating a rule for every situation, we want to understand what is happening and discuss together what the right course of action is. At the same time appreciating what is going well and supporting one another also contributes to the community we want to be.

I believe that leadership and leading by example play an important part. This applies equally to us as the Executive Board. It requires us to reflect on our own behaviour and to acknowledge when we could have acted differently or better. Leading by example does not mean never making mistakes; it means being willing to learn from them.

What we learn and experience here extends well beyond our time at TU Delft. The engineers and professionals of the future not only develop their knowledge and skills here, but also how they work together, take responsibility and engage with others. Many remain connected to TU Delft and to one another and meet again in academia, industry and society. The way we interact here therefore matters not only today, but also tomorrow. It is a continuous process.

This code of conduct provides an important guide to what we stand for as TU Delft and what we can expect from one another. Its true value emerges when together we translate it into everyday practice: through our decisions, our behaviour and the conversations we have with one another.

This is our code of conduct. We have set out the principles and standards. Bringing them to life every day is something we do together.

On behalf of the Executive Board TU Delft
Hester Bijl
Rector Magnificus

About the code of conduct

Whether you work or study at TU Delft, we form a community where we work (together), learn, conduct research and meet one another. We have a code of conduct to ensure that this happens in a safe, pleasant and ethical manner. The code of conduct applies to all staff, students, guests and external staff of TU Delft[1].

The code of conduct makes clear what we may expect of one another: in how we treat each other and in our attitude towards TU Delft as an employer and educational institution. The code of conduct offers guidance for behaviour and a framework against which to assess behaviour. The code of conduct should also offer support when integrity is at stake, and show you where you can turn to for help. In the code of conduct we give examples to provide context. All of these examples are illustrative.

The code of conduct is part of a broader policy on integrity and social safety. Where relevant, we refer to the regulations, policy documents and protocols in question.

Acting with integrity

The principles and standards in this code of conduct apply to everyone at TU Delft and form the framework for acting with integrity. This means acting in a way that takes the rights, interests and wishes of all those involved into consideration.

We are equals, we are eager to learn and we take responsibility. These are the guiding principles for how we want to treat one another and what we can expect of each other. The code of conduct also describes boundaries that must never be crossed, such as harassment or fraud. It also contains rules that must always be observed, for example regarding ancillary activities.

1. By staff, we mean anyone employed by TU Delft on the basis of an employment contract. A guest is anyone who carries out activities or performs work at TU Delft on the basis of a hospitality or visiting professor agreement. External staff are temporary agency workers, secondees and people hired on temporary contracts.

Make behaviour a topic of discussion

Our community is diverse; this fits the academic nature of TU Delft and we are proud of it. It also means that views on behaviour and integrity vary. This code of conduct creates room for conversation about differences, both where they make us stronger and where they cause friction. And it helps with the choices you have to make in your daily work or study. As it is impossible to cover every situation in this code, it is important that we, as colleagues and students, talk to one another about real-life situations: how do we expect people to act, and how do we do justice to academic freedom, safety and collective responsibility?

We need one another to determine what acting with integrity means, which is why this code encourages you to talk to others about integrity and about the decisions you make. This is only possible if everyone feels safe enough to raise matters openly and if asking questions about integrity is seen as normal. This is how, together, we ensure a safe, pleasant and respectful TU Delft.

Breaching the code of conduct

There are consequences if you do not comply with the code of conduct, such as (disciplinary) measures. Which measure is appropriate depends on the situation and is therefore tailored to each case. Measures may be aimed at learning and at professional or personal development. Sometimes a warning or transfer may be necessary, or, in the most serious case, dismissal or termination of enrolment as a student.

Your role

TU Delft expects everyone to actively apply and comply with the code of conduct. This includes reflecting on your own behaviour, being transparent about personal interests and engaging in conversation about difficult topics. In addition, the Executive Board and managers play a key role in promoting and safeguarding integrity.



Our principles

TU Delft has six core values: diversity, integrity, respect, engagement, courage and trust, which together form the acronym DIRECT. They are the guiding principles for the way we work towards our mission. In addition, we introduce three principles here: equality, eagerness to learn and responsibility. These are guiding principles for the way we want to treat one another.

The principles are about professional behaviour. They provide support in situations where it is not immediately clear what is appropriate, while giving direction to the behaviour we want to see. At the same time, they call for further interpretation. That is why, at TU Delft, we discuss what they mean for the way we work together and treat one another.

We are equals

At TU Delft, everyone has equal worth. Every member of our diverse community has equal worth as a human being, regardless of ethnicity and nationality, religion and belief, sexual orientation, social class, (academic) title, gender, age and stage of life, or disability. This does not mean that everyone is the same, because we work in an organisation with hierarchical relationships and different positions, roles and responsibilities.

Equality calls for recognising differences in power and relationships of dependency. Those who hold a stronger position or more influence also carry more responsibility, for example to reflect on the impact of their actions, their words and their role as an example to others. But also to offer safety and space to others, in particular to minorities and vulnerable groups at TU Delft. We listen to a range of perspectives, are aware of differences in power and the responsibility that power brings with it, and we make room for those who often remain in the background.[2]

The people who work and study at TU Delft come from a wide range of cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, with different customs and communication styles. What is self-evident or polite to one person may come across to another as distant or blunt to another. We are mindful of the dignity, interests, wishes and feelings of others. We are aware that we are all different. We respect and accept others as they are, because without respect there is no equality.

2. Such as PhD candidates, international students and international staff, people with a chronic illness or a psychological or physical vulnerability, the LGBTQIA+ community, religious and cultural minorities, or people who hold a dissenting opinion and (consistently) question things.

As we are different from one another, we take the time to get to know each other's expectations and communication styles. Language and tone, non-verbal cues or differing expectations can all lead to misunderstandings. If something is unclear, we ask follow-up questions and give each other room to explain. We exclude no one. We never use differences as a reason to take someone less seriously, to disadvantage them or to treat them unequally.

Respecting one another also means recognising our own judgements and biases and being willing to examine them critically. This means being open to discussing one another's boundaries and being willing to listen to each other. In doing so, we do not judge too quickly and we seek connection, especially when we disagree.

This goes further than merely tolerating others. It is about (actively) welcoming, supporting and valuing all individuals and groups. That is what we mean by inclusivity. Everyone belongs and contributes, differences are recognised and diversity is encouraged.

We are eager to learn

We want to keep learning. We are open to what we do not yet know and are willing to develop our knowledge and skills. This is not only about subject-matter or academic knowledge, but also about wanting to understand others and learning from them. We are willing to hear what we could have done differently.

We ask questions, examine assumptions and remain open to new insights. We build mutual understanding by being curious about each other's background, motivations, experiences, convictions and insights.

Being eager to learn calls for a willingness to change: to adjust your insights, reconsider your positions or let go of convictions or working methods that no longer fit.

Mistakes and errors are a normal and valuable part of development and of an enquiring attitude. This requires a certain mildness, towards ourselves and towards one another. Only then is there room to learn.

Feedback is an important part of reflection, collaboration, and academic and personal growth. We give feedback in a constructive way, not to pass judgement, and we receive feedback with the intention of learning. We create the conditions for giving and receiving feedback. Feedback is aimed at behaviour or performance, never at the person. This does not change the fact that the feedback you give can sometimes be unpleasant for the other person, so be aware of that.

We take responsibility

We are willing to look critically at our own conduct, to admit mistakes and to adjust our behaviour when necessary. When boundaries are crossed, we hold one another to account, including when we see it happening to someone else. As this is often not easy, we help one another with it when needed.

Taking responsibility also means that we explain our actions. Especially when this is difficult, when there has been an incident or when there is a difference of opinion. In doing so, we are as transparent as possible about the considerations behind our decisions.

We are also transparent about what we expect of others and about our experiences with them. Transparency means that we are willing to discuss doubts and dilemmas openly and show vulnerability. It is important to create that space explicitly, by setting aside moments to give feedback or discuss dilemmas, for example. The space to be open must also be felt. A curious and empathetic attitude and a willingness to learn from one another help to ensure that this space is felt.

We also show responsibility when it comes to academic freedom. We cherish and protect that freedom. However, we do not use academic freedom as a way to avoid having to comply with agreements, rules or procedures.

Examples

We are equals

- A manager may ask a member of staff in their team to carry out a task, even if the staff member does not agree with the instruction. This shows that the manager and the staff member are not the same, and that the manager is hierarchically above the staff member. They are, however, of equal worth. The staff member may say that they disagree with the instruction, and why they disagree, and may ask for the reason behind the instruction to be explained. The manager is expected to be able to explain why the request is being made.
- During a meeting attended by several people, a member of staff gives direct feedback on a colleague's work. Although this is well intended, the colleague feels it is offensive due to the presence of several other people. The colleague indicates that they did not appreciate this. The staff member shows empathy and takes this into account for the future.
- A project group includes a couple of outspoken students and a couple of quiet ones. The outspoken students make sure that the perspectives of the quieter students are also taken into account, for example by actively asking them what they think and by being careful not to dominate the conversation themselves.
- A manager faces an issue with two options. The manager asks for advice, and the adviser explains the two options and recommends option 1. Ultimately, the manager still chooses option 2 and explains to the adviser the reasoning behind the choice. The discussions about this are conducted respectfully.

We are eager to learn

- Students point out that a lecturer's lecture slides contain an inappropriate, sexist example. These slides had been used unchanged for years, and there had been no complaints about them before. The lecturer recognises that the example is no longer appropriate and revises it.
- A professor proposes recommending an assistant professor take her place in committees and expert meetings to which she is invited so that this assistant professor can build up a network and visibility. Each time this happens, however, the assistant professor declines the invitation. Rather than assuming that the assistant professor is not interested or ambitious enough, the professor starts a conversation about why this is happening. It turns out that the assistant professor is unsure whether he can live up to the professor's expectations. The professor then takes on a more active role as a mentor and helps the assistant professor to prepare for future meetings.

We take responsibility

- A member of staff has agreed with their manager that they will have completed a particular task by an agreed date. When the staff member realises that this deadline is not achievable, they communicate this in a timely manner and propose an alternative.
- A student says that they are having personal problems and repeatedly fails to show up for a project group. The other group members want to help the student, but if the student really cannot contribute enough to the project work, the student must take responsibility for withdrawing from the group and resitting the assignment at a later date.
- A committee of staff members is working on a recommendation for a dean. Several meetings have been arranged for this purpose, in which the committee chair also actively provides updates and opportunities for feedback to members who were unable to attend. One of the committee members is rarely present and does not respond to requests for feedback. Once the draft recommendation has been produced, however, this member suddenly states that the whole draft is no good and needs to be completely overhauled. This member should, however, have taken responsibility for raising this during at or around the time of earlier meetings.



Our standards

Until now, this code of conduct has been about our principles, guidelines for professional behaviour and how we *want* to treat one another. In addition, we have our standards. These are the boundaries and rules for our conduct that we *must* observe. They are set out below in the code of conduct.

How we treat one another is part of this, but whereas the focus earlier was on desired behaviour, standards are about the boundaries we set on behaviour. When is something transgressive, and what can you do if you are confronted with it? Where is the boundary between your private interests and those of TU Delft? It is also about dealing with material matters. Financial resources and the items you use to carry out your work. Handling data and information, conducting research, sitting exams: rules apply to all of these. You can read about the how and why below. You will also see examples of behaviour and situations that give context to the boundaries and rules. The examples are illustrative.

Where rules have been fleshed out in internal regulations, guidelines or policy, reference is made to these where possible. These documents are reviewed regularly and revised where necessary. In case of a discrepancy between the code of conduct and the most recent regulation, guideline or policy, the latter takes precedence.

Interacting with one another

We work together in a diverse, international academic community. There are minimum standards to how we treat one another, and when these are crossed we refer to transgressive behaviour.

Transgressive behaviour includes discrimination, (sexual) harassment, aggression and violence, bullying and abuse of power. It concerns an act or omission that you should know is not permitted, regardless of how someone experiences it. A boundary is not a personal experience but a clear line between what is and is not acceptable. Transgressive behaviour violates the dignity of another person and is not tolerated at TU Delft.

Whether behaviour is transgressive in a particular case depends on the specific facts and circumstances. Continuous or repeated subtle, often unintended remarks, acts or behaviours that convey a negative or hurtful message can also be transgressive (microaggressions).

Examples

- Repeated remarks that refer to someone's background, such as: "people with your accent are not suited to this field".
- Asking an LGBTQI+ couple: "Which of you is the real mother?".
- Repeatedly misgendering someone.
- Responding to a question from an international colleague by saying "that is how we do things in the Netherlands".

Aggression and violence

One or more incidents in which someone is psychologically, verbally or physically harassed, threatened or attacked.

Examples

- Physical attacks, such as kicking or hitting.
- Making threats, such as: "I'll beat you to a pulp", or threatening to intrude on someone's personal situation, for example by saying: "I know where you live".

Discrimination

Directly or indirectly treating people unequally, detrimentally or excluding them on the grounds of origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability or chronic condition, political affiliation, employment relationship (full-time or part-time), employment contract (permanent or temporary), WAZO (work and care)-leave, marital status, nationality, religion or philosophy of life, without objective justification.

Examples

- Refusing someone an internship or a PhD position because of their religious background.
- Putting colleagues at a disadvantage, excluding them or treating them unfavourably because of their cultural background.
- Failing to provide a student who is neurodivergent with the necessary adjustments they requested.
- Without justification, limiting the opportunities for part-time staff to follow a training programme.
- Consistently passing over female students during a tutorial, without a legitimate purpose.

Bullying

All forms of intimidating behaviour of a structural nature that have the effect or aim of hurting and/or humiliating a person, and against which the victim is usually unable to defend themselves.

Examples

- Repeatedly making nasty or belittling jokes about a colleague or student, or giving nicknames that are meant to be hurtful or are experienced that way, especially when this happens in public.
- Systematically ignoring someone or acting as if they are not there during a meeting or when working together.
- Repeatedly spreading gossip that damages trust in someone and worsens the working or study atmosphere.
- Systematically discrediting a member of staff or a supervisor, for example by ignoring their instructions or continually undermining them in front of others.

Sexual harassment

Any form of verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that has the aim or effect of violating a person's dignity, in particular when a threatening, hostile, offensive, humiliating or hurtful situation is created.

Examples

- Asking intimate questions or making insinuations, such as: "why aren't you wearing that sexy little skirt from last week?".
- Intruding on someone's personal space without consent, for example touching a colleague or student in a sexually charged way without permission.

Harassment

Behaviour with the aim or effect of making someone feel unsafe or threatened.

Examples

- Repeatedly bothering someone, for example by continually seeking them out (online and/or offline) without good reason, monitoring or following them, sending them messages or giving them inappropriate gifts.
- Using emotional blackmail or manipulation, for example by continuing to push for a higher grade or putting extreme pressure on teaching staff.
- Making abusive remarks or insults about or towards staff or fellow students, such as "it's about time she was fired", creating a hostile or fearful atmosphere.
- As a manager, systematically gossiping about a colleague's poor work attitude in order to pressure or undermine them.

Abuse of power

Abusing a position of dependency or hierarchical authority to obtain personal, professional or academic advantages, or to influence, intimidate or disadvantage others.

You ensure that relationships involving a power imbalance or dependency remain businesslike and professional. This also means avoiding contact with students or staff in situations or at locations where the appearance of transgressive behaviour, such as (sexual) harassment or abuse of power, could arise.

Examples

- As a supervisor or manager, asking a PhD candidate or member of staff to work overtime on a structural basis or to take on tasks outside their agreed working hours or role, while the PhD candidate or staff member does not feel free to say no.
- As a lecturer, making a disparaging remark to a student who asks a critical question.
- Pressuring a student to continue their research during their graduation project for longer than necessary.
- As a thesis supervisor, suggesting drinks or a dinner in order to give feedback on a draft version, which the student does not dare to refuse for fear of negative consequences.



Vested interests

A conflict of interest arises when we use our role, position and/or influence to serve our personal interests, or the interests of a person, business or institution in which we have a substantial involvement.

Conflicts of interest can arise in a variety of ways. It is your own responsibility to prevent (the appearance of) a conflict of interest. You do this by being alert to it and communicating about it transparently. Sometimes, measures may be required with your manager/supervisor or academic counsellor which need to be formalised and recorded.

Personal relationships

In a work or study setting, personal relationships such as a romantic or family relationship can lead to (the appearance of) a conflict of interest and/or abuse of power. This applies in particular where there is dependency. For example, in a relationship between a manager and a member of staff or between a lecturer and a student.

While a member of staff teaches, supervises, assesses or otherwise has a professional working relationship with a student, or a promotor/supervisor with a PhD candidate, it is not permitted to have an intimate (romantic and/or sexual) relationship with that student or PhD candidate. For staff members who are in a hierarchical relationship to one another in their professional capacity, intimate (romantic and/or sexual) relationships are likewise regarded as undesirable.

In addition, other forms of personal relationship alongside a professional one can also put professionalism at risk. For example, a family or other personal relationship does not sit well with a position in which decisions are made that affect, or could affect, the other person.

You therefore discuss such a relationship with your manager or academic counsellor as soon as possible, so that appropriate measures can be taken to guarantee independence, objectivity and integrity. Examples of measures include adjusting the working or supervisory relationship, assigning a different manager or assessor, or (temporarily) working in a different team or project, or possibly a transfer to a different department or faculty.

Examples

- A team leader is close friends with a member of staff in their team. This makes it harder to remain objective towards this staff member. And even if they do manage to, there may still be the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- A PhD candidate has two supervisors who are in a relationship with each other, which puts the supervisors' independent judgement under pressure.
- A member of staff has to make a decision about whether or not to hire a family member, which can create the appearance of a conflict of interest.
- A student teaching assistant asks out a student while the student assistant is leading the tutorial. This is undesirable because of the dependent position and the fact that the student teaching assistant assesses the students in the tutorial.

Ancillary activities

Ancillary activities refer to all work and activities that you carry out outside your position or assigned duties at TU Delft. This includes advisory work, board positions, freelance assignments or other professional activities, regardless of whether you receive payment for them.

Ancillary activities can affect your work, which is why you are expected to handle them transparently and carefully. This means that you report them in good time, ask for permission in advance and prevent any possible conflict of interest. Ancillary activities must never come at the expense of your work or damage the integrity or reputation of TU Delft. You comply with the Sector Scheme on Ancillary Activities at Dutch Universities 2024 and the TU Delft Implementation Regulations.

Entrepreneurship

TU Delft encourages entrepreneurship, but conflicts of interest can arise if you are considering bringing an idea or research result to market in a start-up. Consider issues surrounding intellectual property or (indirect) contributions by PhD candidates or graduating students to a business. The division of time and attention between your job at TU Delft and your commercial activities, as well as blurred roles (for example, which role you are acting in, and when), can also cause questions to be raised.

See also:

- Sector Scheme on Ancillary Activities at Dutch Universities 2024
- TU Delft Implementation Regulations

You should therefore discuss with your manager and Legal Services how these activities relate to your work for TU Delft, and make specific arrangements on issues such as intellectual property. For ongoing businesses, you check annually with your manager whether the arrangements are being properly observed in practice and whether existing arrangements need to be tightened or revised.

Examples

- A member of staff starts their own business based on the results of research they carried out themselves. Because the staff member also supervises PhD candidates on the same topic, it may appear (or it may actually be the case) that the PhD candidates are contributing to the business. Make sure to provide clarity and transparency by discussing this with the manager and recording the arrangements in writing.
- A member of staff who also has their own company is invited by the Ministry of Economic Affairs to give a lecture for a fee of €1,000. The staff member consults the manager in advance, because the topic touches on their work at TU Delft. Together they decide whether the lecture takes place on behalf of TU Delft and how the fee is handled.
- After graduating, a student sets up a start-up with a concept developed during their studies. In that case, the intellectual property remains with TU Delft.

Invitations and gifts

We work with a wide range of external parties: businesses, governments, knowledge institutions and civil-society organisations. In these collaborations, invitations or gifts can play a role. This can also happen within the university, for example a student giving a lecturer a gift. Receiving invitations or gifts is neither unusual nor prohibited, but it can pose risks to your independence and integrity.

You should therefore comply with the rules laid down in the Guideline on Remuneration Received by Virtue of a Position at TU Delft. If you are in doubt about accepting an invitation, gift or reward, discuss this with your manager and weigh it up carefully together. Where necessary, arrangements can be made to prevent (the appearance of) a conflict of interest.

See also:

- Guideline on Remuneration Received by Virtue of a Position at TU Delft

Examples

- A professor is invited by a chemical corporation to speak at an international conference. Flights and hotel are included. By accepting, the professor may create expectations on the part of the chemical corporation, and could compromise the professor's independence.
- A student gives a book voucher to their thesis supervisor after obtaining their degree. This is not a problem as long as it involves a relatively small amount and nothing is expected in return.
- A student repeatedly gives gifts to a lecturer. In the student's culture, this is an accepted way to show respect and gratitude. At TU Delft, however, this is not appropriate.

Donations

Donations enable the university to undertake special activities or take initiatives that would otherwise not have been possible. We must, however, handle (potential) donations responsibly.

Donations to TU Delft usually, and preferably, go through the Delft University Fund. The procedure for accepting direct and indirect donations is laid down in the Protocol for the Acceptance of Donations by TU Delft (2020). Follow this protocol to prevent conflicts of interest.

Bribery and corruption

TU Delft applies a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to bribery and corruption. This means that you must not offer, request, receive or accept money, gifts, services or other benefits with the aim of influencing a business decision or obtaining preferential treatment. If you are in doubt about whether a gift, invitation or payment is permissible, discuss this with your manager or your academic counsellor.

See also:

- Protocol for the Acceptance of Donations by TU Delft (2020)



Academic integrity

Research integrity

At TU Delft, we strive for world-class research. This calls for a culture that highly values research integrity. Research conducted with integrity is reliable, transparent and carried out carefully, and it contributes to trust in science and in one another.

Research integrity is of great importance to TU Delft. Rules on this are set out in great detail in the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018, NGWI). We have therefore not repeated them here in the code of conduct.

The principles and standards of good research practice in the NGWI form the basis for conducting research and practising science with integrity. The NGWI, in turn, respects the frameworks of the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023, ALLEA).

Individual researchers, (external) PhD candidates, visiting researchers, part-time researchers or external professionals at TU Delft are all bound by these principles and standards. This also applies to supervisors, project leaders, research directors and managers who help determine the design and conduct of the research. Students, too, must comply with the principles and standards of the NGWI when conducting research or undertaking research placements.

Research involving human subjects

Research that involves people as human subjects can have direct consequences for the physical and mental integrity of participants. When you carry out research involving human subjects, you therefore follow the TU Delft Human Research Regulations and the review procedure carried out by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

See also:

- Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2018, NGWI)
- European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity (2023, ALLEA)
- TU Delft Human Research Regulations



Financial resources, equipment and facilities

At TU Delft, we use financial resources, equipment and facilities so that we can carry out our work and studies properly. These resources are (partly) financed with public money. This calls for careful, transparent and responsible handling. That is why standards and rules apply to the use of resources and facilities on campus[3].

Purchasing and expense claims

Ordering, purchasing and claiming expenses are processes that are susceptible to breaches of integrity. You therefore prevent (the appearance of) favouritism, influence or a conflict of interest. You always make any (private) interests transparent. You also act in line with applicable Dutch and European laws and regulations on procurement, and with the relevant TU Delft regulations and instructions, such as the TU Delft Procurement Policy 2024–2030.

You only claim costs that are necessary for the work, are reasonable and have been agreed in advance with your manager. You do this in accordance with the applicable rules, procedures and instructions, which can be found on the intranet.

- Submitting an expense claim
- Work-related Costs Scheme (WKR)
- WKR standards list

Accepting and accounting for funding

Handling resources carefully also means that you do not accept more funding for research or teaching improvement than you can realistically deliver, given your available time and responsibilities. You handle the resources entrusted to you carefully and transparently. Funding is used only for its intended purpose (not to cover other shortfalls). You also do not spend more than has been allocated to you, and you do not use up a budget simply for the sake of spending it. You account fully and accurately to funders and clients, as well as within TU Delft. In doing so, you follow the policy, procedures and work instructions, and the directions given by your Finance colleagues.

3. By ‘campus’, we mean not only the Delft campus but also our other locations.

See also:

- TU Delft Procurement Policy 2024–2030

Examples

- To make up for a shortage of teaching staff, a promotor asks PhD candidates to teach on a structural basis outside their agreed teaching duties. This is not in line with the purpose and funding of the doctoral programme.
- A degree programme uses a grant for teaching improvement to cover general deficits within the faculty. This is not permitted: resources must be spent on the purpose for which they were allocated.
- A research group takes on a large number of PhD candidates within a single project but does not have sufficient supervisory capacity. This creates obligations that cannot be met.

Business trips

Business trips can strengthen teaching, research and collaboration with national and international partners. You plan and make business trips carefully, transparently and sustainably. Together with your manager, you assess the usefulness, necessity and financial aspects of the trip beforehand. In doing so, you comply with the applicable guidelines:

- TU Delft International Business Travel Policy
- Green Travel Map
- TU Delft Business Travel Expenses Regulations
- List of subsistence rates for international business trips (CAO Rijk)

Examples

- A member of staff attends an international conference abroad and, with prior approval from their manager for leave, can then stay on at the same location for a few days for private purposes. The university only reimburses the travel and accommodation costs related to attending the conference. The additional costs arising from the private stay (such as extra nights' accommodation or changed travel dates) are borne entirely by the staff member.

  The staff member clearly sets out in advance how the time and costs of the business trip and the private extension are separated, and has this checked by their manager. The staff member and manager discuss and confirm these arrangements before the business trip begins, so that there is no ambiguity about them.

Equipment and facilities

Equipment and facilities refer to all (in)tangible resources that you receive or use from TU Delft, such as a laptop, telephone, office supplies, laboratory supplies, printing and copying equipment, an email address and internet access. These resources are intended to enable you to carry out your work or study properly and must therefore be used for that purpose. You handle these resources carefully, in accordance with the existing rules and the instructions you are given.

For students and visitors, these rules are laid down in documents, including the Regulations on the Use of Buildings, Grounds and Facilities for Students and Visitors of TU Delft and the ICT Management Regulations. For employees and visitors, the Digital Workspace Policy applies in addition.

See also:

- Regulations on the Use of Buildings, Grounds and Facilities for Students and Visitors of TU Delft
- ICT Management Regulations
- Digital Workspace Policy

Data, information confidentiality

Knowledge, information and data form the core of our teaching, research and our collaboration with partners. These are often sensitive or confidential data, which we must handle carefully, transparently and responsibly.

Privacy and personal data

We collect, use, share and also store a great deal of personal data, for which we use various digital channels. To respect and protect everyone's privacy, you comply with the applicable legislation – the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the GDPR Implementation Act (UAVG) – the Privacy Policy and underlying protocols.

We have a duty to report any data breach. Incidents must be reported immediately, so that TU Delft can take measures and, if necessary, notify the Dutch Data Protection Authority. Report a (suspected) data breach immediately via databreach@tudelft.nl. The Data Protection Officer (DPO) monitors compliance with the rules and advises TU Delft.

Examples

- Personal data are destroyed as soon as there is no longer a legitimate reason to keep them.
- At the start of a new IT system, study or project, the privacy risks are first mapped out and mitigating measures are assessed.
- Staff check the accuracy of the personal data to which they have access in the course of their work and adjust it where necessary.

Confidential and secret information

As a member of staff or student, you sometimes have access to confidential or secret data. As a member of staff, you have a duty of confidentiality regarding everything you learn in your position, where this has been explicitly imposed or follows logically from the nature of the matter. For students, confidential or sensitive information provided to students must only be used for its intended purpose and in line with the instructions given.

See also:

- Privacy Policy

If this duty of confidentiality places you in a moral dilemma, discuss the matter first with your supervisor or manager. If that is not possible, you can go to their manager. If that is not possible either, or if you are unable to resolve the matter, contact a confidential adviser.

TU Delft attaches great importance to the confidentiality, integrity and availability of information. These principles are laid down in the Strategic Information Security Policy 2022–2024 *(only available in Dutch)*, the IT Security Policy, and the Protocol on Access to and Use of Personal Data *(only available in Dutch)*. This means, among other things, that access to (personal) data is limited to what is strictly necessary for carrying out the work, and that only authorised persons have access to data.

Examples

- A member of staff involved in a recruitment procedure shares application data only with directly involved colleagues, such as members of the selection committee, and deletes it once the retention period has expired, and asks the colleagues with whom this data was shared to delete it as well.
- A student teaching assistant works on a research project involving confidential datasets. The data are stored only on secure TU Delft systems and not shared via personal cloud storage or email without additional safeguards.

Knowledge security

We must prevent technology from falling into the hands of non-democratic actors who could use it to violate human rights. We must also ensure that knowledge and technology do not end up in places where this poses risks to Dutch national security or innovative strength.

Knowledge security ensures that researchers can do their work safely, without improper external influence on the research process.

You are familiar with, and act in accordance with, the TU Delft knowledge security policy, as well as the applicable laws and regulations on sanctions and export control. You can find the TU Delft knowledge security policy and tools for implementing it at: Knowledge Security - Intranet and through the knowledge security advisory line.

See also:

- Strategic Information Security Policy 2022–2024 *(only available in Dutch)*
- IT Security Policy
- Protocol on Access to and Use of Personal Data *(only available in Dutch)*
- Knowledge Security - Intranet

AI technology

Artificial intelligence (AI) is playing an increasingly important role in teaching, research, innovation and operations. While AI offers opportunities to solve societal and scientific problems, it also calls for careful and responsible use. AI is a tool; we encourage independent thinking. We encourage the use of AI in a way that fits our academic values and that contributes to quality, safety, transparency and integrity.

When using AI, you act in line with the TU Delft policy on (generative) AI and the applicable European Union AI Regulation. This means that you handle data and algorithms carefully, are transparent about the use of AI and ensure that applications do not conflict with the code of conduct for research integrity or other applicable laws and regulations. TU Delft offers guidelines, support and training for this, including through the TU Delft AI Initiative, the AI Compliance Taskforce and the (Generative) AI training courses provided by TLS.

Examples

- A member of staff enters confidential research data into a public AI tool without permission. This conflicts with TU Delft policy and the rules on data protection.
- A lecturer uses an AI application to prepare teaching materials. Because this AI application is secured through the TU Delft account with Enterprise Data Protection, its use is in accordance with the university's guidelines.

See also:

- TU Delft policy on (generative) AI
- European Union AI Regulation
- Code of conduct for research integrity
- TU Delft AI Initiative
- AI Compliance Taskforce
- (Generative) AI training courses provided by TLS

Academic fraud

As a student at TU Delft, you are trained to become an independent-thinking engineer. This involves an academic work ethic, in which you must learn to rely on your own critical capacity and be assessed on your own performance. Cheating has no place in this.

Academic fraud refers to doing or failing to do something that makes it no longer possible to form a correct judgement about the knowledge, insight and skills of you as a student, or of another student. You must be aware of the rules and guidelines established by the Board of Examiners of the faculty in question, and comply with them. This also applies to the rights and obligations set out in the Rules and Guidelines of the Board of Examiners and the course instructions.

See also:

- Rules and guidelines; Teaching and Examination Regulations (OER) and Implementation Regulations (UR)



Private conduct

Your private conduct can have consequences for your work, the work of colleagues or your studies at TU Delft. Especially when you are recognisable as a member of staff or student of the university, or when your behaviour relates to your position at TU Delft. That is why certain rules apply to this. It is important to note that the impact, and therefore the permissibility, of private conduct depends in part on your position within TU Delft. Different boundaries apply to a professor or director than to a first-year student, given their difference in visibility and responsibility.

Public statements

TU Delft encourages social engagement and freedom of expression. At the same time, it is important that these statements are consistent with your expertise and with the responsibility you carry within the university. If you are recognisable as a member of staff or student of TU Delft, public statements can affect the trust people place in you or in TU Delft.

Be aware of the impact of your statements on staff, students and the academic community. Think in advance about the purpose, the channel and the possible effects on the working and learning climate within TU Delft. Public statements can be a reason to enter into conversation with one another or, if necessary, to take measures. This would be the case with statements that have a negative impact on the working relationship or on good employment practice, on the teaching and research process, or on a safe study and work environment. And only when it is permitted to restrict freedom of expression, or when a statement does not fall under that freedom. This is the case when statements have a clear connection with TU Delft and are, for example, unnecessarily offensive, or that serve little or no professional and/or societal interest. If you are in doubt, consult a colleague, manager or academic counsellor before you publish anything.

Other private conduct

Other private conduct, too, can affect your performance or have (serious) consequences for TU Delft. For example, excessive substance use, committing criminal offences or verbally abusing people on social media. Certain behaviour is unacceptable under all circumstances. For example racist statements at a public gathering. The limit is reached when private conduct harms TU Delft as an organisation or the rights of those involved with TU Delft.

Examples of private conduct that breaches the code of conduct

- A professor makes a statement in the media labelling a particular group of people as “an inferior race”. Students who attend this professor’s lectures read the report, confront the person about it and say that they feel unsafe because not every student appears to be welcome in the lectures. In this case, the public statement has direct negative consequences for the professor’s work and for students in the study environment.
- A co-promotor regularly meets a PhD candidate outside working hours, and they also secretly stay over at each other’s homes. Although this takes place in the private sphere, it can damage the copromotor’s professional image and raise doubts about their objectivity in assessing and supervising the PhD candidate. Moreover, it can undermine the PhD candidate’s safe learning and working environment.
- A group of students accuses a professor on platform X of serious transgressive behaviour towards fellow students. As a result, the professor no longer feels safe within TU Delft or in public spaces. Although the students do this in their own time and via an external platform, they damage the professor’s reputation in doing so, without the professor being able to defend themselves effectively against it. For this, the students should use the designated internal channels, such as the Integrity & Social Safety Reporting Point.



On campus

On our campus, we want an open, safe and pleasant environment in which everyone feels welcome. That is why we handle resources consciously and responsibly and have rules for debate and demonstrations.

Alcohol and substance use

The Alcohol and Substances Policy (2022) is based on a safe and healthy learning and working environment. Drinks receptions, activities and events are alcohol-free until 17:00. After 17:00, low-alcohol drinks (up to 15%) may be served, as long as this is appropriate to the activity and takes place in a responsible manner. It is not permitted to serve or consume spirits (distilled beverages).

It is prohibited to use substances on campus that fall under the Opium Act; this also applies to substances such as laughing gas or stimulants. Medication prescribed by a doctor is, of course, permitted.

In addition, a smoking ban applies across the entire campus and in all TU Delft buildings. Smoking tobacco, e-cigarettes or other smoking products is therefore not permitted, not even in outdoor areas on TU Delft grounds.

Debate and demonstration on campus

We all contribute to an atmosphere in which conflicting points of view can also be discussed in an open and respectful way. In a safe debate, there is room for disagreement, but no place for harassment, threats or exclusion.

As a member of staff and student of TU Delft, you have the right to express your opinion, to debate and to demonstrate. Demonstrating on campus is permitted, as long as this takes place in accordance with the Guideline on Demonstrations on the TU Delft Campus. This guideline is intended to ensure that demonstrations proceed in an orderly and safe manner, that all participants behave respectfully towards others, and that teaching and research activities are not disrupted.

See also:

- Alcohol and Substances Policy (2022)
- Smoking ban
- The Guideline on Demonstrations on the TU Delft Campus



Have you experienced or seen something?

During your work or study you may find yourself in a situation where integrity is challenged. Have you experienced something that does not feel right? You have doubts about your own actions; you see something happen that does not fit our standards. Whether it concerns yourself or someone else: if a situation raises questions, concerns or doubts, if you feel able to, raise the matter yourself. If that is not possible, for example because the situation does not allow for it or you cannot resolve it together, there are various support services within TU Delft for help, advice or next steps.

Starting the conversation

Whether it concerns yourself or someone else: if a situation raises questions, concerns or doubts, look for ways to speak up about it. Preferably first with the person concerned, or otherwise with your manager, academic counsellor or supervisor.

Conduct conversations about behaviour with respect, curiosity and with the intention of understanding the other person. Not to confront them, but to find a solution together. Do not make assumptions, but enter into dialogue and be open to the other person's perspective. In doing so, speak from your own point of view and your own experiences: "I don't like it when you..." or "Your behaviour makes me feel...". Choose a setting that lends itself to such a conversation, perhaps a walk across campus or a one-to-one conversation. Having this type of conversation with colleagues or fellow students present does not usually work well.

Confidential advisers

If you find it difficult to raise something, or are unable to resolve it together, then you can always turn to a confidential adviser. They listen to your story, offer support, give advice and help you explore next steps. You stay in control. Whether it concerns research integrity (e.g. plagiarism), social integrity (e.g. harassment or bullying) or organisational integrity (e.g. fraud or abuse of power).

Confidential advisers have a duty of confidentiality. They can also refer you to other independent specialists, for example, if there is a need for that.

See also:

- Confidential adviser

Seeking advice or information

Do you have questions about a situation, or do you want to know what your options are? You can always seek information from the Integrity & Social Safety Reporting Point, even if you are still unsure about reporting a concern. You can also turn to your manager, academic counsellor or HR adviser with a question or dilemma.

Reporting a concern

If a situation gives cause to, you can report transgressive behaviour, a possible breach of integrity or misconduct. You can report if something affects you directly, but also if you observe something around you that may harm someone else. You do not need to be certain that rules have been broken, and you do not need to investigate the matter yourself. It is important, though, that you can explain what your suspicion is based on.

The Reporting Point is staffed by specialised members of the Integrity Office. After you report a concern, you are assigned a personal case manager, who informs you about the next steps. The initial meeting is scheduled at a place that is comfortable and safe for you, after which you are referred to an appropriate support service or your report is referred within the organisation. The guiding principle is always to do justice to all those involved.

See also:

- Integrity & Social Safety Reporting Point

Submitting a complaint

Do you want to submit a complaint? Then you can approach the Undesirable Behaviour Complaints Committee for complaints about undesirable behaviour, the Scientific and Academic Integrity Committee for complaints about (suspected) breaches of research integrity, or the Central Complaints Desk (for students only).

As an employee, student or third party, you can submit a complaint about something you have experienced yourself. You want to make your grievances known and seek acknowledgement that something has gone wrong. This must be supported by evidence. With a complaint, your goal is to obtain some form of redress.

Are you unsure which step is right for you? In the Support Guide you will find tips on how to start a conversation and where you can get advice or report a concern or file a complaint about transgressive behaviour, a breach of integrity[4] or misconduct[5], or a suspicion thereof. Of course, you can also turn to a confidential adviser or academic counsellor or HR adviser, who can help you think things through and support you in taking next steps.

4. A suspected breach of integrity is a suspicion that there has been an act or omission by a member of staff or student of TU Delft that conflicts with a standard, rule or law relating to the work and/or study environment that applies to that person.
5. A suspected case of misconduct is a suspicion that there is a breach, or a danger of a breach, of EU law, or an act or omission where the public interest is at stake in the case of: (1) a breach, or a danger of a breach, of a statutory regulation or an employer's internal rules, or (2) a danger to public health, to the safety of persons, to the environment, or to the proper functioning of the public service or a business as a result of improper conduct or omission. The public interest is in any case at stake if the act or omission affects more than purely personal interests and there is either a pattern or structural nature, or the act or omission is serious or extensive.

See also:

- Support Guide

Actions and sanctions

This code of conduct is not optional. If you do not comply with it, there are consequences and it may be necessary to take a (disciplinary) action. An appropriate action is tailored to the situation, because it always depends on the context, the nature and seriousness of the behaviour, the circumstances in which it took place and the people involved.

This means that a conversation always takes place about the situation that has arisen and the behaviour that occurred (hearing both sides of the story). It may also be necessary to start an internal or external investigation. If there is a suspicion of criminal conduct, TU Delft may report it to the police.

Where possible and appropriate, the emphasis is on learning, recovery and professional or personal development. This includes coaching, reflection sessions, additional guidance or attending a training course. If these measures prove insufficient, or when the seriousness of the behaviour warrants it, disciplinary and/or order-related actions may (also) be imposed. Examples of these are a warning, transfer, or – in the case of students and visitors – exclusion from examination(s) or a building or campus ban. In serious or more structural cases, more far-reaching actions may be necessary, such as ending the collaboration, temporarily or permanently terminating enrolment as a student or, for staff, dismissal.

When determining an appropriate action, care, proportionality and the impact on those involved are always taken into account. Disciplinary action and sanctions are imposed in line with the relevant guidelines, as described in, for example, the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW), the Dutch Civil Code (BW), the Collective Labour Agreement of Dutch Universities, the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, the Regulations on the Use of Buildings, Grounds and Facilities for Students and Visitors of TU Delft and the Rules and Guidelines of the Boards of Examiners (RRvE).

Key roles

As an employer, educational institution and knowledge organisation, TU Delft has a duty of care to create a safe, ethical and respectful environment for the members of the TU Delft community. This code of conduct forms part of that duty of care.

Everyone within TU Delft bears responsibility for observing and embodying the principles and standards laid down in this code of conduct. Integrity is something for all of us: together we build a culture in which safe, ethical and respectful behaviour is self-evident.

At the same time, some positions within TU Delft carry an additional responsibility for shaping, supporting and safeguarding integrity. In this section, we highlight two groups: the Executive Board and managers. They play a key role in fulfilling TU Delft's duty of care and keeping this code of conduct alive.

Executive Board

In accordance with the Code of Good Governance, the Executive Board is responsible for ensuring compliance with this code of conduct. The Board is therefore responsible for promoting an open culture in which members of the TU Delft community feel free to hold one another to account, and a culture in which people are open to acknowledging, recognising and learning from mistakes and in which you can gain new insights. Moreover, the Executive Board is responsible for creating a safe environment: an environment in which members of the TU Delft community can engage in dialogue with one another in a safe, equal and respectful way as well as an environment where they can flourish and develop professionally.

In line with these responsibilities, the Executive Board ensures:

- A socially safe, ethical and inclusive working and learning environment in which staff and students feel free and safe to speak up and to hold one another to account.
- Up-to-date policy, regulations and procedures in the area of integrity and social safety.
- Setting up an organisation with the right roles and expertise to implement the policy, regulations and procedures and to safeguard compliance with them.
- Promoting the conversation at TU Delft about integrity and social safety.
- Enforcement when there is conduct that breaches the code of conduct.
- Monitoring the state of the culture, social safety and integrity.

Managers

Managers play a key role in promoting desired behaviour within TU Delft. This applies not only to managers with staff responsibility, but also to others who fulfil a supervisory or coordinating role, such as promotors, supervisors of PhD candidates, project leaders and programme coordinators. They give direction to the culture of their department, faculty, team or programmes. Through their own behaviour, managers demonstrate what TU Delft means by acting with integrity and show that they are aware of their responsibility and impact.

Managers ensure the following:

- A socially safe, ethical and inclusive working and learning environment in which staff and students feel free and safe to speak up and to hold one another to account.
- Actively promoting awareness of integrity and social safety, including by offering information or training on this and by drawing attention to this code of conduct and the support available.
- Actively making room for one-to-one conversations, in which concerns, doubts or personal dilemmas can be discussed in confidence.
- Enforcement when there is conduct that breaches the code of conduct.

All managers within TU Delft are expected to have the skills to create a socially safe, ethical and inclusive working and learning environment. That is why TU Delft sets clear requirements for leadership. Everyone who fulfils or aspires to a leadership role commits to the continuous development of leadership skills.