

## **Code of Business Conduct**

### **Intent and scope**

It is a requirement of the Code of Practice for the Governing of State Bodies (2009) that all statutory bodies and state funded organisations adopt a Code of Business Conduct for board members and staff. This Code of sets out the standards expected of members and staff of the Dental Council in performing their duties. It is intended that this Code will be reviewed as required to reflect changes in the processes and procedures of decision making within the Council and/or as the regulatory environment changes.

All Council members and staff are required to sign that they have read, understood and agree to abide by the Code of Business Conduct. The President and Registrar shall be the only people permitted to access the signed documents. The Dental Council has set out its policy in relation to the disclosure of conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest in Appendix 1.

### **Objectives**

The purpose of the Code of Business Conduct is to:

- Enable the Council provide a high quality service to the public and profession
- Establish a set of ethical principles
- Promote and maintain confidence and trust
- Prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices.

## **General Principles**

### **Integrity**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. disclose any outside employment/business interests in conflict or in perceived conflict with the business of the Dental Council (disclosure of interests – Appendix 1)
2. not be permitted to be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the Dental Council
3. avoid the giving or receiving of corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgment on business transactions
4. act ethically and honestly
5. conduct purchasing activities of goods/services in accordance with best business practice
6. ensure a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector generally

7. ensure the Council's accounts/reports accurately reflect its business performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading
8. avoid the use of the Dental Council's resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the body or its activities
9. do not acquire information or business secrets by improper means.

### **Information**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. provide support to the Dental Council for the provision of access to general information relating to the Council's activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public
2. respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the Dental Council. This would constitute material such as:
  - a. commercially sensitive information
  - b. personal information; and
  - c. information received in confidence by the Dental Council
3. observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest
4. comply with relevant statutory provisions (e.g. data protection legislation, the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 and 2001).

### **Obligations**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the Dental Council
2. comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure
3. introduce controls to prevent fraud including adequate controls to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to claiming of expenses for business travel
4. Council members should use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Council and Committee meetings
5. conform with procedures in relation to disclosure of interest, including the acceptance of positions following employment and/or engagement by a Dental Council which can give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns.
6. conform to the highest standards of business ethics.

### **Loyalty**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to the Dental Council and fully committed in all its activities while mindful that the organisation itself must

at all times perform its statutory obligations and take into account the interests of all stakeholders

### **Fairness**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. comply with employment and equal status legislation
2. commit to fairness in all business dealings
3. value stakeholders and treat all stakeholders equally.

### **Work/External Environment**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. place highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of employees
2. ensure that community concerns are fully considered
3. minimise any detrimental impact of the operations on the environment.

### **Responsibility**

All Council members and staff shall:

1. agree in writing to abide by this Code of Business Conduct
2. comply with Council policy on the acceptance of gifts and entertainment

### **Circulation and Review**

The Council shall:

1. ensure circulation of this Code of Business Conduct which includes the policy on disclosure of interests to all Council members and staff for their retention
2. commit to review the Code of Business Conduct as appropriate.

## Appendix 1

### Disclosure of Interests

To ensure stakeholders continue to have trust and confidence in the Dental Council the following procedures must be observed in relation to the disclosure of real or perceived conflicts of interest. These are in addition to the requirements under the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001.

1. On appointment, each Council member must furnish to the Registrar (as Secretary of the Council) details relating to his/her employment and all other business or professional interests including shareholdings, directorships, professional relationships etc., that could be perceived to involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence the member in relation to the performance of his/her functions as a member of the Council.
2. On appointment, each Council member must furnish to the Registrar any interests of a member's family of which he/she could be expected to be reasonably aware or a person or body connected with the member which could be perceived to involve a conflict of interest or could materially influence the member in the performance of his/her functions should also be disclosed. For this purpose, persons and bodies connected with a member should include:
  - a. a spouse, parent, brother, sister, child or step-child
  - b. a body corporate with which the member is associated
  - c. a person acting as the trustee of any trust, the beneficiaries of which include the member or the persons at (a) above or the body corporate at (b) above
  - d. a person acting as a partner of the member or of any person or body who, by virtue of (a) - (c) above, is connected with the member.
3. Where it is relevant to any matter which arises for the Dental Council, the member is required to indicate to the Registrar the employment and any other business interests of all persons connected with him/her, as defined at (i) and (ii).
4. The Council may exercise discretion regarding the disclosure by members of minor shareholdings. As a general guideline, shareholdings valued at more than €15,000 or of more than 5 per cent of the issued capital of a company should be disclosed.
5. If a member has a doubt as to whether this Code requires the disclosure of an interest of his/her own or of a connected person, that member should consult the President.

6. Details of interests disclosed will be kept by the Registrar in a special confidential register and should be updated on an annual basis. Changes in the interim must be notified to the Registrar as soon as possible by members. Only the President and Registrar will have access to the register.
7. Where a matter relating to the interests of the President, he/she will depute the Vice President or another Council member to chair the Council meeting and will absent himself/herself when the Council is deliberating or deciding on a matter in which the President or a person or body connected with the President has an interest.
8. Dental Council documents on any deliberations regarding interests will not be made available to the member concerned prior to a decision being taken. Decisions once taken should be notified to the member.
9. It is recognised that the interests of a member and persons connected with him/her can change at short notice. Council members must, in cases where he/she receives documents relating to his/her interests or of those connected with him/her, return the documents to the Registrar at the earliest opportunity.
10. A Council member must absent himself/herself when the Council is deliberating or deciding on matters in which that member or a person or body connected with the member has an interest.
11. The President of the Council can determine whether or not there is a real or perceived conflict of interest concerning a Council member(s) and the decision may be taken by the President to exclude the Council member(s) concerned from any discussions of the Council on this matter. This decision will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
12. Former Council members must treat information received while acting in that capacity as confidential.
13. Council members must not retain documentation obtained during their terms as Council members and should return such documentation to the Registrar or otherwise indicate to the Registrar that all such documentation in their possession has been disposed of in an appropriate manner. In the event that former Council members require access to Council papers from the time of their term on the Council, this can be facilitated by the Registrar.

**Disclosure of Interests**

<b>Name</b>	
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<b>1. Disclosure of interest</b>
<b>2. Disclosure of interest</b>
<b>3. Disclosure of interest</b>
<b>4. Disclosure of interest</b>

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Declaration**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert position)

have read, understood and commit to comply with this Code of Business Conduct in my position as a member/member of staff of the Dental Council.

\_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

\_\_\_\_\_ (insert date)