

RIA Code of Business Conduct

Intent and Scope

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State-Funded Bodies (2016), issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, sets out the principles of corporate governance that state-funded bodies are required to adopt. It puts the onus on the Royal Irish Academy to put in place and adhere to a Code of Business Conduct for Council Members and those of its employees.¹ This Code of Business Conduct has been adopted by the Royal Irish Academy in pursuance of the principles of good corporate governance.

Objectives

The objectives of the Code of Business Conduct are to facilitate the Academy to conduct its business by:

- Operating an agreed set of ethical principles
- Promoting and maintaining confidence and trust
- Preventing the development or acceptance of unethical practices
- Promoting the highest management and public-service standards in all activities of the Royal Irish Academy

General Principles

The underlying principle is that Council Members and employees will strive to perform their duties according to the highest ethical standards of integrity, loyalty, fairness, confidentiality and accountability.

Integrity

Council Members and employees should disclose details of outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the Royal Irish Academy.

Employees are not allowed to be involved in outside employment/business interests in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the Royal Irish Academy or that would or might impede the satisfactory discharge of their duties as Academy employees.

Council Members and employees should avoid 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 judgements on Academy-related business transactions. Council Members and employees should:

- Commit to conduct themselves ethically and honestly in all Academy business
- Ensure that the conduct of purchasing activities of goods/services is conducted in accordance with best business practice
- Ensure a culture of claiming expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector generally
- Ensure that accounts and reports accurately reflect business performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading
- Avoid the use of the Royal Irish Academy's resources or time for personal gain, or for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the Royal Irish Academy or its activities

¹ Where this Code of Conduct refers to Council Members and Employees, it should also be understood to refer to members of the Audit and Risk Committee who are also asked to adhere to the Code.

- Commit not to acquire information or business secrets by improper means

Information

Council Members and Employees Should:

- Support the provision of access to general information relating to the Royal Irish Academy's activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public
- Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the Royal Irish Academy. This would constitute material such as personal information and information received in confidence. The requirement to preserve confidentiality continues indefinitely after a Member's term on Council ends.
- Observe appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest
- Comply with relevant statutory provisions (for example, data-protection legislation, Freedom of Information Acts)

Obligations

Council Members should:

- Fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations
- Ensure that there are adequate controls to prevent fraud, including adequate controls to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to the claiming of expenses for business travel
- Use their reasonable endeavours to attend all Council and related meetings

Council Members and employees should comply with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure.

To guard against conflict of interest or disclosure of information, Council Members and employees should return to the Executive Director, on resignation, retirement or conclusion of their term, any documentation obtained during their term / employment or confirm that all documentation has been securely disposed of.

Loyalty

Council Members should be loyal to the Royal Irish Academy and fully committed to its objectives, and should acknowledge the duty of all to conform to the highest standards of business ethics. Members of the Audit and Risk Committee who sign this form will balance loyalty to the Academy as an institution with their statutory responsibility to monitor and/or challenge management actions.

Fairness

Council Members and Senior Management should:

- Ensure compliance with employment-equality and equal-status legislation, and adhere to the Academy's Diversity and Inclusion Statement
- Commit to fairness in all business dealings
- Value stakeholders and treat all stakeholders equally

Council Members and senior Academy management should ensure that all staff appointments and promotions are consistent with established public-sector norms.

Work/External Environment

Council Members should place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of employees.

Responsibility

It is not possible for a set of rules or guidelines to provide for all situations that may arise. Council Members and employees of the Royal Irish Academy will bear in mind, therefore, that it is primarily their responsibility to ensure that all of their activities, whether covered specifically or otherwise in this document, are governed by the ethical considerations implicit in these procedures. The Executive Director will ensure that copies of this Code of Business Conduct are circulated to all Council Members and all employees for their attention. The above-mentioned recipients must complete the Declaration of Understanding as set out below and return the completed declaration to the Academy's Executive Director.

Clarification and Review

Any Member of Council or staff who is in doubt as to the application to him/her of this Code of Business Conduct should seek clarification, as appropriate, from the Academy's Executive Director.

Council is committed to reviewing this Code of Business Conduct at appropriate intervals.

Declaration of Understanding

I have read and understood the Code of Business Conduct and agree to be bound by the principles set out in any dealing for or on behalf of the Royal Irish Academy.

Name in block capitals: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____