

Code of Conduct for Academic Staff

1. Preamble

The behaviour of SLITA Academics has an impact on the education and life of the nation as well as on the local environment and the world community in general. Academics, therefore, are expected to have a regard for the impact of their personal behaviour on the SLITA, students, society, environment and the community. The SLITA is providing all necessary resources to the academic community expecting that they perform their duties with proper regard to this vision. It is essential then the members of the Faculty of Textile and Apparel Studies comport themselves in a manner that uphold high standards of professional ethics that will ensure confidence in the institution and community at large. Academics are thus expected to ensure that decision-making is open and fair in conformity with the SLITA Act, bylaws and regulations.

The SLITA, and its academic staff, including those holding positions of authority, shall enjoy the academic freedom of the Faculty as enshrined in relevant laws and regulations. This code of conduct, therefore, shall not, in any form or in any means, limit or interfere with the academic freedom of the teachers/academic staff of the SLITA.

2. Purpose

This code of conduct, which forms part of the terms of employment for academic staff, sets out the expectations of the Faculty of Textile and Apparel Studies (FTAS) with respect to the professional and personal conduct of the staff. A key purpose of the code is to promote integrity through ethical decision-making and behaviour.

3. Scope

The term "professionalism" is used to describe adherence by academic employees to an acceptable standard in the method, manner, and spirit in which they perform their duties. The professional conduct of academic employees at SLITA is assessed in relation to four distinct areas of SLITA activity:

- (1) - academic preparation
- (2) - classroom conduct
- (3) - relationships with students outside the classroom
- (4) - relationships with other departments and staff

4. Adherence to Professional Activities

4.1 Academic Preparations

4.1.1 Academic Readiness

All faculty members are expected to be academically prepared to teach assigned courses. Faculty will demonstrate academic readiness by maintaining, developing, and expanding competence in their field (s). Specifically, academic employees will:

- explore materials in and relating to their field (s);
- use available Professional Development days in a productive manner;
- keep abreast of current research and technical advances in their field; and
- maintain familiarity with current standards of practice in their field.

4.1.2 Course Delivery

All academic employees are expected to perform preparatory activities prior to classes as are necessary to ensure adequate delivery of the courses they have been assigned. Specifically, academic employees will:

- prepare course outlines for the courses they are teaching or become familiar with outlines that already exist;
- have clear learning goals for each class;
- select texts and order films, videos, and other materials for each class in a timely fashion;
- gather supplementary materials for distribution as needed; and
- consult with colleagues teaching the same course.
- share information relevant to fields of instruction and discuss teaching strategies with appropriate faculty;
- discuss issues related to curriculum development.

4.2 Classroom conduct

Academic employees will refrain from using class time to promote their personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas and will refuse to allow students to use class time for such purposes. This guideline is not intended to restrict the freedom of academic employees or students to express personal views of relevance to topics being taught or discussed.

4.2.1 Classroom Environment

Academic employees will treat all students with courtesy and respect. In each and every class they teach, academic employees will maintain a climate in which learning can flourish and in which all students are treated with equality and respect.

4.2.2 Review of SLITA Policies

Academic employees will ensure their students are familiarized with SLITA policies and codes relating to student rights and responsibilities;

4.2.3 Review of Course Description

Academic employees will provide their students with a course description and review it with them at the first class. The course description will clearly state:

- the title of the course, the duration of the course, and the number of instructional hours involved;
- the name and office number of the academic staff member;
- the title(s) of the text(s) and any other learning resources required for the course;
- the general goals of the course, including, if possible, a detailed outline of lecture topics, reading assignments, due dates for projects or written work.
- the evaluation procedure that will be used in the course, including specific percentages for items that will count toward the final grade; and

4.2.4 Class Protocols and Content

Academic employees will:

- ensure that all activities in the class pertain to the learning objectives of the class;
- commence each class on time;
- inform students of the procedure to be followed in the event that their class is cancelled;
- be in the classroom, ready to start teaching, at the prescribed time, with technical aids on hand;
- use allotted instructional time
- end classes on time. Classroom time should be managed so that the room is vacated on schedule and other classes are not inconvenienced by being forced to wait;
- encourage open discussion and feedback from students regarding the course and the manner in which it is being taught as a follow-up to the required written course evaluations;

4.3 Relationships with students outside the classroom

4.3.1 Interaction with students outside the classroom occurs in two contexts:

Contact with students that is didactic in nature, as when faculty assist students with their work in areas such as reading rooms and labs, or meet with students in offices or elsewhere to provide help with course materials or feedback on performance.

Contact with students that is non-didactic in nature, as when faculty interact with students in areas such as lounges or cafeterias or at social functions held on or off-SLITA.

4.3.2 General Interactions

Academic employees will:

- demonstrate courtesy, respect, patience, and a willingness to help in their interactions with students in either context;
- demonstrate the spirit of professionalism by encouraging students to approach them outside the classroom to clarify issues of concern and by providing reasonable assistance with course work at a time that is agreed upon by both parties;
- respond to special needs identified by a student by directing the student to appropriate resources within the university that might be of assistance in meeting course objectives;
- consult, where required, with Disabilities Services or with the Dean for help in determining how to reasonably accommodate a student with special needs.

4.3.3 Conflict Resolution

- Faculty will strive actively to resolve conflicts between themselves and any student and should make an effort to resolve conflicts between students;
- In the event of conflict between faculty and student, the faculty member will meet with the student and maintain an open, non-confrontational attitude while attempting to resolve the problem at hand.
- In the event of conflict between students, faculty will intervene by making verbal attempts at conciliation; if not successful, faculty should immediately notify the appropriate authority according to the procedural guidelines established in the SLITA policy.
- Academic employees should refrain from physical intervention to resolve a conflict.
- Academic employees should behave toward students with circumspection, avoiding conflict on SLITA premises that might result in the imposition of SLITA sanctions or civil or criminal proceedings.

Professional Boundaries

To maintain their professional relationships, faculty will not:

- develop a friendship with a student, which might be misunderstood by the student;
- become sexually intimate with a student currently enrolled in a course being taught or evaluated by the faculty member;
- involve students in their own personal problems;

involve a student in any interpersonal difficulties the faculty member might have with any other member of the SLITA community; or become involved in any situation with a student or group of students that is inconsistent with the role of an academic, for example, getting drunk or using prohibited substances on SLITA premises.

4.4 Relationships with other Departments and staff.

Behaviour that is inappropriate inside the classroom is equally inappropriate in relations with other faculty and staff. When interacting with other academic employees/colleagues, faculty will:

- behave with courtesy, respect, patience, helpfulness, and a general spirit of goodwill in their interactions;
- share educational resources such as audiovisual equipment, computer facilities, and learning resource materials;
- vacate classrooms in a timely fashion so as not to inconvenience incoming faculty;
- leave classrooms reasonably clean and orderly, with boards cleared and seating arrangements restored to the layout standard for that classroom, so that incoming faculty will not have to perform housekeeping chores before beginning class;
- refuse to engage in or condone gossip, innuendo, or any other activities that would malign or otherwise damage a colleague;
- refrain from talking about a faculty member or another course or program in a public manner or with students. Instead, students should be encouraged to share their concerns with either the faculty member involved or the faculty member's Chair.

Faculty who are directly affected by unprofessional or troublesome conduct of other department, the relevant department should directly attempt to clarify and correct the situation. Should such an intervention be unsuccessful (that is, if the behaviour persists), faculty members should report to the authority of SLITA. Faculty will, without exception, maintain confidentiality when attempting to resolve issues and will base all reports of concern on direct behavioural observations of the department involved. Whenever possible, these observations should be documented in writing.

4.4.1 Conduct with Faculty Support Staff

Faculty are expected to:

- treat support staff with courtesy and respect;
- behave toward support staff in a circumspect manner, avoiding conduct or comments that are or could be reasonably construed as being discriminatory in nature or that might result in the imposition of SLITA sanctions or civil or criminal proceedings;
- respect the professionalism of support staff and honour and abide by the systems and procedures that support staff members have established to enable them to function effectively;
- assist support staff by handing over in time the sheets, records of grades, and other documents that must be processed according to a Faculty schedule at the times requested by support staff and in the format specified;

- respect the terms and conditions of the support staff collective agreement and individual job descriptions;
- provide support staff with appropriate advance notice to complete requested work;
- keep support staff fully apprised of any changes in the nature or timing of the services they are expected to perform.

4.4.2 Conduct with Faculty Administrative Staff

Faculty will:

- treat Faculty administrative staff with courtesy and ensure that their activities in the SLITA will not impede the effective operation of their department or the SLITA;
- notify the relevant office at the earliest reasonable opportunity if, for reasons of illness or accident, they are unable to meet their assigned classes and provide, if possible, appropriate instructions to be given to their classes to be carried out during their absence;
- provide the Head of the Department with appropriate written notice of requests for vacations at non- traditional times;
- avoid problems of professional conflict of interest by ensuring that the Head of the Department is aware of and has approved the terms and conditions of any additional employment or contracted activity that might impede their ability to fulfill their assigned responsibilities in the SLITA;
- accurately complete essential academic records, such as exemption requests and amended grade notices, within specified time frames and submit grade calculations within specified times following the end of the semester.

4.4.3 Faculty Equipment

Faculty will:

- demonstrate a concern for the appropriate use and maintenance of all equipment provided by the SLITA, such as computers, photocopiers, and test-scoring devices;
- ensure that SLITA services such as photocopying and postage are used for Faculty purposes only.

4.4.5 Academic Freedom

Academic staff are entitled to the exercise of academic freedom. Academic freedom includes the right, without constriction to:

- freedom of expression in the learning environment,
- freedom in carrying out research and disseminating and publishing the results thereof,
- freedom in producing and performing creative works,
- freedom to engage in service to the SLITA and the community,

- freedom to express their opinion about the SLITA, its administration, or the system in which they work,
- freedom from institutional censorship and
- freedom to participate in professional or representative academic bodies.

In exercising such freedom, there is a responsibility to adhere to the law as it pertains to Human Rights and Hate Propaganda as defined under the Criminal Code of Sri Lanka, any other relevant legislation, the code of conduct for academic faculty and to respect the academic freedom of all others.

5. Acceptable Conduct:

- 5.1 It is the responsibility of the members of the staff to apprise him/herself of and abide by the rules, regulations and by-laws that affect his/her SLITA roles
- 5.2 The Faculty of Textile and Apparel Studies expects the members to follow all legitimate instructions given by those supervising their activities and/or work areas subject to provisions laid out in the SLITA Act and Government Establishment Code and perform duties or any other institutional assignment to the satisfaction of the institution. Academic staff should refrain from shirking or intentionally delaying any legitimate duty or assignment assigned to them by the Faculty.
- 5.3 Those holding positions of authority and/or decision-making powers over either other members of the staff and/or students at the SLITA shall refrain from using those positions and/or power accruing to them from the holding of such positions to harass and/or create an environment, which is not conducive to learning or working, for their subordinates or those who are placed under their authority. Personal likes/dislikes and partialities/animosities should not interfere with the just discharge of responsibilities and duties of those in positions of power. They should not demand favours of a personal nature and/or subject subordinates to punitive measures/actions for non-compliance with such demands.
- 5.4 The SLITA should strive to maintain the highest standards in all the teaching, research, outreach activities and dealings with the public that it undertakes. Academics should not conduct themselves in ways that may undermine the standards of its awards and dissemination of knowledge or lead the general public to lose faith in the institution's probity. Members of the academic staff should be honest in all official matters. They should not misrepresent or withhold information with which they are concerned or take advantage of the lack of knowledge or inexperience of students, other academic staff or the general public.
- 5.5 All members of the academic staff shall practice intellectual honesty in their diverse roles.

Plagiarism constitutes a serious offense and the SLITA treats such offenses, once established beyond reasonable doubt, very seriously. Those found guilty shall be dealt with in accordance with provisions in the SLITA Act, Government Establishment Code and other relevant by-laws.
- 5.6 The SLITA should not concern itself with the private lives of its employees unless they affect its effective operations or reputation.

- 5.7 Any form of conflicts of interest should be declared and academics should refrain from performing duties where such conflict is present or would be perceived by others to be present.
- Academics who are relatives of, or who have any other close personal relationship with, other employees/students/clients should not place themselves in a supervisory, assessing or any other decision-making position in relation to the latter.
 - An academic (or his/her family members) should also desist from engaging in business relationships with the SLITA, its suppliers, research sponsors or donors.
- 5.8 The SLITA recognizes the value of outreach and other services that the academic staff may perform in relation to the community or public at large or to various institutions, boards, and bodies of the State. All permanent, temporary and contract staff must ensure that such work does not interfere with their SLITA-related teaching, research and service functions; does not adversely affect their SLITA work performance; and does not involve the use of SLITA resources, unless such involvement has been given express approval by the Director General.
- 5.9 The SLITA values the undertaking of consultancy activity by its academic staff. It recognizes that consultancy forms an important part of an academic's functions as a SLITA teacher, in particular in encouraging a close relationship with the community, including industry, business and commerce. Through its consultancy policies and practices, the SLITA seeks to offer an efficient and valued service to the community, based on the excellence of its educational research provision and professional capacities. In accordance with that policy, all academic staff who undertake consultancy must inform the Director General of such consultancy and pay applicable dues to the SLITA. **Academic staff should ensure that consultancy related assignments do not interfere with their teaching and service commitments to the SLITA.**
- 5.10 SLITA academics should not exploit their power, positions, or opportunities for financial or any other forms of personal gain. Exploitation in any form should be avoided and discouraged by reporting such incidents or policies to relevant authorities. Intimate and sexual relationships that are developed through influence of the office held are tantamount to exploitation.
- 5.11 Academic staff of the SLITA must not engage in slandering in verbal, written or electronic means with malicious intent that is intended to target and tarnish the reputation of another employee or student at the SLITA.
- 5.12 Canvassing is allowed for posts or memberships made through elections and other relevant regulations or laws. In all other instances, including recruitments, appointments and promotions, canvassing in any form or through any means shall be deemed a disqualification and shall result in the candidate's or applicant's exclusion from the process for selection in question.

6. Inappropriate Behaviours:

Academic employees will not use the classroom or online environment to:

- use scurrilous, profane, or obscene language;

- make remarks or engage in conduct that is racist, sexist, or in other ways discriminatory, as defined by Instrument of Human Rights safe guards. nor permit any student in any class to do so;
- engage in behaviour or make remarks that could reasonably be interpreted as threatening, nor allow any student in any class to engage in such behaviour; or
- encourage, by inaction or innuendo, the development of a classroom environment that is fractious, disrespectful of others, or inconsistent with the Code of Student Conduct:
- promote their personal, religious, political, social, or business agendas;
- spread negative, malicious, or unkind remarks or rumours.

7. Procedure for Handling Misconduct

- 7.1 This code of conduct is not in lieu of the categories of misconducts identified in the Government Establishment Code.
- 7.2 These bylaws shall be interpreted in conjunction with and under the laws and regulations governing the SLITA.
- 7.3 All academic staff/officers are duty bound to report any instances of wrongdoing, including bribery and corruption, maladministration, serious or substantial waste of public money or resources, public information contravention, or any other kind of wrongdoing or misconduct, to the relevant authority in the SLITA. The SLITA shall protect whistleblowers and create an enabling environment for such reporting.

Note : SLITA expects all faculty to conform to the explicit standards of professionalism defined in this document. Academic employees who demonstrate behaviour that does not comply with or that is inconsistent with the minimal standards of professionalism contained in this document may be subject to the range of disciplinary actions specified in the collective agreement and the government establishment code.