

CODE OF CONDUCT



TATA INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

(A Deemed University, established under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956)

MUMBAI

CODE OF CONDUCT

The TISS Code of Conduct provides the standards by which the Institute's faculty, administrators, staff and students should conduct themselves. The Institute aims to foster the highest possible ethical standards in the interaction of its faculty, administrators, staff and students with each other, and with customers, suppliers, regulators and the community at large. The code of conduct is a guide to provide direction to its faculty, administrators, staff and students in using the principles of ethical conduct as a foundation for behaviour.

1.0 LEAVE

Faculty and staff must follow leave rules and abstain from work with due permission. School/ Centre secretariat and administrative division and units must have knowledge on whereabouts of their faculty and staff respectively.

Duty leave must be approved and approval must be obtained from the School Deans or Chairpersons and independent centres respectively. Rail and air booking, now decentralised to the schools and independent centres, can be done only when the request comes with the duty leave approval and permission. All faculty/ staff movement will be placed on the school/centre page at the intranet.

2.0 INSTITUTE ASSETS

2.1 Electronic Communication Resources

By using any TISS electronic equipment or systems or by accessing the Internet or intranet using a TISS sign-on ID or any TISS computer equipment or systems, the faculty, administrators, staff and students of TISS acknowledges that he or she represents TISS and agrees to comply with TISS policies governing their use. TISS provides electronic equipment and systems, including Internet and intranet services, for institute-related activities. Consequently, TISS faculty, administrators, staff and generally students should use such equipment and systems to further the institutional interests of TISS and only in a manner that maintains the reputation and image of TISS. Limited personal use of these resources is authorised so long as such use is

- occasional
- of reasonable duration
- does not adversely affect performance
- does not violate Indian laws or compromise intellectual property rights
- is not otherwise prohibited by the Institute policy.

2.2 Use of Institutes Resources

Institute resources must be reserved for official purposes on behalf of the Institute. They may not be used for personal gain, and may not be used for personal use except in a manner that is incidental, and reasonable in light of the employee's duties. Institutes resources include, but are not limited to, the use of Institute systems (e.g., telephone systems, data communication and networking services) and the TISS domain for electronic communication forums; the use of Institute equipment (e.g., computers and peripherals, Institute vehicles); the use of procurement tools such as purchasing cards and petty cash; and, the time and effort of staff, students and others at TISS.

3.0 EMBEZZLEMENT, THEFT AND MISAPPLICATION OF FUNDS

TISS holds each faculty, administrator, staff and student responsible for maintaining accurate records. Anyone who embezzles, steals, or wilfully misappropriates any funds, credits or real property of TISS will be subject to disciplinary action by the Institute and legal action.

4.0 BEHAVIOUR NORMS

The basic norms of conduct expected by the Institute includes:

- TISS does not cause or tolerate any violation of law or regulation in the conduct of its institutional objectives or related activities
- TISS provides pertinent information to authorised auditors or regulatory agencies, and discloses, on a timely basis, information required for judging the soundness of its condition and its merits as an investment
- TISS maintains and uphold standards and procedures that are designed to safeguard the legitimate confidentiality of information pertaining to its employees, students and associate partners
- TISS endeavours to deal fairly and in good faith with its employees, students, associate partners and regulators

5.0 CONDUCT OF FACULTY, ADMINISTRATORS, STAFF AND STUDENTS

- Members of the TISS community shall perform their duties in a fair and ethical manner in accordance with established policies, procedures and regulations.
- Members of the TISS community shall carry out their duties with professionalism. The Institute supports the efforts of its faculty, administrators, staff and students to achieve and maintain professional standards.
- Supervisors have a particular responsibility to support the Code of Conduct and to demonstrate compliance within their school/centre/unit.

6.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

As a member of TISS, you have a duty of loyalty to the Institute and must, therefore, avoid any actual or apparent conflict of interest with the Institute. The faculty, administrators, staff and students must not use their position for private gain, to advance personal interests, or to obtain favours or benefits for themselves, members of their families, or any other individuals, corporations or business entities. A conflict situation can arise when a faculty, administrator, staff or student takes an action or has an interest that may make it difficult for him or her to perform his or her work objectively and effectively. Conflicts of interest also arise when a faculty, Administrator, staff and student or a member of his or her family receives improper personal benefits as a result of such faculty's, administrator's or staff's position with the Institute. If such a situation arises, the member should immediately report the circumstances to the Registrar.

7.0 REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Being factual and truthful is important in all communications with others, including with any statutory authority.

8.0 FRAUD

The faculty, administrators, staff and students of TISS must not engage in fraudulent conduct. Fraud includes deliberately practiced deception, whether by words, conduct, false or misleading allegations, or by concealment, to secure unfair or unlawful gain. Fraud covers both express and implied representations of fact, and may be written or oral.

9.0 DRUG FREE WORKPLACE, SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

TISS strives to provide a safe productive environment for its members. This includes a workplace free of the problems associated with the use of illegal drugs, smoking and alcohol. To maintain a drug-free workplace, the presence or use of illegal drugs or use of alcohol and smoking on Institute premises is not permitted.

10.0 EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES OR PERSONS HAVING CLOSE PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

To minimise security risks and avoid conflicts, whenever possible, family members or others with close personal relationships should not work in positions where one may supervise another, have influence over performance and one that involves a chain of custody or approval authority with respect to another and/or that involves a workplace relationship that would create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with another. The management has the discretion to determine whether a personal relationship may interfere with the performance of a current member and/or would result in a conflict of interest.

11.0 GIFTS AND GRATUITIES

Generally, faculty, administrators, staff and students should not accept things of value from third parties in connection with Institute's work transaction. The faculty, administrators, staff and students may accept from a third party meals, refreshments, travel arrangements or accommodations or entertainment, all of reasonable value, in the course of a meeting or academic purposes. They may also accept from a third party advertising or promotional material or nominal value, such as office supplies, discounts or rebates on merchandise or services that do not exceed those available to other customers of the third party and gifts of modest value that are related to commonly recognised events or occasions. Gifts of cash in any amount are expressly prohibited.

The faculty, administrators, staff and students may not, on behalf of TISS, directly or indirectly give, offer, or promise anything of value to any individual, business entity, organisation or any other person for the purpose of influencing the actions of the recipient.

12.0 HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

Harassment and discrimination of any form such as caste, religion, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation or bullying has no place in TISS. All forms of harassment and discrimination are serious issues that undermine morale and can adversely affect the ability of staff and students to feel included. Such behaviour is unacceptable and all complaints will be dealt with fairly and promptly. Complaints will be dealt with by respective committees and statutory bodies of the Institute. Disciplinary action will apply to any staff member or student who is found to have harassed another member of the TISS community. All forms of behaviour of TISS faculty, staff and students outside the campus will be dealt with by law enforcement agencies.

13.0 UNION MEMBERSHIP

The Institute staff and students have the right to choose whether or not to join a union or association. Similarly, those who choose to join may also choose whether or not to participate in union or association activities. Any activity that affects the academic work of the Institute will be dealt with as per law.

14.0 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Institute respects Intellectual Property Rights as per national laws.

15.0 PROCUREMENT

It is the responsibility of every staff member of the Institute involved in the supply of goods or services, to or for the Institute, to declare in writing all relevant interest that the staff member may have in any proposed transaction.

In particular, those staff who deal directly with suppliers must:

- ensure that their processes are open and transparent;
- not engage in misleading or deceptive conduct;
- not transact with suppliers for private or unauthorised use; and
- not compromise the Institute's standing or integrity of its purchasing activities through the acceptance of gifts or hospitality.

All schools, centres, administrative divisions, projects and other entities of the Institute should ensure that employees are aware of the requirements to not disclose confidential information and to manage properly the information they receive as part of the procurement process.

In the event of doubt or perceptions of conflict, further advice should be sought from the Registrar.

16.0 INTERNAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Periodic assessment of the accountability standards of academic and administrative activities and processes will be mandated by the Academic Council, Governing Board, the internal audit group, external auditors and other internal review functions and/or regulatory agencies. All TISS members are expected to provide timely and accurate information during any such assessments of the accountability environment.

17.0 FINANCIAL REPORTING

All Institute accounts, financial reports, tax returns, expense reimbursements, time sheets and other documents, including those submitted to government agencies must be accurate, clear and complete. All entries in the Institute's books and records, including departmental accounts and individual expense reports, must accurately reflect each transaction. All members must ensure to take appropriate approvals before incurring any expenses on the Institute's behalf. Retrospective approvals will not be allowed and the expenses incurred will be treated as personal expense. The authorities, the Registrar or the Director must be informed of any emergency procurement to be done.

Financial discipline is applicable to travel. Air or train booking will not be done without the grant of duty leave or any other leave and authorisation of the School Dean, Chairperson of Independent Centres, Registrar for all Administrative Divisions and Director for all those reporting to that position. The Institute will not reimburse travel costs incurred in all unauthorised travel.

18.0 OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Teaching, field work, research guidance, attendance of meeting of the Institute's statutory bodies — School Board, Academic Council, Research Council and Governing Board — examination duty, admission work, school/centre meeting and seminars given by faculty and students at the school/centre level must take priority over all activities outside the institute. This commitment to basic reason for our existence must be non-negotiable. Prior approval of the Director must be obtained to attend non-Institute engagement to have priority over teaching and attending meeting of statutory bodies of the institute.

Remain engaged with external events and programmes through Skype and video conferencing facilities available at the institute. All staff and faculty must be careful to conserve scarce financial resources of the Institute and whenever work can be accomplished through Skype, telephone and video-conferencing, travel must be avoided.

As private citizens, faculty, administrators, staff and students of TISS are free to petition or otherwise contact the government on any issue. However, unless authorised in writing, faculty, Administrators, staff and students may not purport to represent the Institute when contacting any branch of government at any level.

19.0 NON-WORK-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Staying focused on providing the best education to our students and producing quality research and field action projects are our top priority. Faculty and staff must refrain from:

- Use of the student(s) to promote personal interest or cause harm to the academic environment of the Institute. Evidence of any indulgence of this kind of abuse of students will result in summary dismissal from the services at the institute.
- TISS has zero tolerance policy with respect to discrimination of any form on the basis of caste, religion, gender, region of origin, physical ability, sexual orientation and others. Any practice of reverse discrimination will be monitored and reported to the National Commission of Scheduled Caste, National Commission of Scheduled Tribes, National Commission on Women and other law enforcing agencies, and appropriate action initiated.

20.0 INTERACTION WITH THE MEDIA

Faculty can interact and share information with media on academic issues without permission from the authorities. However, information given out must be based on research work and other findings and defensible when followed-up by the government and others. Individuals will be responsible for the consequences for addressing issues without defensible evidence.

Employees should refer all questions or requests for information from reporters or other media representatives to the Registrar, Deputy Directors and the Director's office to ensure consistency and accuracy of information.

21.0 USE OF CORPORATE NAME AND LETTERHEAD

TISS name, logo and letterheads may not be used for any purpose other than in the normal course of official Institute work, unless expressly approved by senior management

22.0 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE/STATEMENT OF RESPECT

TISS strives to provide a safe work environment that is conducive to academic work, good morale and a high level of productivity. The faculty, administrators, staff and students are expected to treat fellow members and associate partners and vendors with courtesy and dignity and resolve any difference in a professional, non-abusive and non-threatening manner.

The faculty, administrators, staff and students are responsible for their behaviour and for understanding how others may perceive their conduct in the workplace.

Disruptive, unruly or abusive behaviour by faculty, administrators, staff and students in the Institute premises or at Institute-sponsored events will not be tolerated. Inappropriate conduct includes verbal or physical threats, fights and obscene or intimidating language and behaviour, as well as any other abusive conduct.

The possession of firearms or other weapons on or in all premises or property owned, operated, managed or controlled by TISS is prohibited.

Members are to report any threats or incidence of violence to their Dean or Registrar. The faculty, administrators, staff and students who witness or are involved in a situation where danger is imminent should call the local number for emergency response and then contact internal resources as appropriate

23.0 COMPLIANCE WITH LAWS, RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Institute's faculty, administrators, staff and students are subject to several laws, rules and regulations, only some of which are specifically addressed in this code. TISS faculty, administrators, staff and students are encouraged to become reasonably informed and to comply with the laws, rules and regulations applicable to you, whether or not they are addressed in this code.

24.0 DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be promptly and consistently applied to serve as notice that there are serious consequences for intentional wrongdoing and to demonstrate that TISS is committed to integrity as a core part of its culture. TISS believes that application of discipline for a violation of our ethical standards should be prompt and must be appropriate. Therefore, the Institute will weigh all mitigating and aggravating circumstances, including whether the violation was intentional or inadvertent, the extent of the likely damage to the Institute resulting from the violation and whether the offending person has committed previous violations of this code or other Institute policy concerning ethical behaviour.

Staff and faculty members using students for creating disturbances, and indiscipline will face serious action. Using students to play divisive and obstructive activities is a serious crime.

Violation will be marked and memo will be given by the Registrar. Suitable action will follow. Violation of Institute rules and norms will be investigated through due process. Extreme action may include dismissal from service or compulsory retirement.

25.0 APPLICATION AND WAIVER

Any waiver of this code for faculty, administrators, staff and students of the Institute may be made only by the Director or by the Chairperson of the Governing Board, where necessary by the Governing Board. Any waiver of this code for members of the Institute will be promptly disclosed to the Governing Body.

26.0 COMMUNICATION WITH REGISTRAR/AUDIT COMMITTEE

The Institute encourages its members to engage in an active and open dialogue with the Registrar/Audit Committee and to discuss with the Registrar/Audit Committee any concerns or suggestions that members may have regarding the Institutes disclosure controls and reporting procedures.

27.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All faculty, administrators, staff and students of TISS shall acknowledge receipt of the code of conduct and agree to comply with it as a condition of employment/service/enrolment to academic programme. A reaffirmation of this agreement may be required periodically.