



Codes of conduct

Codes of conduct play a key role in establishing organisational culture. By detailing the expected standards of behaviour, they enable employees to respond appropriately to the corruption risks and ethical challenges posed by a continuously changing environment.

A code of conduct cannot provide a set of rules stipulating how employees should behave in every conceivable circumstance. Instead, it provides a set of guiding standards, principles and values to determine the right or best course of action. This puts responsibility on the individual to use judgement and common sense in resolving ethical issues in the public interest.

The *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994* details the requirements for the development and implementation of public sector codes of conduct in Queensland, and sets out the ethical principles and values applicable to employees. The Act states that a code of conduct should be based on the principles of:

- integrity and impartiality
- promotion of the public good
- commitment to the system of government
- accountability and transparency.

Public sector codes of conduct should be reviewed on a regular basis and updated if necessary, especially where there have been material changes in the regulatory or legislative framework affecting the particular sector or body. This allows for a reasonable response to change and ensures that the code does not become obsolete.

Staff should be provided with regular and ongoing training in the content and operation of their code of conduct, especially when it has been reviewed and updated.

The Act provides for two types of codes of conduct for public sector bodies in Queensland:

1. The *Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service* (often referred to as the Single Code) is administered by the Public Service Commission and applies to:
 - Departments
 - TAFE institutes and statutory TAFE institutes
 - Administrative units of a court or tribunal
 - Any other public sector body which adopts the code by regulation.
2. Codes of conduct developed specifically by and for other public sector entities which are not covered by the Single Code. These codes must be developed in accordance with the principles, values and other guidelines set forth in the *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*. These codes will be developed by:
 - The parliamentary service
 - Local governments
 - Universities, university and agricultural colleges
 - Statutory bodies
 - Other public sector bodies as prescribed under a regulation.

Some bodies, such as government owned corporations and non-state schools are not subject to the requirement to have a code of conduct.

Related information

- [Keeping your code of conduct relevant: Guidelines for best practice \(PDF, 214 KB\)](#) Information for public sector agencies on how to review their code of conduct and effectively implement the revised code.

- Keeping your code of conduct relevant: Best practice checklist (PDF, 160 KB) Checklist to help public sector agencies review their code of conduct and evaluate the revised code after the review.
- CMC Code of conduct (PDF, 150 KB)

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