

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR TEACHERS

I. Teachers

Whoever adopts teaching as a profession assumes the obligation to conduct him/her in accordance with the ideal of the profession. A teacher is constantly under the scrutiny of his students and the society at large. Therefore, every teacher should see that there is no incompatibility between his/her precepts and practice. The national ideals of education which have already been set forth and which he/she should seek to inculcate among students must be his/her own ideals. The profession further requires that the teachers should be calm, patient, and communicative by temperament and amiable in disposition. Every faculty member should work within the university policies and practices to satisfy the vision and mission of the university. Code of conduct for teaching is mainly governed by the Vels Institute of Science, Technology, and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Chennai, statutes, ordinances and UGC Regulation-2018.

Teachers should:

- a. Adhere to a responsible pattern of conduct and demeanor expected of them by the community.
- b. Manage their private affairs in a manner consistent with the dignity of the profession.
- c. Seek to make professional growth continuous through study and research.
- d. Express free and frank opinions by participation in professional meetings, seminars, conferences, etc. towards the contribution of knowledge.
- e. Maintain active membership of professional organizations and strive to improve education and profession through them.
- f. Perform their duties in the form of teaching, tutorial, practical, seminar and research work conscientiously and with dedication.
- g. Co-operate and assist in carrying out functions relating to the educational responsibilities of the university such as: assisting in appraising applications for admission, advising and counseling students as well as assisting in the conduct of the university examinations, including supervision, invigilation, and evaluation.
- h. Participate in extension, co-curricular, and extra-curricular activities including community service.

II. Role of Teachers with the Students

Teachers should:

- a. Respect the right and dignity of the student in expressing his/her opinion.
- b. Deal fairly and impartially with students regardless of their religion, caste, political, economic, social, and physical characteristics.
- c. Recognize the difference in aptitude and capabilities among students and strive to meet their individual needs.
- d. Encourage students to improve their attainments, develop their personalities and at the same time contribute to community welfare.
- e. Inculcate among student's scientific outlook and respect for physical labor and ideals of democracy, patriotism, and peace.
- f. Be affectionate to the students and not behave in a vindictive manner towards any of them for any reason.
- g. Pay attention to only the attainment of the student in the assessment of merit.
- h. Make available to the students even beyond their class hours and help and guide students without any remuneration or reward.
- i. Aid students to develop and understanding of our national heritage and national goals.
- j. Refrain from inciting students against other students, colleagues or administration.

III. Role of Teachers with the Colleagues

Teachers should:

- a. Treat other members of the profession in the same manner as they themselves wish to be treated.
- b. Speak respectfully of other teachers and render assistance for professional betterment.
- c. Refrain from lodging unsubstantiated allegations against colleagues to higher authorities.
- d. Refrain from allowing considerations of caste, creed, religion, race, or sex in their professional endeavour.

IV. Role of Teachers with the Authorities

Teachers should:

- a. Discharge their professional responsibilities according to the existing rules and adhere to procedures and methods consistent with their profession in initiating steps through their own university bodies and/or professional organizations for change of any such

rule detrimental to the professional interest.

- b. Refrain from undertaking any other employment and commitment including private tuitions and coaching classes which are likely to interfere with their professional responsibilities.
- c. Co-operate in the formulation of policies of the university by accepting various offices and discharge responsibilities which such offices may demand.
- d. Co-operate with the authorities for the betterment of the university keeping in view the interest and in conformity with dignity of the profession.
- e. Should adhere to the conditions of contract of engagement/appointment.
- f. Give due notice before a change of position is made.
- g. Refrain from availing themselves of leave except on unavoidable grounds and as far as practicable with prior intimation, keeping in view their particular responsibility for completion of academic schedule.

V. Role of Teachers with the Non-Teaching Staff

Teachers should:

- a. Treat the non-teaching staff as colleagues and equal partners in a cooperative undertaking, within VISTAS of its campus.
- b. Help in the function of joint staff councils covering both teachers and non-teaching staff.

VI. Role of Teachers with the Guardians

Teachers should try to see through teachers' bodies and organizations, that the university maintain contact with the guardians, their students, send reports of their performance to the guardians whenever necessary and meet the guardians in meetings convened for the purpose for mutual exchange of ideas and for the benefit of the university.

VII. Role of Teachers with the Society

Teachers should:

- a. Recognize that education is a public service and strive to keep the public informed of the educational programs which are being provided.
- b. Work to improve education in the community and strengthen the community's moral and intellectual life.
- c. Be aware of social problems and take part in such activities as would be conducive to the progress of society and hence the country as a whole.

- d. Perform the duties of citizenship, participate in community activities and shoulder responsibilities of public offices.
- e. Refrain from taking part in or subscribing to or assisting in any way activities which tend to promote feeling of hatred or enmity among different communities, religions or linguistic groups but actively work for national integration.

VIII. Guidelines for Biometric Attendance System

A biometric attendance system is introduced & followed for digitally recording the attendance of all the faculty. Accordingly, biometric attendance machines have been installed in most of the blocks/buildings of the campus, to enable the faculty and staff to register their attendance by recording their finger or face impressions through the biometric machines. The guidelines for biometric attendance system are framed with regard to the main objectives to ensure the punctuality and observation of daily working timings by the faculty and staff and the guidelines be adhered by all the staff.

a. Attendance on Register

In addition to registering/marking the attendance digitally through biometric attendance system as above, faculty/staff are also required to sign the attendance register in their respective department/section as is being done hitherto as per previous practice till any further orders in this regard. Weekly report of biometric attendance of faculty/staff will be provided to the HODs/section in charges by the concerned authority, for settlement of leaves/relaxations/incentives and to check punctuality as well as daily working hours.

VIII. Disciplinary procedure

If there is a case against a teacher for a possible breach of the code of conduct, then a standing investigating committee will be formed to recommend a suitable disciplinary action who shall inquire into the alleged violation and accordingly suggest the action to be taken against the said teacher. The committee may meet with the staff to ascertain the misconduct and suggest one or more of the following disciplinary actions based on the nature of the misconduct,

- a. **Warning:** Indicating that the action of the said delinquent teacher was in violation of the code and any further acts of misconduct shall result in severe disciplinary action.
- b. **Restrictions:** Reprimanding and restricting access to various facilities on the campus for a specified period of time.

- c. **Community service:** For a specified period of time to be extended if need be. However, any future misconduct along with failure to comply with any conditions imposed may lead to severe disciplinary action, including suspension or expulsion.
- d. **Suspension:** A teacher may be suspended for a specified period of time which will entail prohibition on participating in teacher/student related activities, classes, programs etc. Additionally, the teacher will be forbidden to use various university facilities unless permission is obtained from the competent authority. Suspension may also follow by possible dismissal, along with the following additional penalties.
- e. **Expulsion:** Expulsion of a teacher from the university permanently. Indicating prohibition from entering the university premises or participating in any student/teacher related activities or campus residences etc.

IX. Appeal

If the delinquent teacher is aggrieved by the imposition of any of the aforementioned penalties, he/she may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor may decide on one of the following:

- a. Accept the recommendation of the committee and impose the punishment as suggested by the committee or modify and impose any of the punishments as stipulated in this code which is commensurate with the gravity of the proved misconduct, or
- b. Refer the case back to the investigating committee for reconsideration. In any case, the Vice-Chancellor's decision is final and binding in all the cases where there is possible misconduct by a teacher.

X. Academic Integrity

As a premier university, VISTAS values academic integrity. It is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity encompasses honesty and responsibility, and awareness relating to ethical standards for the conduct of research and scholarship. The university believes that in all academic work, others' ideas and contributions must be appropriately acknowledged. Academic integrity is essential for the university's success, and its research missions, and hence, violations of academic integrity constitute a serious offense.

a. **Scope and Purpose**

1. This policy on academic integrity, which forms an integral part of the code, applies to all teachers at the university and are required to adhere to the said policy. The purpose of the policy is twofold:
 - i. To clarify the principles of academic integrity, and
 - ii. To provide examples of dishonest conduct and violations of academic integrity.

NOTE: These examples are only illustrative, NOT exhaustive.

2. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the university and the teachers. Every member of the university community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld.
3. The principles of academic integrity require that a teacher,
 - i. Properly acknowledges and cites the use of the ideas, results, material or words of others.
 - ii. Properly acknowledges all contributors to a given piece of work.
 - iii. Makes sure that all work submitted as his or her own student in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of impermissible materials or impermissible collaboration.
 - iv. Obtains all data or results by ethical means and reports them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions.
 - v. Treats all other teachers/students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their professional/educational goals without interference. This requires that a teacher neither facilitates academic dishonesty by others nor obstructs their academic progress.

b. Violations of this policy include, but are not limited to:

1. Plagiarism means the use of material, ideas, figures, code or data as one's own, without appropriately acknowledging the original source. This may involve submission of material, verbatim or paraphrased, that is authored by another person or published earlier by oneself.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- i. Reproducing, in whole or part, text/sentences from a report, book, thesis, publication or the internet.

- ii. Reproducing one's own previously published data, illustrations, figures, images, or someone else's data, etc.
 - iii. Taking material from other's notes or incorporating material from the internet graphs, drawings, photographs, diagrams, tables, spreadsheets, computer programs, or other non-textual material from other sources into one's class reports, presentations, manuscripts, research papers or thesis without proper attribution.
 - iv. Self plagiarism which constitutes copying verbatim from one's own earlier published work in a journal or conference proceedings without appropriate citations.
 - v. Submitting a purchased or downloaded term paper or other materials to satisfy a course requirement.
 - vi. Paraphrasing or changing an author's words or style without citation.
2. Cheating includes, but is not limited to:
- i. Allowing or facilitating copying, or writing a report or taking examination for someone else.
 - ii. Using unauthorized material, copying, collaborating when not authorized, and purchasing or borrowing papers or material from various sources.
 - iii. Fabricating (making up) or falsifying (manipulating) data and reporting them in student's thesis and publications.
 - iv. Creating sources, or citations that do not exist
 - v. Altering previously evaluated and re-submitting the work for re-evaluation
 - vi. Signing another teacher's name on a report, research paper or thesis.

3. **Conflict of Interest:** A clash of personal or private interests with professional activities can lead to a potential conflict of interest, in diverse activities such as teaching, research, publication, working on committees, research funding and consultancy. It is necessary to protect actual professional independence, objectivity and commitment, and also to avoid an appearance of any impropriety arising from conflicts of interest.

Conflict of interest is not restricted to personal financial gain; it extends to a large gamut of professional academic activities including peer reviewing, serving on various committees, which may, for example, oversee funding or give recognition, as well as influencing public policy.

To promote transparency and enhance credibility, potential conflicts of interests

must be disclosed in writing to appropriate authorities, so that a considered decision can be made on a case-by-case basis. Some additional information is available also in the section below dealing with resources.

- c. Guidelines for academic conduct are provided below to guard against negligence as well as deliberate dishonesty:
 1. Use proper methodology for experiments and computational work. Accurately describe and compile data.
 2. Carefully record and save primary and secondary data such as original pictures, instrument data readouts, laboratory notebooks, and computer folders. There should be minimal digital manipulation of images/photos; the original version should be saved for later scrutiny, if required, and the changes made should be clearly described.
 3. Ensure robust reproducibility and statistical analysis of experiments and simulations. It is important to be truthful about the data and not to omit some data points to make an impressive figure (commonly known as “cherry picking”).
 4. Laboratory notes must be well maintained in bound notebooks with printed page numbers to enable checking later during publications or patenting. The date should be indicated on each page.
 5. Write clearly in your own words. It is necessary to resist the temptation to “copy and paste” from the Internet or other sources for manuscripts, and thesis.
 6. Give due credit to previous reports, methods, computer programs, etc. with appropriate citations. Material taken from your own published work should also be cited; as mentioned above, it will be considered self-plagiarism otherwise.
- d. **Individual and Collective Responsibility:** The responsibility varies with the role one plays.
 1. **Student roles:** Before submitting a thesis (PG or PhD) to the department, the student is responsible for checking the thesis for plagiarism using software that is available on the web (see resources below). In addition, the student should undertake that he/she is aware of the academic guidelines of the university, has checked the document for plagiarism, and that the thesis is original work. A web check does not necessarily rule out plagiarism. If a student observes or becomes aware of any violations of the academic integrity policy, he/she is strongly encouraged to report the misconduct in a timely manner.

2. **Faculty roles:** Faculty members should ensure that proper methods are followed for experiments, computations, and theoretical developments and that data are properly recorded and saved for future reference. In addition, they should review manuscripts and theses carefully. Faculty members are also responsible for ensuring personal compliance with the above broad issues relating to academic integrity. Faculty members are expected to inform students of the university's academic integrity policy within their specific courses, to ensure minimal academic dishonesty, and to respond appropriately and timely to violations of academic integrity.
3. **University roles:** A breach of academic integrity is a serious offence with long lasting consequences for both the individual and the university, and this can lead to various sanctions. In the case of a student, the first violation of academic breach will lead to a warning and/or an "F" course grade. A repeat offence, if deemed sufficiently serious, could lead to expulsion. It is recommended that faculty bring any academic violations to the notice of the department Chairperson. Upon receipt of reports of scientific misconduct, the Vice-Chancellor may appoint a committee to investigate the matter and suggest appropriate measures on a case-by-case basis.