



Integrity and Standards Unit (ISU)

INFORMATION SHEET



Please refer to the [ISU website](#) for information on the following:

- [Complaint Resolution Process](#) (procedures, guidelines, flowcharts, forms)
- [Conflicts of Interest / Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality](#) (system, procedures, guidance, FAQs)
- [Public Interest Disclosures](#) (what, how, when, links to PSC information)
- [Fraud and Corruption Prevention](#) (plan, policy, risks, case studies, red flags)
- [Reporting Misconduct to external agencies](#) (CCC or Public Sector Commission)

and to access the:

- [Code of Conduct](#)
- [Online Complaints Portal](#)
- [Online Conflicts of Interest Register](#)
- [External avenues for lodging a complaint](#)

ISU training workshops

Just a quick reminder that the ISU is running the following training workshops during May:

- Avoiding Conflicts of Interest**
Tuesday, 7 May 2019 (211:139)
- Fraud and Corruption – Prevent, Detect and Respond**
Thursday, 9 May 2019 (211:139)
- Managing Complaints**
Tuesday, 14 May 2019 (211:221)
- Fact Finding** (the pre-requisite for which is Managing Complaints)
Thursday, 16 May 2019 (211:230)
- Blowing the Whistle – the PID Act, and Reporting Misconduct – the CCM Act**
Tuesday, 21 May 2019 (211:221)



Each session is 2.75 hours long and will take

place between 9.00am and 11.45am at the above Bentley locations. Further information is available upon registering via iPerform.

Abuse of power in the workplace

“Power” can be defined as the ability to make others do what you want them to do.

But power is never equal in a workplace. Power differentials may arise because of factors such as positional authority or roles, superior knowledge or expertise, or from certain individuals being well respected. Power differentials are a fact of life but if they are abused or exploited by the more powerful for personal gain or pleasure or to compel the less powerful to commit wrongful acts, then serious damage may occur to both the wellbeing of the less powerful and the organisations in which they work.

Abuse of power in the workplace may manifest itself in undesirable or unlawful behaviours such as bullying, sexual misconduct, harassment, assault, victimisation, fraud or corruption. Here are some examples of behaviours which, if they occurred at Curtin, would result in allegations of serious misconduct being raised:

- ⊖ A lecturer pressures one of his female students to have an intimate relationship with him in return for not failing her or giving her better grades.
- ⊖ A manager continually demeans and harasses one of her team members to the point of the team member going on stress leave or resigning.
- ⊖ An academic is unlawfully instructed by their head of school to increase the final mark of a failing student who happens to be related to the head.

Have you observed or experienced any such abuses of power at Curtin and are unsure of what to do?



If so, please don't hesitate to contact the ISU for a confidential discussion.

The fact remains, however, that there is a major power imbalance between a professor and a student — one that can easily be exploited by someone with predatory inclinations ... Faculty have the power not only to grade and evaluate students' work, but also write referral letters, sit on editorial boards of academic journals, and act as mentors and counsellors. Judging by many of the recent testimonials of former students, this not only prevents many victims from coming forward, but also raises the question of whether it prevents students from being in a position to truly consent to any type of relationship at all.

<https://www.nationalobserver.com/2018/01/17/analysis/professors-power-and-predators-why-student-teacher-relationships-should-be>

INTEGRITY AND STANDARDS UNIT INFORMATION SHEET NO. 2, APR 2019

If you see or hear something
that's not right ... say something!



Q&A: Can I be “friends” with my students?

Q. As an academic, where does the line sit in terms of my relationship with my students. Can't I be friends with them, attend social functions, friend them on Facebook or interact with them through social media?

A. It is very important that you establish and always maintain a strictly professional relationship with your students. This includes, but is not limited to, not developing a friendship which might be misunderstood by the student (or others in the class or your work colleagues), not involving the student in your personal problems or any other interpersonal conflict you may have with your colleagues or others, and certainly not getting involved in any situation which others may see as being inconsistent with your role as a professional Curtin academic e.g. getting drunk with students.

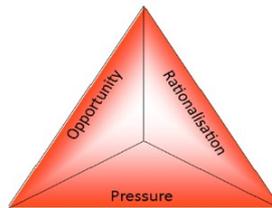


This extends to what you say and do through social media channels, such as Facebook and Twitter. It's also very important to remember, as discussed in the earlier article, that because of the inherent nature of staff and student roles, a staff member is in a position of power relative to a student - irrespective of the student's age, gender or maturity. You must therefore ensure that you constantly recognise this power differential and always act in a respectful and fair manner, never engaging in sexual harassment, bullying, favouritism or exploitation.

Why do people commit fraud?

Cressey's Fraud Triangle is a model for explaining the factors that cause someone to commit fraud. It consists of three components which normally must all be present for fraudulent behaviour to occur:

- 1. Opportunity** i.e. the circumstances that permit someone to commit a fraud, is generally provided through weaknesses in internal control systems such as inadequate or lack of: supervision and review, separation of duties, management approvals and system controls.
- 2. Pressure** i.e. the pressure placed on or incentive provided to a person to commit fraud, can be imposed due to: personal financial problems, personal vices such as gambling, drugs, extensive debt etc, and unrealistic deadlines and performance goals.
- 3. Rationalisation** occurs when the individual develops a justification for their fraudulent activities i.e. they have a frame of mind or character that allows them to commit a fraud. The rationalisation varies by case and individual. Some examples include:
 - *I really need this money and I'll put it back when I get paid*
 - *I'd rather have the organisation on my back than the tax office or creditors*
 - *I just can't afford to lose everything – my home, car, everything*
 - *The organisation deserves this for treating me badly*
 - *I am entitled to the money*
 - *I am underpaid, or my employer cheats me*
 - *My employer is dishonest to others and deserves to be fleeced*



agreement between parties.

The PID Act provides protection for those making such disclosures and those who are the subject of disclosures, as well as providing a system for the matters disclosed to be investigated and for appropriate action to be taken.

Nevertheless, making a disclosure or 'whistleblowing' is a serious matter and in many cases, it will take courage and trust for people holding information to come forward.

Want to know more? Then call the ISU for more information about how to make a disclosure. Alternately, check out our [web site](#).

Nepotism in recruitment

What do the following scenarios have in common?

- ⊗ A staff member employs their son as a casual administrative assistant.
- ⊗ A staff member hires their partner as a casual research assistant for a research project.
- ⊗ A staff member contracts their niece to write lectures for their unit.
- ⊗ The Chair of a selection panel does not disclose the fact that one of the candidates for the job is his stepson.

They are all examples of “nepotism”, which can be defined as the ... *practice among those with power or influence of favouring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs.*



They also represent clear cut breaches of both the [Conflict of Interest Procedures](#) and the [Code of Conduct](#) and must be avoided. If you are unsure of the correct ways to recruit staff, please liaise with your People & Culture representative.

How to “blow the whistle” - the PID Act

The Public Interest Disclosure Act 2003 (the PID Act) encourages people to make protected disclosures about certain types of wrong-doing in public authorities (such as the University) without identities being revealed or fear of reprisal.



A disclosure of wrong-doing must be in regard to public interest information i.e. information that shows or tends to show wrongdoing by a public authority, public officer or public sector contractor when performing a public function.

This means that a disclosure, to be covered under the Act, must be more than just a general complaint about dissatisfaction with a product or service, or a grievance that can be resolved by

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