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## NOLAN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE

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### Context

As part of the ongoing review of all ULaw Policies and Procedures, we have considered how the Nolan Principles of Public Life ('the Principles') are integrated into ULaw.

To Note: On 14 September 2016 the UK's Committee on Standards in Public Life (CSPL) published a major report on ethics for regulators, *Striking the Balance. Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life in Regulation* (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 2016). This applied the seven 'Nolan Principles' to public regulatory authorities. In preparation for this, the Committee commissioned Professor Hodges to prepare a paper on 'Ethics in Business Practice and Regulation'. The CSPL's Report firmly endorsed the general thrust of Professor Hodges' conclusions (see pages 62, 69-70), which are based on his 2015 book *Law and Corporate Behaviour*. First, that encouraging an ethical approach to compliance on the part of those regulated - as well as those working in the regulator itself - is both a sound regulatory *and* commercial strategy. Second, that regulators should actively engage with those they regulate and take a leadership role by encouraging positive compliance, and collaborative relationships. Third, that various practical actions could be taken, and the Committee particularly recommended amendment of the Regulators' Code. <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/news/2016-09-16-cspls-impact-business-practice-and-regulation>

'In light of the result of the June 2016 referendum in which the British people voted to leave the European Union (EU), the UK's regulatory landscape is likely to be substantially restructured in the coming years. Given the importance of supranational legislation for the UK's regulatory environment, domestic regulatory bodies are likely to become all the more important as the UK withdraws from the EU's legal framework. In this context, the Committee believes that maintaining the highest ethical standards within regulatory bodies continues to be of the utmost importance.' (CSPL, 2016, iii)

Below is an outline of the principles applied to ULaw.

## 1. The Principles applied to the University of Law

The Principles provide private companies and the public sector with a stated code of ethics. They require holders of public office to display certain characteristics. In order that ULaw and its staff and students can apply this code of ethics, they have been refocused and reordered as set out below:

Principle	Explained	Applied to the University of Law
<p><b>Honesty</b></p> <p><i>Holders of public office should be truthful.</i></p> <p><b>Integrity</b></p> <p><i>Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.</i></p>	<p>We have a duty to declare any private interests relating to our duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.</p> <p>We will not place ourselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence us in the performance of our duties;</p>	<p><b>People:</b></p> <p>Many of our staff are professionally qualified and are thus under obligations of professional conduct or good practice, e.g. barristers, solicitors, librarians, accountants etc.</p> <p><b>Product:</b></p> <p>The quality of our learning products and the profitability of the organisation takes precedence over benefitting outside interests, where these interests are incompatible with our overall aims, e.g. with our firm-specific LLM LPC courses we balance the needs of client firms with overall efficiency and pedagogical integrity to ensure fairness in assessment for individual students.</p> <p>We have a continued focus on educational quality as opposed to short term cash flow as shown by the change in emphasis re our admissions criteria, e.g. BPTC admissions.</p> <p>We give all students an equal opportunity to complete the course successfully, and do not to give preference to individuals.</p>
<p><b>Leadership</b></p>	<p>ULaw promotes and support these principles by leadership and example</p>	<p>This is applied at all levels, internally and externally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ULaw displays thought leadership in both education, business and legal sectors.</li> </ul>

Principle	Explained	Applied to the University of Law
<p><i>Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ULaw management promote and support leadership by example.</li> <li>• The Executive Management Board delivers a strong, communicative and coherent leadership.</li> <li>• Leaders of each function show colleagues within that function that they are part of a team and that they are valued. Teambuilding is emphasised positively and resourced. We feel that commitment to teambuilding can deliver loyalty and a positive focus.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Objectivity</b></p> <p><i>Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.</i></p>	<p>Holders of office and others throughout ULaw make choices on merit in carrying out their work, including making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits.</p>	<p><b>Appointments</b></p> <p>Reinforcing a consistent competency-based approach to internal and external appointments.</p> <p>Where appropriate including in such decisions someone from outside the relevant function or outside ULaw.</p> <p><b>Appraisals</b></p> <p>The University has widely consulted on the performance development review process (PDR) and has issued a new system (September 2016) which will be monitored and reviewed in 2017.</p>
<p><b>Openness</b></p> <p><i>Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.</i></p>	<p>There is openness about all the decisions and actions we take. We give reasons for our decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands;</p>	<p><b>Information</b></p> <p>Demonstrating openness by, for example, being explicitly transparent with outside stakeholders (e.g. firms).</p> <p>We are good at releasing statistical information to students and potential students.</p> <p>The Marketing function is evaluating how to work with issues such as less-than-sympathetic news stories e.g. agenda-setting with social media. We need to anticipate 'bad news stories' and well as the positive messages we give. This is probably easier now that we are a company with information obligations.</p> <p>[We are less good at controlling the agenda. This is partially because of the efforts of less-than-sympathetic outside sources such as Roll On Friday. ]</p>

Principle	Explained	Applied to the University of Law
<b>Accountability</b> <i>Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.</i>	<p>We are accountable for our decisions and actions, to the public; and we submit ourselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to our office;</p>	<p>Accountability is something we acknowledge and embrace. Student and staff feedback is already well-developed, however there are other aspects to accountability:</p> <p>We have explicitly promoted accountability to students and law firms, and this has to be celebrated.</p> <p>As a private university we now have statutory information obligations, which can be used to demonstrate public accountability.</p> <p>Internally, we should recognize accountability as facilitating institutional progress and guard against it leading to a 'blame' culture or similar.</p>
<b>Selflessness</b> <i>Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.</i>	<p>We demonstrate selflessness in our actions – we should not act in order to gain financial or other benefits for ourselves, our family or our friends.</p>	<p>In developing the business, we avoid being defensive about our own role or function, in the knowledge that the overall health of the organisation will benefit all of us and our stakeholders.</p> <p>This means assuring colleagues that any reorganisation deemed necessary to help ULaw adapt to the changing market and regulatory environment will be accompanied by opportunities for role reassignment and retraining if it is feasible.</p>

## Version History

Version	Amended by	Revision summary	Date
1.0		Amendments approved by Academic Board	October 2016
1.1	Senior Quality Officer	Change to the document coding convention	30/03/20

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1.1	Quality Assurance Team Leader	Extended to term of approval of 2 years	October 2021
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