



Code of Conduct for Members of Longford and Westmeath ETB (LWETB)

1. Introduction

Longford and Westmeath ETB has developed this Code of Conduct for Members of the Board. The Code takes account of the implications of the Ethics of Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act 2001

2. Intent

The purpose of the Code is to provide guidance to the Chairperson and members of LWETB in performing their duties.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the Code are:

- To set out an agreed set of ethical principles;
- To promote the development and acceptance of ethical practices;
- To promote the highest legal, management and ethical standards in all the activities of LWETB.
- To promote compliance with best current management practice in all the activities of LWETB.

4. General Principles

It is the policy of LWETB to maintain a high reputation for ethical behaviour and fair dealing in the conduct of its business.

It is not possible to provide for every situation in the Code of Conduct. If there is doubt about the probity of any particular situation, a member must consult the Chairperson of the Board.

5. Availability of the Code

LWETB will:

- make available this Code of Conduct, and a policy document on disclosure of interests, to all members of the Board and will make all members aware of its importance and availability.
- ensure that all members of the Board acknowledge receipt and understanding of its contents;
- provide practical guidance and direction as required on such areas as gifts and entertainment and on other ethical considerations, which arise routinely.

6. Review

LWETB will review this Code of Conduct as appropriate. Any proposed revisions to this Code must be considered and approved at a meeting of the Board.

7. Breaches of the Code

Breaches of the Code of Conduct will be notified to the Chairperson and to the Comptroller and Auditor General, and may be notified to the Minister for Education and Skills with the annual accounts and report.

8. Fundamental Principles

The members of the Board are required to observe the following fundamental principles, as set out under the following headings:

- (a) Integrity;
- (b) Information;
- (c) Obligations;
- (d) Loyalty;
- (e) Fairness;
- (f) Consideration for Work/External Environment.

(a) Integrity

Members of the Board will:

- disclose outside employment/business or other interests which objectively would be considered to be in conflict or in potential conflict with the business of the ETB;
- avoid the acceptance of further employment where the potential for conflict of interest arises during a reasonable period of time after a person has ceased to be member of the Board;
- refrain from giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or the recipient to make independent judgement on business transactions;
- collaborate vigorously, energetically, ethically and honestly with other educational institutions, commercial and other providers of research and advisory services;
- ensure that the ETB conducts its purchasing activities of goods/services in

accordance with public policy and best business practice and its purchasing regulations reflect this;

- claim expenses only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with good practice in the public sector generally;
- ensure that expenses are claimed only as appropriate to business needs and in accordance with the public sector generally;
- ensure that the ETB engages consultancy and other services in accordance with public policy guidelines;
- satisfy themselves that the accounts/reports accurately reflect the Board's performance and are not misleading or designed to be misleading;
- avoid the use of the ETB's resources or time for personal gain, for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the ETB or its activities;
- ensure that the ETB is committed to acquiring information or business secrets by proper means only.

(b) Information

Members of the Board will:

- ensure that the Board is committed to providing access to general information relating to its activities in a way that is open and enhances its accountability to the general public;
- respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by LWETB, having regard to paragraph 13 of Schedule 3 of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013. Sensitive information would constitute material such as:
 - ▶ Personal information;
 - ▶ Information received in confidence by LWETB;
 - ▶ Any commercially sensitive information or other information sensitive to the reputation of LWETB;
 - ▶ Any other material, release of which might constitute an unlawful or unethical act.
- ensure that the ETB observes appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where, exceptionally, it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest;
- ensure that the ETB complies with all relevant statutory provisions (e.g. Data Protection Acts, 1998 and 2003, and the Freedom of Information Acts, 1997 to 2013 ;
- observe the strictest confidentiality in relation to all discussions and decisions taken at in-camera meetings of the Board and in the ETB;
- continue to observe the strictest confidentiality with regard to sensitive information and to discussions and decisions taken at meetings of the Board and in the ETB when Board membership has ended.

(c) Obligations

Members of the Board will:

- fulfil all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the ETB by the Education and Training Boards Act 2013 and other relevant legislation;

- ensure that the ETB complies with detailed tendering and purchasing procedures, as well as complying with prescribed levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure;
- ensure that controls are in place to prevent fraud and to ensure compliance with prescribed procedures in relation to levels of authority for sanctioning any relevant expenditure including expenses for business travel; make every reasonable effort to attend all Board meetings;
- will ensure conformity with procedures laid down by the Board in relation to conflict of interest situations. This includes acceptance of positions and/or engagement by a State body that may give rise to the potential for conflicts of interest and to confidentiality concerns. The Board will also ensure that any procedures that it may put in place in this regard are monitored and enforced;
- acknowledge the duty to conform to highest standards of ethics.

(d) Loyalty

Members of the Board will acknowledge the responsibility to be loyal to the ETB and to be fully committed to all its activities while mindful that the ETB itself must at all times take into account the interests of its students and funders, including tax payers.

(e) Fairness

Members of the Board will:

- ensure that the ETB is committed to complying with employment equality and equal status legislation;
- ensure that the ETB is committed to fairness in all business dealings;
- ensure that the ETB values its students, staff, suppliers and customers, and treats all its students, staff, suppliers and customers equally.

(f) Work/External Environment

Members of the Board will:

- place the highest priority on promoting and preserving the health and safety of its staff and students;
- ensure that community concerns are fully considered in its activities and operations;
- minimise any detrimental impact of the ETB's operations on the environment.