



Dublin International Study Centre

LEARNER CODE OF CONDUCT

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Learner Code of Conduct

Purpose

1. This Code of Conduct outlines the expectations of learner behaviour at DISC. It ensures that all learners contribute to a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment and understand their responsibilities under Irish law, institutional regulations, and QQI quality assurance standards.

Scope

2. This policy applies to **all learners enrolled at DISC**, regardless of their programme, mode of study, or visa status. It outlines expectations for learner conduct throughout their engagement with the institution and in all contexts where they represent DISC, formally or informally.

The Code of Conduct applies across the following environments and situations, including but not limited to:

- **On Campus:** All classrooms, libraries, offices, common areas, and any physical locations managed or operated by DISC and UCD.
- **Online and Virtual Learning Spaces:** This includes the use of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), email communications, discussion boards, and social media use in connection with DISC.
- **Organised Activities:** All institutional events such as field trips, seminars, workshops, guest lectures, social functions, and external visits organised or endorsed by DISC.
- **Accommodation Settings:** Learner residences or accommodation arranged through DISC or its partners, where learners are expected to adhere to accommodation rules and demonstrate respectful, safe conduct in shared living spaces.
- **Wider Community Representation:** Any setting in which learners are identified as DISC students, such as volunteering, or public interactions that may reflect on the institution.

Expected Learner Behaviour

3. DISC is committed to promoting academic excellence, personal responsibility, and mutual respect. Learners are expected to uphold the values of inclusion, safety, and professionalism while participating in all aspects of life at DISC. Breaches of this policy will be addressed through the Student Disciplinary Procedure. These expectations are in place to support wellbeing, dignity, and academic success of all members of the DISC community. Learners must:
 - Engage positively in all lessons, activities, and academic support services.
 - Respect others, including staff, fellow learners, and external stakeholders, regardless of cultural background, language, gender, ability, or belief. This includes upholding the rights of individuals under Irish Equality law, which

prohibits discrimination based on the nine protected as defined in the Employment Equality Acts 1998 – 2015 and the Equal Status Act 2000 – 2018. These protected characteristics include gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

- Listen actively and engage with differing opinions in a respectful manner. While the freedom of expression act is protected under the Irish Constitution and is fundamental to academic settings, it must be exercised responsibly and in a way that does not infringe on the rights and dignity of others.
- Act safely, avoiding any behaviour that could endanger themselves or others, especially those under the age of 18.
- Report concerns about the welfare or safety of others to a member of staff.
- Abide by Irish laws, including those concerning drugs, alcohol, public order, and online safety.
- Use the internet responsibly and refrain from accessing or sharing harmful, illegal, or inappropriate material. DISC does not tolerate cyber bullying in any circumstances. Online bullying includes, but is not limited to, sending or posting abusive, threatening, defamatory, or humiliating messages; sharing images, recordings, or personal information without consent; excluding individuals from online groups or activities in a harmful manner; impersonation; or engaging in sustained hostile behaviour through digital platforms. This applies to all forms of electronic communication connected to the programme, including email, virtual learning environments, messaging applications, social media, and video conferencing platforms.
- Avoid physical or verbal aggression, harassment, bullying, or intimidation in any form.
- Respect DISC property and the belongings of others.
- Refrain from any action that brings DISC into disrepute, whether on or off campus. Such actions may involve public misconduct, online activity linked to DISC, disrespectful behaviour while representing the centre, academic dishonesty, or inappropriate conduct during events.
- Adhere to accommodation rules and the terms of their tenancy or residency.
- Follow the reasonable instructions of staff and participate in meetings related to attendance, behaviour, or academic progress.

Prohibited Conduct

4. To maintain a safe, respectful, and effective learning environment, certain behaviours are strictly prohibited at DISC. Learners must not engage in any conduct that disrupts the academic community, endangers others, or undermines the integrity of the centre. The following behaviours are expressly forbidden:
 - Learners must not attend DISC while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. .
 - Learners must not use or possess illegal substances or weapons on campus or in accommodation.

- Learners must not engage in disruptive behaviour in class or during events.
- Learners must not commit acts of dishonesty, including academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism or cheating), as outlined in DISC's Academic Integrity Policy.
- Learners must not harass, threaten, or abuse staff or fellow learners.
- Learners must not misuse digital platforms or violate cybersecurity protocols.

Disciplinary Action

5. DISC is committed to maintaining high standards of learner behaviour and ensuring a safe, respectful, and inclusive learning environment. Where a learner's conduct falls below the expectations set out in this policy, a fair and transparent disciplinary process will be followed. This process is designed not only to enforce standards but also to support learners in reflecting, improving, and accessing appropriate help where needed.

Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary action may be taken in response to:

- Breaches of the Code of Conduct on or off campus.
- Academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism, cheating).
- Disruption of the learning environment.
- Harmful or abusive behaviour towards others.
- Failure to comply with Irish law or DISC policies.

Possible Sanctions

Sanctions are proportionate to the severity, frequency, and context of the misconduct and may include one or more of the following:

- **Verbal or Written Warnings:** Issued in cases of minor or first-time misconduct. These include clear guidance on expected behaviour moving forward.
- **Behavioural Contracts:** A formal agreement between the learner and DISC that outlines expected improvements and the support available to help achieve them. Breach of the agreement may result in further sanctions.
- **Suspension from Classes or Activities:** Temporary removal from academic or extracurricular activities where behaviour poses a disruption or risk to others. Learners will be given conditions for re-entry.
- **Withdrawal from the Programme:** Permanent exclusion may occur in serious or repeated breaches, including violent behaviour, criminal activity, or persistent non-compliance after previous interventions. Learners dismissed on disciplinary grounds will not be entitled to fee refunds.
- **Reporting to External Authorities:** Where behaviour breaches Irish law, involves immigration non-compliance, or endangers others, DISC is obliged to report the matter to external authorities such as the Gardaí (Irish police),

Immigration Service Delivery (ISD), or other relevant bodies.

Disciplinary Procedure

DISC follows a structured, fair process that ensures timely communication, learner participation, and confidentiality.

Key Principles:

- Learners are informed promptly of alleged breaches.
- Learners have the opportunity to respond and present evidence or mitigating circumstances.
- All proceedings are documented and handled by authorised staff.
- Learners have the right to appeal through the Student Appeals Procedure.

Procedure Stages

Informal Stage: Minor concerns may be addressed through a discussion or verbal warning, with a record kept on file. The aim is to help the learner understand expectations and make necessary changes without formal sanction. Such breaches may include, but is not limited to low-level disruptions in lessons, or minor instances of inappropriate language.

Formal Warning: Issued for more serious breaches or if conduct does not improve. The learner will be invited to a meeting to discuss the behaviour and may be accompanied by a support person. The learner will be invited to a meeting to discuss the behaviour and may be accompanied by a support person. Examples of breaches at this stage may include but are not limited to disrespectful or inappropriate behaviour toward staff or fellow learners, repeated unauthorised absence from class or activities, incidents involving physical aggression, threatening behaviour or theft of property.

Probation: Applied where breaches are repeated or significant, normally the implementation of behavioural contract or support plans. Failure to meet probation conditions may lead to escalation.

Suspension: A temporary exclusion from classes or campus facilities may be imposed in cases of significant misconduct or where safety is at risk. Conditions for return will be clearly communicated.

Withdrawal from the Programme: Used as a last resort where there is persistent non-compliance or in cases of severe misconduct. The decision will be confirmed in writing, with reasons provided. Learners will be informed of their right to appeal.

Right to Appeal

Learners have the right to appeal any formal disciplinary decision through DISC's Student Appeals Procedure. Appeals must be submitted within the

specified timeframe and will be reviewed by an appropriate, independent staff member or committee.

Record-Keeping and Confidentiality:

- All disciplinary proceedings will be fully documented and stored securely in line with data protection requirements.
- Information will be treated as confidential and shared only with those who need to know for legitimate reasons.

Support During the Process

- Learners may access wellbeing or counselling services at any stage of the disciplinary process.
- DISC encourages learners to seek advice and support to help address underlying issues contributing to misconduct.

Support and Education

6. DISC promotes a restorative and educational approach to learner conduct. Where appropriate, learners will be given opportunities to reflect on their behaviour, understand its impact on others, and make positive changes.

DISC recognises that behavioural issues often have underlying causes. To support learners in addressing these, DISC may offer:

- Structured reflective conversations with staff or designated mentors.
- Access to internal wellbeing services.
- Academic or pastoral support plans developed to meet individual needs.
- Workshops or learning resources on topics such as respectful communication, conflict resolution, and stress management.
- Clear guidance on expected behaviour, with opportunities to demonstrate improvement and;
- Where appropriate, referral to reputable external services, such as mental health professionals, community counselling agencies, or educational psychological supports.

Monitoring and Review

7. This policy is reviewed annually by the Head of Quality in conjunction with the Deputy Director of Student Experience. It is updated to reflect changes in national legislation, institutional practice, and learner feedback. All learners receive this policy during induction and must agree to its terms as a condition of enrolment.

Document Control

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