

Code of Conduct for Employees of the Veterinary Council of Ireland

Approved by the Veterinary Council of Ireland at its meeting held on 7th February 2013

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Introduction

The Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies requires all state bodies to put in place a stated code of business conduct for both Board/Council (Council) members and employees. The provisions of the Code apply to all employees whether full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary, fixed term etc. It shall also apply to employees on leave or on career breaks. For the purpose of this document, the term “employee” shall hereafter encapsulate all of these categories. This document outlines the Code of Conduct expected of me as an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

Intent and Scope

This code outlines my responsibilities as an employee to protect the reputation and assets of the Veterinary Council of Ireland. The Code of Conduct applies when I act in my capacity as an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland. This includes any time I spend during the normal course of business of the Council, time spent attending meetings and any time I represent the Council in my capacity as an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

Objective of the Code

The objectives of this code are to

- Establish an agreed set of ethical principles;
- Prevent the development or acceptance of unethical practices;
- Promote and maintain confidence and trust in the Veterinary Council of Ireland.

General Principles

The fundamental principles expected of me as an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland together with my responsibilities under each principle are set out as follows:

- I will disclose in writing (where possible) any conflict of interest, or potential conflict, with the business of the Veterinary Council of Ireland to the President of the Council (ref section 26 VPA).
- I will respect the confidentiality of sensitive information held by the Veterinary Council of Ireland or discussed at Council meetings, at committee meetings or at Inquiries. This would include personal information, information received for Council and committee meetings and information provided in confidence and any other information sensitive to the reputation of the Veterinary Council of Ireland (ref section 25 VPA).
- I am committed to act both ethically and honestly in all dealings in my role as an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland.
- I will ensure public and community concerns are fully considered.
- I will avoid giving or receiving corporate gifts, hospitality, preferential treatment or benefits which might affect or appear to affect the ability of the donor or recipient to make independent judgement on transactions.
- I will ensure that queries are dealt with respectfully, sympathetically, efficiently and promptly.
- I will conscientiously serve the public through my work at the Council. I will be committed to the Council’s activities whilst at the same time considering the interests of consumers, the public, Government Departments and other State Agencies.
- I will show due consideration and respect for the public, my colleagues and the position they hold.
- I will at all times comply with national laws and obligations in relation to my fellow employees.

- I will not use the Veterinary Council of Ireland resources for personal gain or for the benefit of persons/organisations unconnected with the Council or its activities. For the sake of clarity, Council resources can be defined as including property and funds, information, IT equipment, stationery and any other asset (tangible or intangible) owned by the Council.
- I will at all times abide by the principles and functions of the Veterinary Council.

Exclusive Service

The staff positions in the Council are primarily full-time and staff shall not, during their term of employment, engage directly or indirectly in any other business, trade or professions, save with the express consent of the Council.

Loyalty

- I acknowledge my responsibility to be loyal to the Veterinary Council of Ireland and be fully committed to its activities and decisions.

Fairness

- I am committed to dealing fairly with all issues considered by the Council and/or its committees/sub-committees.
- I am committed to observing appropriate prior consultation procedures with third parties where it is proposed to release sensitive information in the public interest.

Legal Obligations

- I will not act in a manner which I know or suspect is illegal, immoral or unethical or for which I have no legal authority.
- I will ensure that all regulatory and statutory obligations imposed on the Veterinary Council of Ireland by the Veterinary Practice Act 2005 and other legislation are fulfilled.
- I will ensure that relevant statutory provisions (e.g. data protection legislation, freedom of information etc) are complied with.

General Statement

I acknowledge that it is not feasible to have a code of practice that will specifically provide for all situations which may arise. As an employee of the Veterinary Council of Ireland I will bear in mind that it is primarily my responsibility to ensure that all of my activities, whether covered in this document or not, are governed by the ethical and other considerations implicit in it.

I _____ hereby confirm that I have read and understood this document and I agree to be bound by the principles set out above.

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____