

Campaign on UN Standards of Conduct

1. IDENTIFYING PROHIBITED CONDUCT

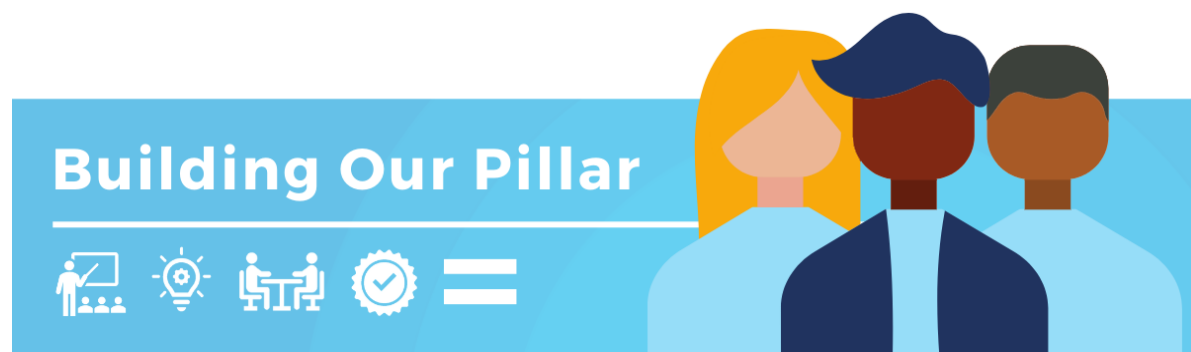
From: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Sent on: Wednesday, October 5, 2022 3:14:12 PM

To:

CC: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Subject: Focus: UN Standards of Conduct



All UN staff and other personnel are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. In order to ensure a harmonious work environment, we are sharing information on common barriers to reporting prohibited conduct and resources to remind staff of UN Standards of Conduct.



Uncertain about whether an incident should be reported?



Reluctant to speak up about something you aren't sure is prohibited, or even happened?



As staff members, we all have a responsibility to act on prohibited behavior.

"I'm not sure that what happened is that bad."

You don't know all the facts, or what really happened.

Remember that:

The investigatory process will assess the validity of a report. Your role is not to adjudicate whether the conduct took place or was prohibited.

STAFF MEMBERS SHOULD REPORT POSSIBLE PROHIBITED CONDUCT.

“She’s just a bully, it’s not harassment.”

You work with someone who is a bit abrasive, but harmless. Remember that:

Harassment may take the form of words, gestures or actions which tend to annoy, alarm, abuse, demean, intimidate, belittle, humiliate, or embarrass another.

Harassment is any unwelcome conduct that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation to another person, when such conduct interferes with work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

“He made inappropriate comments, but we weren’t at the office.”

Something happened outside the office – you wonder if you can report it.

Sexual harassment may occur in the workplace or in connection with work.

Sexual harassment may occur outside the workplace and outside working hours, including during official travel or social functions related to work.

“We never got along – now she’s refusing to provide me a recommendation.”

**You may know about an incident that seems unfair and about more than a disagreement over performance.
Remember that:**

Abuse of authority is the improper use of a position of influence, power or authority against another person. This is particularly serious when a person uses their influence, power or authority to improperly influence the career or employment conditions of another, including, but not limited to, appointment, assignment, contract renewal, performance evaluation, working conditions or promotion.

“I saw something happen but it only happened once.”

The incident was an isolated event, and you think therefore it can't be prohibited conduct. However...

Discrimination may be an isolated event affecting one person or a group of persons similarly situated, or may manifest itself through harassment or abuse of authority.

“She was a subcontractor when the incident happened.”

You might know about an incident that occurred with someone who wasn't a staff member – and assume therefore that it needn't be reported.

Reports of prohibited conduct in the workplace or in connection with work can be submitted by any person and against any person, irrespective of whether such persons have any contractual status with the Organization.

SUMMARY

To do our part to ensure a harmonious workplace we must all:

- *Treat* all people in the workplace courteously, with dignity and respect.
- *Reflect* on our own behavior and how it may be perceived.
- *Respond* to issues raised with us constructively.
- *Attend* relevant training.
- *Speak up* and be an active bystander.
- *Report* **POSSIBLE** prohibited conduct and cooperate with investigations.

SEEKING HELP

If you believe that prohibited conduct may have occurred, you may seek guidance/information/advice from the following:

The ***SpeakUp Helpline*** is available to provide confidential advice:

- Helpline: +19173678910. When dialling internally from the UN's New York duty station, the extension is 78910.
- Email: speakup@un.org

Talk to your supervisor, a manager, a trusted colleague, or contact any of the below:

- **DPPA-DPO Conduct & Discipline Focal Points** (dppa-dpoconductanddiscipline@un.org) provide guidance on provisions of [ST/SGB/2019/8](#), [ST/AI/2017/1](#), and [ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1](#)

- **Office of Internal Oversight Services** - provide a platform for staff members to formally report possible unsatisfactory conduct: <https://oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing>
 - **UN Ombudsman and Mediation Services** (unoms@un.org)
 - **The Staff Counsellor's Office** (scohq@un.org)
 - **Office of Human Resources**
 - **The Ethics Office** (ethicsoffice@un.org)
 - **The Office of Staff Legal Assistance**
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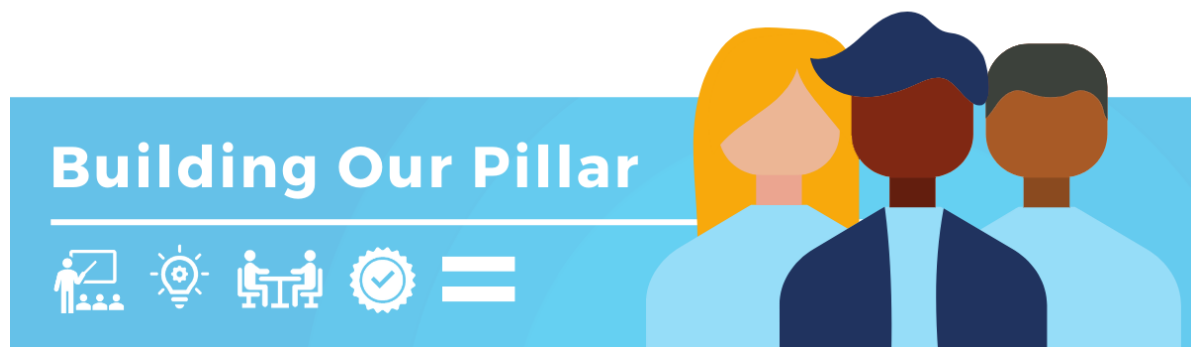
2. RESPONDING TO PROHIBITED CONDUCT

From: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Sent on: Friday, November 11, 2022 3:58:08 PM

CC: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Subject: Focus: UN Standards of Conduct - Part 2



All UN staff and other personnel are entitled to be treated with dignity and respect. To ensure a harmonious work environment, we are sharing resources to remind staff of UN Standards of Conduct.

Our previous email provided resources for identifying possible prohibited conduct. This message focuses on how to respond to possible cases of prohibited conduct and explains how to intervene informally or formally.



Who do you contact about prohibited conduct?



What if you don't want to report something officially?



As staff members, and managers, we have a responsibility to act.



Below, some information on the resources we can use when facing an issue related to prohibited conduct.

“Something happened but I’m not sure I want to make a formal complaint.”

If you are affected by possible prohibited conduct but not sure you want to make a formal complaint, one consideration is whether to try to address the situation in an informal manner.

INFORMAL RESOLUTION EARLY INTERVENTION

- **Direct intervention** Affected individuals may, on a voluntary basis, if they feel comfortable and safe doing so, approach alleged offenders about possible prohibited conduct and ask for such conduct to stop, as the alleged offenders may not be aware of the negative impact of the conduct on others.
- **Managerial intervention** Affected individuals who believe they may have been subject to possible prohibited conduct may raise the matter with their supervisors or other senior officials, if the situation allows and they feel comfortable doing so.

You may contact the Office of the Ombudsman and Mediation Services to discuss options available to you, including conflict coaching or a facilitated conversation.

“I need help, but I don’t want everyone to know what happened.”

- Affected individuals may prefer, and are encouraged, to discuss their situation confidentially.
- Remember that contacting the UN Ombudsman or the Staff Counsellors is confidential and does not in itself trigger any investigation.
- The **Office of the United Nations Ombudsman and Mediation Services** provides a safe space to discuss options when you are unsure how to proceed.
- **Staff Counsellors** are mental health professionals who can provide psychosocial support and discuss tools to address the emotional impact that the situation has on the affected individual.

However, if the nature of the conduct makes direct approach difficult, affected individuals always have the option to report formally. An unsuccessful attempt to resolve the matter informally does not preclude it from being formally reported.

“I’m ready to report – but I don’t know where to send it.”

You’ve encountered a situation that you think should be reported. However, you’re not entirely sure where to

formally report the incident.

Possible prohibited conduct should be reported either to the head of department or office of the subject staff member, with a copy to the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS), or directly to OIOS.

“I’m ready to report but I’m worried things will be awkward while an investigation is underway.”

You are worried about how things will go in the workplace whilst an investigation is underway. Remember that:

The head of entity can consider interim measures to protect the integrity of any investigation including:

- **Physical separation of the people involved.**
 - **Reassignment.**
 - **Flexible working for all parties.**
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“I think a formal complaint is needed, but I am not the affected person.”

You may think that because you weren't affected by an incident, you can't formally report it. However...

Formal reports of possible prohibited conduct may be made by persons who consider that they are the affected individuals, or by persons who have knowledge of possible prohibited conduct.



Uncertain about whether an incident should be reported – and worried about retaliation?



It is our duty to report any breach of the Organization's regulations and rules.



An individual who makes a report in good faith has the right to be protected against retaliation.

“Am I protected if I speak up?”

Whether you are intern, UNV, contractor, consultant or staff member, you are protected from retaliation if you:

- **Report through an established internal mechanism (OIOS, the ASG for Human Resources Management, Head of Department, or office concerned.)**
- **Staff who report through external mechanisms are protected against retaliation in specific circumstances.**
- **Report as soon as possible, and not later than six years after becoming aware of the misconduct.**
- **Cooperate in good faith with a duly authorized investigation or audit.**

“How can I ensure that I will be protected”

- Upon consent of the individual who made the report, OIOS will inform the Ethics Office of any report that may pose a retaliation risk so that appropriate retaliation prevention actions can be taken.
- Individuals who believe that retaliatory action has been taken against them may also submit a request for protection against retaliation to the Ethics Office in person, by mail or email, or through the Ethics Office helpline.

SEEKING HELP

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2. Email: speakup@un.org

Talk to your supervisor, a manager, a trusted colleague, or contact any of the below:

- **DPPA-DPO Conduct & Discipline Focal Points** (dppa-dpoconductanddiscipline@un.org) provide guidance on provisions of [ST/SGB/2019/8](#), [ST/AI/2017/1](#), and [ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1](#)

- **Office of Internal Oversight Services** - provide a platform for staff members to formally report possible unsatisfactory conduct: <https://oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing>
 - **UN Ombudsman and Mediation Services** (unoms@un.org)
 - **The Staff Counsellor's Office** (scohq@un.org)
 - **Office of Human Resources**
 - **The Ethics Office** (ethicsoffice@un.org)
 - **The Office of Staff Legal Assistance**
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3. RECEIVING GIFTS AND HONORS, UNDERTAKING OUTSIDE ACTIVITY

From: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Sent on: Friday, December 16, 2022 2:28:45 PM

CC: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Subject: Focus: UN Standards of Conduct - Gifts, Honours and Outside Activity (4/4)

Building Our Pillar



Receipt of Gifts and Honours and Undertaking Outside Activity

To ensure staff perform their roles following the highest standards of ethics and integrity, we are sharing resources to remind staff of UN Standards of Conduct.

Previous emails dealt with identifying possible prohibited conduct, responding to possible misconduct and fraud.



Uncertain about whether you can receive a gift or honour?



Unclear about what to do with a gift you have received?



Not sure who to tell if you are offered a gift or honour?

“It’s just a small gift, surely it’s allowed...”

Uncertain about whether you can receive a gift or honour, whether from a member state or a vendor your office works with?

According to [ST/SGB/2018/1](#):

- **No staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any Government.**
- **If refusal of an unanticipated honour, decoration, favour or gift from a Government would cause embarrassment to the Organization, the staff member may receive it on behalf of the Organization and then report and entrust it to the Secretary-General.**
- **No staff member shall accept any honour, decoration, favour, gift or remuneration from any non-governmental source without first obtaining the approval of the Secretary-General.**

Staff members must report to, and in some cases, deposit the gifts and honours with the Executive Office.

For any inquiry, contact dppa-dpo-admin@un.org.

“I’m not sure if this counts as a conflict of interest...”

- **A staff member whose personal interests interfere with the performance of his or her official duties or impartiality as an international civil servant shall disclose any such actual or possible interest to their head of office.**
 - **Unless authorized by the Secretary-General, the staff member shall formally excuse him or herself from any involvement in situations which might give rise to a conflict of interest.**
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Uncertain about whether you need to get permission for an activity outside working hours?



Do not know whether to issue statements to the press, or to accept an invitation to speak on a UN matter?



Unsure about whether you can be a member of a political party?

“I heard that a colleague is running for election.”

- **Staff members shall not engage in any outside occupation or employment, whether remunerated or not, without the approval of the Secretary-General.**
- **Staff members shall not, except in the normal course of official duties or with the prior approval of the Secretary-General, engage in any outside activities that relate to the purpose, activities or interests of the United Nations.**

The below are considered outside activities, and the staff member must get approval prior to engaging in any of the following activities:

- **Issuing statements to the press, radio or other agencies of public information.**
- **Accepting speaking engagements.**
- **Taking part in film, theatre, radio or television productions.**
- **Submitting articles, books or other material for publication, or for any electronic dissemination.**

A staff member wishing to engage in an outside activity for which prior approval is required shall submit a request in writing through his or her supervisor to the executive officer at United Nations Headquarters.

“Am I not allowed to be a member of a political party?”

Membership in a political party is permitted, provided that such membership does not entail action, or an obligation to take action, by the staff member.

“Should I seek approval for outside activity?”

A staff member wishing to engage in an outside activity for which prior approval is required shall submit a request in writing through his or her supervisor to the executive officer at United Nations Headquarters.

When a staff member is unsure whether to engage in outside activity, she/he must ask the Ethics Office for guidance and advice. The Ethics Office will provide confidential guidance on ethical issues.

SEEKING HELP

If you believe that prohibited conduct may have occurred, you may seek guidance/information/advice from the following:

- **DPPA-DPO Conduct & Discipline Focal Points** (dppa-dpoconductanddiscipline@un.org) provide guidance on provisions of [ST/IC/2016/25](#), [ST/AI/2017/1](#) and [ST/SGB/2018/1](#).
- **Office of Internal Oversight Services** - provide a platform for staff members to formally report possible unsatisfactory conduct: <https://oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing>
- **Office of Human Resources**

- [The Ethics Office \(ethicsoffice@un.org\)](mailto:ethicsoffice@un.org)
 - [The Office of Staff Legal Assistance](#)
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4. FRAUD

From: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Sent on: Friday, December 9, 2022 3:47:11 PM

CC: BuildingOurPillar <buildingourpillar@un.org>

Subject: Focus: UN Standards of Conduct - Fraud



International Anti-Corruption Day – Fraud

To mark International Anti-Corruption Day, December 9th, we are sharing resources to remind staff of UN Standards of Conduct and ensure staff perform their roles following the highest standards of ethics and integrity.

Our previous emails dealt with identifying possible prohibited conduct and responding to possible misconduct.



Reluctant to speak up about something because you aren't sure if it is fraudulent or not?



Uncertain whether something should be reported formally or informally?



Unsure of your responsibilities as a staff member in relation to acts of misconduct?

“I saw something, but I’m unsure if it’s fraud...”

The term “fraudulent acts” in the United Nations Secretariat includes both fraud and corruption.

- **Fraud: any act or omission whereby an individual or entity knowingly misrepresents or conceals a material fact in order to obtain an undue benefit or advantage for himself, herself, itself or a third party, or to cause another to act to his or her detriment.**
- **Corruption: any act or omission that misuses official authority or that seeks to influence the misuse of official authority in order to obtain an undue benefit for oneself or a third party.**

Fraudulent acts constitute a violation of the Staff Regulations and Rules and misconduct for which disciplinary measures may be imposed.

If someone makes a fraudulent submission or claim, all related benefits and compensations by that claimant will be denied and payments recovered. If there is prima facie evidence of a fraudulent act, an investigation will be carried out by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) or by the Department.

Fraudulent acts may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Submitting falsified documentation.**
 - **Misrepresenting educational qualifications.**
 - **Making material omissions or false inclusions in PHPs.**
 - **Knowingly submitting an education grant, travel or other entitlement claim containing false information.**
 - **Improperly assisting a person outside the UN secure employment in exchange for money or other favours.**
 - **Improperly assisting a vendor in a procurement process.**
 - **Misusing UN resources to benefit oneself or a third party.**
 - **Soliciting or accepting bribes.**
 - **Revealing internal confidential information in order to obtain a benefit for oneself or a third party.**
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“I may have knowledge of a fraudulent act. What do I do next?”

As a staff member, you have the duty to report any breach of the Organization's regulations and rules.

Remember, the most important thing is the intention of the staff member who makes the report. You may report any suspected unsatisfactory conduct if your intentions are good.

SEEKING HELP

If you believe that a fraudulent act may have occurred, you may seek guidance/information/advice from the following:

- **DPPA-DPO Conduct & Discipline Focal Points** (dppa-dpoconductanddiscipline@un.org) provide guidance on provisions of [ST/IC/2016/25](#), [ST/AI/2017/1](#) and [ST/SGB/2018/1](#).
 - **Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS)** - provide a platform for staff members to formally report possible unsatisfactory conduct: <https://oios.un.org/report-wrongdoing>
 - **Office of Human Resources**
 - **Fraud and Corruption Awareness Handbook** provides information on preventing, detecting, responding to, and reporting on allegations of fraud and corruption.
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