

Draft Principles for Responsible Code of Conduct for Community Involvement
Prepared by Tanis Dagert, Community Liaison Officer, Vancouver Island University

‘Vancouver Island University’ is a community-engaged university, dedicated to designing innovative processes to strengthen student learning and contribute to a civic and sustainable society. VIU is a vital part of its communities in Nanaimo, Duncan, Parksville, Powell River, British Columbia, Canada and the world. The university honours the time and commitment that goes into building respectful community relationships and embraces engagement as foundational to its academic mission.

Consistent with the Vancouver Island University Vision and Values statements (see [Academic Plan](#)) all employees and students are required to maintain the highest standard of conduct when acting on behalf of the university as part of their community involvement. *Community involvement* means any interaction with people, employers, professionals, family members, co-worker, agencies or institutions (public or private) that you engage with as part of a learning activity or work assignment.

Principles are decision-making tools that can increase the rigor and quality of community engagement and act as a foundation for the development of engagement goals, objectives, and activities whether it be for public events, community-based experiential learning, domestic or international partnerships, institutional or industry partnerships, community-based research, collaborative programming, etc.

Some learning activities and work assignments will require a high level of interpersonal exchanges, critical thinking, cooperation collaboration, and the development of trust among the people you interact with in the collection, syntheses of information and interaction with others in the community.

Principles and guidelines for Responsible Code of Conduct for Community Involvement:

Ambassadorship / Representation of the University

All VIU employees and students are required to represent themselves, their role and their status, and the university accurately. Values of trust, honesty, collaboration, respect, dignity, and inclusion are to be demonstrated in working with stakeholders, and with people in the local, regional, national or international community. No-one should misuse or misrepresent the institution or their professional affiliation(s), and must not exploit the relationship with the person or agency or institution for personal benefit, gain, or gratification. Students and employees should have their university identification with them when conducting site visits as part of developing or implementing community involvement activities or projects. All VIU students are expected to abide by the VIU Student Academic Code of Conduct Policy 99.01 (located [here](#)) in relation to their academic related work in / with community.

Human Rights

It is the policy of Vancouver Island University and responsibility under the BC Human Rights Code, to provide an environment that is free of harassment and other forms of discrimination. The intention of the Policy is to prevent discrimination against any member of the University, due to race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, age, or an unrelated criminal conviction. Sexual harassment of individuals or groups is also discrimination, which is prohibited by law and by this policy. All members of the University are prohibited from engaging in discrimination. The University considers discrimination and harassment to be a serious infringement of a person’s human rights and University members found to be in violation of the Policy and Procedures may be subject to a range of corrective measures, up to and including expulsion or dismissal from the University. (See [VIU Policy 21.03](#) Human Rights Policy)

Freedom from Harassment

Members of the University community are responsible for treating other community members with respect and dignity and to maintain environments free of personal harassment. Personal harassment is defined as objectionable conduct or comment directed towards a specific person(s), which serves no legitimate work or educational purpose and has the effect of creating an intimidating, humiliating, offensive, or hostile work or educational environment. Personal harassment is a broad term that includes behaviours that could be called psychological harassment or bullying. (See [VIU Policy 21.05](#) Personal Harassment Policy).

The following behaviors are considered harassment and are unacceptable:

- Violence, threats of violence or violent language directed against another person.
- Sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist or otherwise discriminatory jokes and language.
- Posting or displaying sexually explicit or violent material.
- Posting or threatening to post other people's personally identifying information ("doxing").
- Personal insults, particularly those related to gender, sexual orientation, race, religion, or disability.
- Inappropriate photography or recording.
- Inappropriate physical contact. You should have someone's consent before touching them.
- Unwelcome sexual attention. This includes, sexualized comments or jokes; inappropriate touching, groping, and unwelcomed sexual advances.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking or following (online or in person).
- Sustained disruption of community events, including talks and presentations.
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behavior.

Diversity and Accessibility

The University is committed to continue building an educational community that is equitable, diverse and inclusive and ensures we are accessible to and inclusive of all members of our communities. Engagement is built on respect for the different knowledges, experiences and contexts of individuals and communities within and beyond VIU. Diversity may be related to economic, educational, employment, or health status as well as differences in culture, language, race, ethnicity, age, gender, mobility, literacy, or personal interests. The processes, strategies, and techniques used to engage the community must be respectful of and complement cultural traditions. Be sensitive to the needs of particular individuals or groups to maximise their ability to contribute and provide information in forms that are easy to understand and appropriate for all sectors of the community. (See [VIU Policy 21.04](#) Diversity and Educational Equity).

Professional and Respectful Communications and Behavior

When working in / with community it is important to participate in an authentic and active way and to exercise consideration and respect in your speech and actions. These include being polite, informing people of who you are and the reason for your request, actively listening to the person, being genuine, using respectful eye contact, using empathy when appropriate and being thankful for their time and contribution. Engagement involves a commitment to clear, honest conversations about process, ownership, access and motivation. Building relationships means listening, learning, and adapting approaches throughout. Attempt collaboration before conflict and refrain from demeaning, discriminatory, or harassing behavior and speech. Online behavior should reflect the same standards of honesty, respect, and consideration that you use face-to-face, and be in accordance with the highest professional behaviours and ethical standards.

Integrity and Conduct in Research and Scholarly Activity

The university holds all Researchers responsible for conducting Research and Scholarly Activity in compliance with applicable laws and regulations and for following the requirements of applicable institutional policies, ethical standards and professional standards of their discipline. Researchers are defined as ‘faculty members, students, researchers and all other personnel, engaged in Research and Scholarly Activity, associated with the university’. (See [VIU Procedure 31.10.001](#) Integrity and Conduct in Research and Scholarly Activity).

Confidentiality/ Privacy/ Veracity

Confidentiality relates to the right of the person you are interviewing or meeting with to control access to the information that they wish to release to you and the information they do not want to release. It is your responsibility to uphold the right to confidentiality and privacy as it arises in the context of conducting an assignment. Veracity refers to authenticity or presenting a truthful account of the objective information you obtain while respecting confidentiality.

Autonomy/ Informed Consent

All people have the right to make decisions as to whether to participate in a learning activity or exercise. Informed consent is required from others when they are involved in a student’s learning activity or exercise and students should follow the processes for obtaining informed consent.

Consent must also be given for any involvement of minors under the age of 19 (whether a student or community member) from a substitute decision maker and if there is a cognitive or affective impairment that precludes a person from being able to give consent. Each person has the right to change consent or reconsider participation in any activity at any point and has the right to make decisions about what information to release or not release.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest arises when a University member’s private interests supersedes or competes with his or her dedication to the interests of the University whether it be it to advance or protect one’s own interest or the interest of others with whom one has a close relationship with, be financial or otherwise and could be detrimental to the interests of the University. Relationships that constitute a conflict of interest include, but are not limited to: close family relationships such as those between spouses or spousal equivalents, parents and children, siblings, in-laws, grandparents and grandchildren, or any other person residing in the employee’s home; sexual relationships; relationships between persons whose economic interests are closely interrelated. It is the responsibility of University member’s to avoid conflicts of interest and to declare any circumstances which exist giving rise to potential or real conflicts of interest.

Criminal Record Check

Under the BC [Criminal Records Review Act](#), a criminal record review must be conducted by the Criminal Record Review Program (CRRP) for anyone that:

- Works with children or vulnerable adults, or
- Has unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults during your employment, occupation or education, or
- Are licensed by or receiving funding from the provincial government

In accordance with Part 4.1 'Registered Students' an educational institution must ensure that every registered student who will work with children or work with vulnerable adults undergoes: (a) a criminal record check, or (b) a criminal record check verification.

If there are outstanding charges or convictions that present a risk of physical, sexual or financial abuse the education institution must ensure that the registered student does not work with children or vulnerable adults as a registered student.

Intellectual Property Rights

VIU recognizes and is committed to preserving the principles of academic and intellectual freedom and ensuring that all creators of intellectual property – students, faculty, staff, community members have their rights protected, have their contributions acknowledged appropriately, and receive appropriate economic return for their contributions in creating intellectual property if it results in commercialization.

Acknowledgement

It is important to involve community partners in writing and reviewing products of the scholarship / activity before they are published or otherwise disseminated. As well, any person who has made a contribution that is reported in a presentation, publication and/or artistic performance, either in the conception, design, or execution of the experimental work, interpretation of data or drafting an article/presentation, should be given appropriate acknowledgement or attribution.

Competence

In the context of conducting assignments and exercises that involve interacting with members of the community it is critical that students and employees recognize the limits in their expertise and capacity and take care not to exceed these limits. They shall terminate an activity if it becomes clear that there is a risk of harm.

Political engagement

While recognizing the University's mission of education is fundamental to a democratic society, public trust requires that the University and its resources not be used to promote partisan political causes and candidates. Students and employees may speak and act as individual citizens but must not say or imply that their views represent the views of the University. (See VIU [Policy 41.16](#) Political Engagement).