1.0 PURPOSE

1.1 Nova Scotia Community College’s mission of building Nova Scotia's economy and quality of life through education and innovation requires a shared commitment to the College’s core values and to high standards of ethical conduct. At NSCC, we hold ourselves accountable for the embodiment of these values and standards.

1.2 The Employee Code of Conduct focuses on standards of conduct by which NSCC employees are expected to govern themselves in carrying out College business and in interacting with each other, our learners and the communities we serve.

2.0 SCOPE

2.1 This Code applies to all current employees regardless of status. It applies to all employee behaviour on campus, on-line or off-site, which may undermine the College’s mission and values or detrimentally affect the College’s reputation.

3.0 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

3.1 The actions we choose to take as individual employees reflect on us all and influence how others perceive NSCC. The Employee Code of Conduct provides an overview of key practices and behaviours which support NSCC’s values and Mission. Complying with the behavioural expectations set out below is a condition of employment.

3.2 Our guiding values are: student success, employee success, accessibility, diversity and inclusion, safety, innovation, sustainability and public accountability. As members of the NSCC community, employees must act in a manner which supports these values, both in performing their daily job functions and in relation to any off-duty activities, which could negatively impact:
   a. NSCC’s pursuit of its mission and vision
   b. the employee’s ability to perform their duties satisfactorily;
   c. NSCC’s management and support of employees and students;
   d. the working and learning environment; or
   e. NSCC’s reputation.

3.3 College policies set out standards of behaviour and expectations of NSCC employees which support NSCC’s values and operations. NSCC requires that its employees are familiar with its policies and act in accordance with them.
3.4 Employees must lead by example by acting with professionalism. Professionalism is a set of attitudes, behaviours and characteristics appropriate to an organization and/or profession. At NSCC, professionalism includes demonstrating integrity, respect, accountability and a commitment to NSCC’s Mission, Vision and Values. Core elements of appropriate professional behavior include:

a. **Responsible, Safe and Ethical Job Performance**
   
i. meeting all work obligations (being on time, present and productive);
   
ii. devoting time, energy and ability to their position, as required by their employment responsibilities and any governing professional standards;
   
iii. encouraging positive work behaviour, including promoting appropriate personal and professional workplace relationships and boundaries;
   
iv. when on College business or learning activities (including conferences, etc.), refraining from engaging in behaviour that may bring their own reputation or that of the College into disrepute;
   
v. performing their work in a safe, responsible manner free from the influence of drugs or alcohol; and,
   
vi. complying with NSCC policies.

b. **Respectful Interaction with Others**
   
i. treating others with respect, dignity, courtesy, honesty and fairness, and with proper regard for their rights, safety and welfare;
   
ii. contributing to a workplace that is free of harassment, bullying or discrimination against employees, students, or members of the public; fostering a climate of diversity and inclusion and seeking to avoid or remove obstacles to accessibility within the scope of their role; and,
   
iii. working together as a team to build a positive work environment built on open communication, constructive interpersonal relationships, effective conflict and issues resolution, cooperative problem solving and reporting issues or concerns appropriately to the manager.

c. **Acting with Integrity**
   
i. refraining from all professional or personal relationships, including consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships, which could create a potential conflict of interest or commitment for the employee. In the event such relationships exist or develop, they must be disclosed per the Conflict of Interest & Commitment policy.
ii. refraining from consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships with students. NSCC prohibits such relationships between its employees and students, while they are pursuing studies at the College, as they can give rise to actual or perceived conflicts of interest, undermine the integrity of the learning environment and pose a risk that they exploit the relationship of authority and trust that is inherent in the relationship between employees and students. In the event such relationships are pre-existing, they must be disclosed per the Conflict of Interest & Commitment policy.

iii. safeguarding NSCC assets, resources, information, data, etc. and using them responsibly and only as required for College purposes;

iv. only using College information for authorized purposes and in a manner aligned with any applicable legal, ethical and professional standards;

v. complying with copyright laws and policies and upholding NSCC values of academic integrity; and,

vi. refraining from unethical behaviour such as misappropriation or misuse of College assets, theft, or inaccurate reporting of financial information for personal advantage of oneself or others.

d. **Avoiding Inappropriate Communications**

i. respecting the privacy and confidentiality interests of the College and others and avoiding any inappropriate disclosure of personal or confidential information; and,

ii. not using social media or any other public forum to disparage NSCC, co-workers or students and not contributing content that would bring the College, yourself or other employees or students into disrepute or would harm their standing in the community.

3.5 **Code Compliance**

a. Conduct which undermines NSCC’s values or which breaches any of the standards of conduct set out above, or any other NSCC policy, is a breach of this Code (See Appendix A for examples of breaches). Employees must not tolerate or participate in behaviour that is inconsistent with College policies and the Employee Code of Conduct. Employees who are uncertain as to whether a particular course of action or decision is or would be contrary to the Code or any other NSCC policy should consult with a manager or senior leader to obtain direction or guidance.

b. A suspected breach of the Code may be pursued, as determined by the College, under applicable Policies and Procedures or as matters of discipline under collective agreements.

c. Code breaches will result in sanctions and may include disciplinary measures up to, and including, termination of employment.
d. Anyone with information suggesting that a breach of the Code has been committed is expected to report it to his/her manager or a Senior Leader. Reports of potential breaches shall be passed along to the HR Consultant in confidence for advice and guidance regarding next steps.

3.6 Confidentiality

The College will maintain strict confidentiality at all times in the reporting and investigation of alleged violations of the Code. All records are to be kept confidential and securely filed within Central Human Resources. The College will take every reasonable precaution to protect the concerns and identity of those involved to the greatest extent possible. All parties will be required to maintain confidentiality to ensure the integrity of process.

3.7 Abuse of Policy

The College requires any employee raising concerns regarding an alleged breach of the Employee Code of Conduct do so in good faith based on an honest belief a violation has occurred. An individual acting in good faith will not be disadvantaged or lose their employment status by reporting their concerns, even when concerns cannot be substantiated under the applicable policy. However, the willful misuse or abuse of the Code may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

3.8 Reporting

The Director of Human Resources will provide the President and Executive team an annual report summarizing activity and College response under the Employee Code of Conduct.

3.9 Communication and Acknowledgement

In order to communicate the College’s expectations with respect to the Employee Code of Conduct, the College will provide every employee, regardless of status, with a copy of, or electronic access to, the Employee Code of Conduct. For new hires, this will be carried out at time of hire as part of the offer of employment/during orientation to the College, and will require their signed acknowledgement.

3.10 Regular Review

The Employee Code of Conduct shall be reviewed in accordance with the NSCC Policy Review Schedule.
4.0 SUPPORTS

Related Contracts
- Faculty Collective Agreement
- Professional Support Collective Agreement
- Operational Support Collective Agreement

Related Guidelines
- Management/Confidential Employment Guidelines

Supporting Documents
- Employee Code of Conduct (42.02) Appendix A – Examples of Breaches
- Frequently Asked Questions
- About our Code

Related Policies
- Academic Integrity
- Alcohol and Drug
- Asset Management
- Attendance Management
- College Purchase Card
- Computer Usage
- Conflict of Interest and Commitment
- Use of Copyright Materials
- Email
- Employee Success
- Employment of Relatives
- Entertainment
- Environmental
- Fair Hiring
- Fraud
- Intellectual Property
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Procurement
- Research Ethics Board
- Research Integrity
- Respectful Working and Learning Environment (Discrimination & Harassment)
- Safe Disclosure ("Whistleblowing")
- Smoke-free NSCC
- Social Media
- Travel and Reimbursement
- Violence Prevention

Related Laws are all applicable laws including but not limited to the following:
- Nova Scotia Human Rights Code
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Criminal Code
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act
- Trade Union Act/Labour Standards Code
APPENDIX A – EXAMPLES OF BREACHES

It is not possible to list each and every behaviour which could violate this Code. The following is not intended to be a comprehensive list but rather provides a range of examples that may constitute a breach of the Code. Employees are expected to exercise sound judgement, consider the principles that shape the policy, and when in doubt seek guidance from their manager to avoid breaches of the Code of Conduct. Some questions that should be considered in deciding on appropriate behaviour are:

- Is the conduct consistent with the Employee Code of Conduct and/or College policies, practices and procedures?
- Is it consistent with applicable professional standards in my field of expertise?
- Will it reflect well on me and the College?
- Would I want to read about it in the newspaper?
- What would an objective third party think?
- Whom should I consult with for guidance or to assist me in resolving this situation?

The following list of examples, while not comprehensive, is illustrative of situations which may constitute a breach of the Code and/or College policies and that may result in disciplinary action:

**Responsible, Safe and Ethical Job Performance**

**Professional Behaviour**

- When representing the College at a professional engagement or event, including learning activities, engaging in any behaviour that may bring an employee’s own reputation or that of the College into disrepute (i.e. excessive alcohol use, loud, disrespectful comments).
- Allowing personality conflicts to escalate to unprofessional conduct in the workplace.
- Being under the influence of alcohol, or drugs in the working and learning environment.
- Possession of, or trafficking in, a controlled substance as defined in Provincial legislation.

**Workplace Health, Safety and Security**

- Failure to participate in required drills and observe lockdown procedures, fire alarms, and emergency preparedness plans.
- Carrying or possessing weapons or dangerous chemicals (except where required and permitted for academic purposes).
- Refusal or failure to follow all safety requirements including how to properly use safety equipment as instructed and/or as is defined by professional standards and the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- Smoking (tobacco, electronic cigarettes) on College property, or at college events and activities other than designated areas.
Respectful Interaction with Others

Respect and Dignity

- Using of insulting, lewd or obscene language.
- Making remarks or engaging in conduct that is racist, sexist, or in other ways discriminatory, as defined by the Nova Scotia Human Rights Act and NSCC’s Respectful Workplace and Learning Environment (Discrimination and Harassment) Policy, nor permitting any employee, or student in any class, to do so.
- Physical/sexual abuse, violence, threats of violence or intimidating behaviour.
- Bullying, harassing, discriminatory or other demeaning behaviour or making comments that should be known to be unwelcome and disrespectful.
- Engaging in behaviour or making remarks that could reasonably be interpreted as threatening, or allowing any employee or student in any class to engage in such behaviour.
- Encouraging, by inaction or innuendo, the development of a workplace or classroom environment that is fractious, disrespectful of others, or otherwise inconsistent with this Code of Conduct.
- Any behaviors that threaten positive and productive relations with other people including negative, malicious, or unkind remarks.
- Taking retribution or reprisal against an individual who has reported/disclosed improper activity or policy violations.

Acting with Integrity

Favouring of Outside Interests for Personal Gain

- Exerting influence on the discussion of, or voting on, College decisions relating to agreements, programs and/or services to the advantage of the individual or person with a relationship to that individual.
- Engaging in a College agreement or service contract with a third party in which either the individual or a person with a relationship to that individual has a financial or other interest.
- Accepting significant gifts or special favours for personal gain from private organizations or individuals with whom the College does business, or from students or colleagues, without complete disclosure to and approval from the person’s supervisor.

Inappropriate Use of College Personnel, Resources or Assets

- Using College students or staff on College time to carry out work in which either the individual or a person with a relationship to that individual has a personal, financial or other interest.
- Unauthorized and non-reimbursed use of College resources or facilities to benefit a private concern in which either the individual or a person with a relationship to that individual has a financial or other interest. This includes College assets which are deemed surplus and must be disposed of according to College policy.

Abuse of Authority

Employees entering into a consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship with a student. Such relationships undermine the integrity of the learning environment and pose a risk that they exploit the relationship of authority and trust that is inherent in the relationship between employees and students.
Conflicts of Interest - Employment and Evaluative Relationships

- Participating in the selection, supervision, teaching, counselling, evaluation or discipline of a student with whom the individual has a personal relationship including consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship. This includes any other potential evaluative situations and any pre-existing relationships (i.e. those existing prior to the evaluative process/individual becoming a student).

- Participating in the personnel decisions (selection, supervision, evaluation, approval/denial of increments/ performance pay, etc.) involving a person with whom the individual has a personal relationship including consensual romantic and/or sexual relationship. This include oversight of work or other potential evaluative situations and any pre-existing relationships (i.e. those existing prior to the evaluative process).

- Having direct or indirect authority over a relative's employment through decisions, recommendations or judgments related or influence to: the approval/denial of increments/ performance pay, the assignment and approval of overtime, the negotiation of salary level, conduct of performance appraisals, discipline, the assignment or direction of work assignments, the approval of leaves of absence.

- Failure to declare and/or remove self from any situation where there is a real or perceived risk of favouritism, or to be in a position to influence the hiring, or supervise employment activities of an immediate family member or person with whom a relationship exists per the Conflict of Interest & Commitment and Employment of Relatives policies.

Conflicts of Commitment

- An employee arranges to work for someone else and such an arrangement conflicts with the time commitment to the College.

- During the course of employment, an employee is engaged in a business that competes with the business of the College.

- An employee solicits College clients to advance his or her personal interests.

Fraud and Dishonesty

- Lying about matters connected with work.

- Using College credit card for personal purchases.

- Giving or receiving a bribe in any form and/or covering up bribery.

- Theft and/or any improper act to conceal the theft of College assets.

- Embezzlement of College assets.

- Inaccurately reporting financial information for a personal advantage (falsifying travel and expense claim forms, falsifying hours of work time records, not recording/reporting vacation taken)

- Authorizing or receiving remuneration for time not worked

- Authorizing or receiving remuneration for goods that were not received or services that were not performed.

Copyright and Academic Integrity

- Taking credit for the work of others by misrepresenting or not disclosing (by including credits) the source or authorship of the content per procedures in the NSCC Use of Copyright Materials Policy.

- Using copyright protected materials in excess of the limits placed by educational copyright exceptions and NSCC Use of Copyright Materials Policy.
Record Keeping and Use of Information
- Collection, use, disclosure or disposal of personal information contrary to the requirements of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP).
- Knowingly destroying, discarding, omitting, altering, or submitting false information in any official College documents, records or files.
- Knowingly signing or approving records that are untruthful or inaccurate (overtime, leave reporting).

Stewardship of physical assets and resources
- Deliberate damage to College property and/or unauthorized use of College equipment, supplies, resources or property.
- Theft, misuse or waste of assets or equipment.
- Unauthorized removal of College property.
- Misuse or altering I.D. cards, access cards.

Stewardship of electronic and/or online assets and resources
- Knowingly accessing websites that would be violations of the Human Rights Code and/or College policies.
- Conduct which violates NSCC’s Social Media Policy.
- Unauthorized access to emails or files.
- Installing unapproved, unauthorized or unlicensed software onto College equipment.
- Knowingly transmitting, downloading or storing any communication of a damaging nature (such as viruses).

Avoiding Inappropriate Communications

Inappropriate Use of Information
- Using for personal gain or other unauthorized purposes, private or confidential information acquired as a result of the individual's College activities; such information might include knowledge of forthcoming developments requiring contractor selection, etc.
- Unreasonably delaying publication of information or premature release of information to secure personal gain or to secure gain for a person with whom an individual has a relationship.
- Including the College (or any part of it) or a College position title when publicly expressing personal views on any matter;
- Failing to exercise reasonable discretion whenever discussing business outside the organization or at organization events.

Communication and Official Information
- Failure to respect confidentiality and privacy of any information concerning other employees or students provided in the course of conducting business.
- Discussing sensitive College business in public or disclosing information received through their position at the College which is not published or available to the general public.
- Knowingly furnishing false information, knowingly making a false accusation or knowingly reporting a false emergency to any College Leader or Office;
- Failure to comply with the requirements of any of the following: applicable funding applications and agreements; College and other applicable policies; standards of the relevant profession; any disciplinary requirements imposed; or and any laws or regulations.
- Violating Copyright or any College policies related to information ownership rights and approvals, replication and circulation.