



11 November 2019

Ethics in the Office

Introduction

1. Service with the International Labour Office is subject to the highest standards of conduct and integrity, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the International Labour Organisation and the United Nations Charter.
2. Strict observance by all ILO staff members of ethical standards is essential for building a culture of integrity and respect in the Office, as well as for protecting its reputation and maintaining the trust that the ILO should enjoy on the part of its member States, workers' and employers' organizations and the public at large. These standards are elaborated in:
 - (a) Chapter I of the ILO Staff Regulations;
 - (b) the Financial Rules and the Financial Regulations of the ILO;
 - (c) the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service issued by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC);
 - (d) Office Directive, *Rules governing outside activities and occupations*, IGDS No. 71;
 - (e) Office Guideline, *Conflicts of interest*, IGDS No. 68;
 - (f) Collective Agreement on Anti-harassment Policy and Investigation Procedure between the International Labour Office and the ILO Staff Union, 28 November 2014;
 - (g) Office Directive, *Employment of domestic workers by ILO officials*, IGDS No. 479;
 - (h) Office Directive, *Anti-fraud and anti-corruption policy*, IGDS No. 69; and
 - (i) Office Guideline, *Gifts and hospitality offered to officials by external sources*, IGDS No. 552.
3. The Directive is issued pursuant to article 8 of the Constitution of the ILO, article 30 of the ILO Financial Regulations and article 1.2 of the ILO Staff Regulations. It supersedes the Office Directive, *Ethics in the Office*, IGDS No. 76 (version 1), of 17 June 2009.
4. The Directive is to be read in conjunction with Office Directive, *Reporting misconduct and protection from retaliation*, IGDS No. 551.

5. The Directive applies to all ILO staff members, irrespective of service category or type of contract.
6. This Directive is effective as of the date of issue.

Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service

7. The Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service issued by the ICSC complement the provisions of Chapter I of the ILO Staff Regulations and guide ILO staff members both in carrying out their duties and in the activities they undertake outside the framework of such duties.
8. All staff members are expected to respect and strictly comply with the Standards of Conduct. A copy is issued to each staff member upon initial appointment. Each staff member is also requested to sign a statement confirming that she/he has read the document and undertakes to observe the standards contained therein. The signed statements are placed in the personal file of each staff member.
9. Staff members are also encouraged to consult the Principles of Conduct for Staff of the International Labour Office, a tool prepared and kept up to date by the Ethics Officer. This tool aims at helping staff under any type of contract to recognize ethical issues in a number of situations and respond to them in the right way.¹ Managers at all levels should ensure that those who report to them are familiar with the Principles of Conduct and should help promote adherence.

Duty to disclosure interests

10. A potential conflict of interest can arise where a staff member's personal relationships or position in external entities can compromise or be seen to compromise objectivity and impartiality in the discharge of official duties for the ILO (e.g. roles, activities or participation in bodies or groups dealing with ILO matters and activities, close ties with constituents or ILO oversight bodies, etc.). Financial interests of staff as a result of family and personal relationships, gifts, benefits and hospitality received from outside sources, as well as through other business interests such as partnerships and family businesses, are also considered to be one of the main causes of conflict of interest in a public administration.
11. Staff members confronted with a conflict of interest or by a situation that could lead to a perception of a conflict of interest, must disclose that interest to their immediate supervisor and jointly take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way which protects the best interests of the Office.² Non-disclosure of conflicts of interest or situations that could lead to a perception of a conflict of interest may amount to misconduct subject to disciplinary sanctions.

The ethics function

12. The ethics function is an integral part of the ILO's accountability framework.³ Contributing to building a culture of integrity and respect across the Office, the function is entrusted with the following responsibilities:

¹ www.ilo.org/public/english/ethics/download/principles.pdf.

² See Office Guideline, *Conflicts of interest*, IGDS No. 68.

³ Office Guideline, *The ILO accountability framework: key standards and mechanisms*, IGDS No. 195.

- (a) On request, to counsel managers and staff members on questions of ethics, including conflicts of interest, outside activities and occupations, and gifts.
 - (b) To provide guidance to HRD and other relevant ILO units to ensure that ILO policies, procedures and practices reinforce and promote the ethical standards called for under the Staff Regulations and the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, and that the ethical standards pertaining to staff members are clearly understood.
 - (c) To assist, in collaboration with HRD and other relevant ILO units, in designing, promoting and implementing programmes to inform and educate staff with a view to increasing awareness on ethical issues.
 - (d) To receive and review requests for protection from retaliation, or threats of retaliation, from individual staff members who believe that action has been taken against them because they have reported misconduct or cooperated in good faith with an audit or investigation, as set out in Office Directive, *Reporting misconduct and protection from retaliation*, IGDS No. 551.
 - (e) To receive information regarding allegations of the inappropriate treatment by staff members of domestic workers employed by them, as set out in Office Directive, *Employment of domestic workers by ILO officials*, IGDS No. 479.
13. In exercising the responsibilities related to the ethics function, the staff member appointed to serve as Ethics Officer is independent of any other official, department or organizational entity of the ILO and reports directly to the Director-General, to whom she/he presents an annual report. The annual report is made publicly available at: www.ilo.org/ethics.
14. All offices and staff shall cooperate with the Ethics Officer and provide access to any records and documents requested by the Ethics Officer, except for medical records that are not available without the express consent of the staff member concerned and other records that are subject to confidentiality requirements.
15. The Ethics Officer has unrestricted and confidential access to the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee of the International Labour Office, and vice versa. ⁴
16. The Ethics Officer can be contacted by email at ethics@ilo.org or telephone at +41 (22) 799 6555. Staff members should forward all information and documentation available to them related to their request.

Guy Ryder
Director-General

⁴ Terms of reference for the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee of the International Labour Office, para. 5, available at: <https://www.ilo.org/public/english/edmas/ioac/index.htm>.