

## VALUES FOR WORKING TOGETHER AND PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOURS IN SCFP

### BACKGROUND

This document develops the University of Reading's [Values for Working Together and Professional Behaviours](#) for local practice within the School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy.

The values and practices outlined in this document are a guide to the professional behaviours and working practices that are endorsed by the School and the University of Reading. They include the values that are recognised during promotion and staff rewards, and which are highlighted during the annual Performance and Development Review. The behaviours impact on the ability of our staff to:

- Achieve results
- Demonstrate excellence
- Find innovative solutions
- Embrace and enable change
- Develop oneself and others
- Work together

This document has been developed by the School Management Board in collaboration with the School's Diversity and Inclusion, and Health, Safety and Wellbeing, Committees to provide clear guidelines on the School's core expectations of its staff, and in response to calls by staff for support with managing their workload demands. A key change is that wellbeing and equality are now included in the terms of reference for the Diversity and Inclusion Committee, , thus becoming the School Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Committee (WIDE). A "wellbeing champion" represents the School and is a member of the WIDE Committee.

### SCFP VALUES

#### ***Mission statement***

"The School of Chemistry, Food and Pharmacy delivers excellence in teaching and research that focuses on promoting human health, preventing and treating disease, and enabling sustainable living on our planet. Through the development of individuals and through the promotion of an inclusive, collaborative culture, the School aims to empower current and future generations of educators, researchers and support staff by embedding collegiality and innovation into ways of working, teaching, policy and practice."

#### ***SCFP working culture***

In SCFP we are committed to providing a culture of equality, inclusion and fairness for all staff and students. The University emphasises the importance of respect, responsibility and accountability in working together to demonstrate ethical behaviour at all times. Within SCFP we will adhere to these values in achieving a high level of professionalism, collegiality, and ethical behaviour.

There is zero tolerance of bullying or any behaviour between colleagues that could be interpreted as intimidatory. As such, all staff and students have a responsibility to understand and uphold the behaviours expected of them and to ensure that their own behaviour, and that of those around them, upholds the standards expected within the School and University. Individuals who believe they are subjected to, or witness, harassment or bullying are encouraged to raise the matter as early as possible to give every opportunity to resolve the problem. Those who witness examples of bullying or harassment may wish to challenge this behaviour; however, they should only do so in an appropriate way and only if they can do so without putting themselves in a vulnerable position. The University has several formal procedures for dealing with allegations of harassment and bullying, all of which aim to ensure that issues are dealt with appropriately within the specific circumstances. For students, please refer to 'Student Complaints Procedure; Disciplinary Proceedings commenced on the part of the University'; for staff, please refer to 'Harassment and Bullying Procedure; Grievance and Disciplinary Procedures'.

The University's [Harassment Reporting and Support](#) webpage and [Harassment and Bullying Policy Statement](#) provide further information, including how to report an incident.

There is also a network of volunteer [Harassment Advisers](#) across the University who are trained to offer support and advice.

In a working environment of continuous change, it is important for staff to understand the expectations of them and to be accountable to colleagues and students. We aim to promote a positive culture in the workplace and respond to individuals in need. As such, we wish to support an excellent work-life balance by accommodating flexible working where possible, enabling shared parental leave, providing a culture where people can take their full annual leave entitlement and, where possible, scheduling meetings to take account of core working hours and part-time working.

All staff are entitled, and encouraged, to take advantage of the mentoring that is available across the School for various types of support. Staff are also encouraged to train as mentors so that they can support other colleagues. See the separate document on mentoring in SCFP for more information.

### **RESPONSIBILITY & ACCOUNTABILITY**

All staff in SCFP are expected to work with the independence that is appropriate for their role, to show initiative to organise their own workloads to meet objectives, to make effective use of resources, and to communicate clearly and respectfully. To meet the aspirations of our working culture it is important that:

- We take personal responsibility to prioritise workloads effectively and seek assistance from supervisors/peers as necessary.
- We engage with opportunities for continuous professional and personal development. We understand the overall goals of the University and the School and how we play a part in achieving these.
- We are open to change and new practices and approaches.

### ***Professional delivery of teaching***

Student expectations of academic staff are set out in the Reading Student Charter:

- teach in an engaging and varied manner that inspires learning
- give timely and constructive feedback on work
- provide effective pastoral and learning support when needed
- respond, communicate and consult in a timely and effective manner
- recognise the student body to be a diverse collection of adults who are partners with an equally important voice in their learning.

High quality contact time with staff has always been important to students. In SCFP, we recommend that we ensure the consistency and quality of the student experience by:

- Making every effort to arrange meetings with all Academic Tutees at least once per term and replying promptly to requests by Tutees for additional meetings or advice. Please see the [Academic Tutor System Guidance](#) for more information. Staff will have different approaches to managing their availability to students that is dependent on their own role and working pattern. Options such as providing set office hours by means of a note on the door will work for some colleagues but not others. All staff should respond to email requests for meetings promptly (within three working days), even if the actual meeting cannot take place quickly because of diary constraints. If the staff member has permission to be away during term time, e.g. at a conference, they should make alternative arrangements in advance with a colleague to deal with student matters that cannot wait until their return.
- Delivering all teaching assigned by the Head of Department or line manager as specified on the module description form, including agreed contact hours, assessment type and content. Staff will engage with lecture capture technology where it is available and benefits students' learning. Staff delivering teaching shall be given sufficient information and time to prepare by their HoD/line manager.
- Maintaining up-to-date and informative module information on Blackboard. This should normally include a Module Handbook (containing a teaching timetable, description of all assessments including deadlines and a reading list), and a link to the Module Description Form and lecture capture material where it is available.
- Responding to emails from students within two working days.
- Returning all summative assessment feedback to students within 15 working days of the submission deadline.

In SCFP, we also expect academic staff to play their part in the administration and enhancement of teaching and learning. Staff on research-only contracts typically provide support for undergraduate and master's level research projects and should therefore expect to engage with the relevant areas of teaching administration. Examples of administration and T&L enhancement include:

- Attending School/Department Board of Teaching, Learning and Student Experience Committees when invited.
- Participating in away days focused on teaching.
- Representing our teaching programmes at open days, visit days, summer schools and outreach events.

- Occasional weekend and/or evening working may be requested, particularly in relation to recruitment and outreach events, but there is no expectation that such out of hours working is compulsory for any member of staff.
- Attending graduation ceremonies whenever possible to take the opportunity to celebrate the success of our students and recognise the role that staff have played in enabling that success. PGR supervisors should expect to support their graduating students by attending the relevant ceremony.
- Engaging in CPD, for example through training events organised by the HEA or CQSD.
- Participating in quality assurance procedures for teaching and learning, including peer review of teaching, engaging with the collection and discussion of module feedback, completing module convenor reports and module description forms when the role demands, and responding to comments from external examiners.

### ***Commitment to research and scholarship***

SCFP prides itself in undertaking research that has real-world application and which is driven by the needs of industry, public bodies and third sector organisations based in the UK and overseas. Scholarship is an integral part of academic activity and includes pedagogic scholarship that promotes the development and dissemination of good practice in education at a University, National and International level. We recognise the value that research and scholarship brings to the enhancement of our reputation and our ability to build links with external communities.

Staff on Research Intensive and T&R contracts are expected to:

- Develop a research portfolio (for those roles that include a requirement for independent research). Precise expectations for each staff member in terms of grants and papers to be submitted for the forthcoming year should be discussed during the PDR, and targets set that are appropriate for that individual's work profile.
- Remain "research active." "Research active" is defined by an individual being able to evidence applications for funding, submission of papers and attempts to recruit PhD students. Whilst we welcome and celebrate success in these areas, we recognise that it is not always guaranteed, and the endeavour involved should be recognised. The School commits to providing mentoring and support for staff who are actively trying to build a research portfolio.

Staff on T&S contracts are expected to:

- Develop their own scholarship opportunities by attending education-focused conferences and, where possible, presenting their own work.
- Disseminate the outputs of their scholarship through appropriate channels, e.g. pedagogy focused journals, conferences, and contributions to Higher Education focus groups.
- Actively communicate their scholarship findings to the School and University to enable sharing of best practice and to enhance the educational experience.

### ***Availability and collegiality***

Academic contracts do not usually specify fixed working hours. This has positive and negative consequences. The flexible nature of the contracts means that staff may choose to work outside of "normal" hours, but there is no expectation that this is the case, and there

shall be no enforcement of any requirement to do so. Academic staff are expected to be present on campus to meet their basic work requirements for teaching, meetings, tutorials and administrative roles, but are otherwise trusted by colleagues and line managers to deliver their performance targets according to a schedule that suits them. They should be present sufficiently frequently in order to engage with the teaching and research culture (if research is part of their contract), enable collaborative working and contribute to collegiality through mentorship of staff and students. Contribution to the academic community depends on everyone meeting these expectations; failure to do so results in an increased burden for the staff who are present and engage with all aspects of academic life. Formal flexible working can be approved for staff who wish to have fixed adjustments of hours. Line managers and Heads of Departments/Head of School will need to consider requests individually, considering the wider implications for the effectiveness of a team if some staff are habitually working on campus for restricted numbers of hours. HR's [flexible working](#) webpage has more information, including how to formally make a request.

However, the nature of an academic role means that the academic may well be working away from their office for substantial periods of time, whether that be in other parts of the campus, at meetings hosted off campus, or working at home. There is no requirement to seek approval from a line manager to work away from the office, unless the staff member plans to be away for one week or more, but it is the responsibility of the individual staff member to ensure that no important events are missed and that students and staff for whom they have a supervisory role are adequately supported. If a staff member regularly works away from their office during term time it would be helpful to inform their line manager that this is the case and to provide assurance that all necessary steps to facilitate communication have been taken.

Therefore, the expectation around **staff availability and notification of absence** is that:

- All staff will maintain an up-to-date electronic diary and will share access to the diary with the appropriate executive support team member. This should, at a minimum, enable enquiries from students and visitors regarding the academic's whereabouts to be answered appropriately, i.e. to indicate if the person is teaching, on campus but in another location, or away from campus.
- Staff will use the out-of-office facility on their email accounts to let senders know if they are away from campus for more than one consecutive working day and to provide alternative contact details for urgent enquiries. Please ensure that the following text is included: 'If your email is a request under the Freedom of Information Act, please resend your email to [imps@reading.ac.uk](mailto:imps@reading.ac.uk)'. Instructions should also be provided for tutees in terms of whom they should contact (Department Senior Tutor) if their enquiry is urgent.
- If staff are working at home, for example to complete a substantive teaching or research task, they will respond to emails within two working days and provide a contact phone number for their line manager/executive support to use for urgent matters.
- When travelling overseas, staff must complete an 'Overseas travel form' in advance of the travel date and, if required, the relevant risk assessment must be approved. University policy states that expenses will not be reimbursed if an overseas travel form has not been completed.

- When reporting sick, all staff should follow the [Sickness Reporting Procedure](#) so that the School can ensure appropriate support is put in place to facilitate their return to work as soon as possible
- It is recognised that staff may occasionally need to take [unplanned leave](#) at short notice as a result of unforeseen occurrences or personal emergencies. If this occurs, staff must inform their line manager as soon as possible so that they can agree the type of leave that would be appropriate to use under the circumstances, in accordance with University policies and procedures.

Academic colleagues are expected to attend all relevant meetings within their Department, School and the wider University. Apologies must be sent in advance with a brief explanation if attendance will not be possible; “working from home” is not an acceptable reason to miss core meetings unless a formal flexible working arrangement has been previously approved.

Staff who are responsible for line management of other staff should, in advance, plan a new member of staff’s induction process to ensure it runs smoothly and speak to their local executive support staff member to acquire the School induction and information for new staff pack. They should be available to meet the new member of staff on their first day (or make alternative arrangements) and consider the provision of office space and a computer. They should also ensure that new members of staff (and PGR students) are introduced to members of the School/Department/research group so that they can establish a network of contacts and become integrated into our community as quickly as possible.

Colleagues on sabbatical are not expected to attend all meetings or to offer office hours, but they are expected to notify annual leave and to remain contactable. They remain responsible for the supervision of their PGR students unless other arrangements are made, and they will typically be removed from major line management duties for the duration of the sabbatical.

Some colleagues will have a legal right to request flexible working on the basis of personal circumstances. In order to accommodate the bulk of these requests it is recommended that meetings are scheduled to run between 10am and 4pm wherever possible. Where meetings are held on a regular basis for a specific group of people they should be rotated in terms of time/day to facilitate the attendance by part-time staff.

### **Annual leave**

The leave year runs from 1 October to 30 September the following year. All colleagues are encouraged to take their full leave entitlement each year. It is important to record annual leave through the [Employee Self Service](#) portal so that there is no expectation that a member of staff is available for work during that period. In addition to Bank Holidays and University closure days, the following entitlements typically apply:

- Full-time academic staff are entitled to 26 days annual leave plus University closure days and Bank Holidays. Outside these days, staff are expected to be contactable whether on campus or working elsewhere.
- Support staff are entitled to annual leave based on their length of service and FTE of employment. The basic leave is 21 days for 1.0FTE plus University closure days and

Bank Holidays. Information in relation to annual leave entitlement can be found on HR's [webpage](#).

All requests for leave must be approved in advance by the relevant line manager, who will not unreasonably withhold consent, using the Employee Self Service portal.

### **PROFESSIONALISM & RESPECT**

Teamwork, sharing and respect are essential to achieve our School's aspiration of fairness and equality for all. We wish to foster a supportive environment that is inclusive and does not seek to apportion blame, but which aims to meet the highest standards in delivering excellence in teaching, research and scholarship, and enterprise. Colleagues will trust each other to deliver on the expectations of their role and will not engage in any activity that seeks to undermine another.

#### ***Communications***

All communications should be courteous, fair and prompt. Reasonable notice should be given for requests for assistance and deadlines for the completion of tasks. Care should be taken in dealing with students and staff, respecting the boundaries of personal privacy. It is important to understand the needs of others and to take time to listen and reflect on their perceptions.

- There is no expectation that emails should be answered outside of normal working hours, but where possible all enquiries should be acknowledged within two working days.
- Ask yourself if you could make the communication more easily by picking up the phone or going to see the relevant individual in person. Wherever possible SCFP would like its staff to use a more personal form of communication than email, although the outcomes of discussions and agreed courses of action may be best recorded via this medium.
- Email is not a medium in which to raise contentious or personal issues or to conduct extended debates; confidential matters are best discussed in person or by phone.
- Keep emails concise and copied only to essential recipients. The following tips help to promote good practice in the use of emails:
  1. Have specific times to check emails – emails can hijack your day and stop you focusing on the important tasks you want to get done.
  2. Do not use email to avoid people – if there is potential for confusion, clear it up in person or over the phone. However, for less complex issues, a brief email will allow a busy person to answer at their convenience rather than be interrupted.
  3. Be mindful of delegation over email – if you leave important and/or time critical instructions for someone via email, check in with them as soon as you can to clarify their understanding and acceptance of what you have asked them to do.
  4. Email should not be used to publicly assign or delegate tasks that require prior discussion with the individual(s) concerned.
  5. Aim to be as polite in emails as you would be face-to-face – without visual clues it is difficult to accurately interpret the meaning behind words. Be mindful that misunderstandings are much more likely, and any offence caused, be it intentional or unintentional, can escalate.

6. Do not communicate regarding contentious issues over email in the “heat of the moment” – take time before replying and be mindful that once an email is sent, it is out of your control.
7. Consider who you are copying emails to – normally ‘CC’ is “for information only” and you should not expect individuals to respond. If you want a response, include individuals in the “to” field.
8. Use clear succinct message titles which summarise the content in a few words – this make it easy for recipients to prioritise, file and retrieve emails. Ensure messages are to the point but are written carefully.
9. Make use of priority rating – high should be for urgent action only, low should be for information only.
10. Do not use “reply all” unless necessary. Do you need everyone to be in on the conversation?

### **FAIRNESS AND TRANSPARENCY**

SCFP has a dedicated Committee for Health and Safety (Chair: Prof. Carol Wagstaff) which has representatives from academic, administrative, technical and research staff. There is also a Wellbeing, Inclusion, Diversity and Equality (WIDE) Committee (Chair: Prof. Helen Osborn) which has representation from students, PDRAs, academic and support staff from all three departments. The aims and terms of reference for the WIDE committee are given below and apply to all staff across the School:

#### **WIDE Aims**

- To promote and support a diverse community of staff and students.
- To create and provide environments that support people to feel free to be themselves, while respecting others.
- To recognise and address that in all areas there are equality and inclusion challenges for people with certain protected and unprotected characteristics.
- To enable all staff and students to fulfil their potential and to foster a working environment that protects their physical and mental wellbeing.
- To promote flexible working and good working practices, mentoring, mandatory unconscious bias training, support for promotions and professional behaviour.
- To measure our success on an annual basis through data collection and surveys and communicate our findings to the School. This will inform our future priorities for action and ensure that these priorities are embedded in School policy and practice, and align with the University’s wellbeing, equality and diversity policies and objectives.

#### **WIDE Terms of reference**

- To assess the School's position in relation to Diversity and Inclusion principles
- To embed issues of equality within our working practices
- To enhance opportunities for development for individuals and groups
- To increase engagement with relevant University and School strategic aims
- To improve social cohesion across the School
- To hold one meeting per term to discuss and implement these actions
- To represent the wellbeing of all student and staff groups

All staff can use their appropriate representative(s) to raise any concerns or highlight issues connected with wellbeing, equality, diversity and inclusion. The committee is also dedicated to monitoring stress in SCFP on an annual basis and providing up-to-date online resources on preventing and coping with workplace stress. Staff are also encouraged to make use of the University's [Wellbeing Peer Support Network and the resources available from People Development on enhancing wellbeing](#).

The University also has [five diversity networks](#) helping to support and promote diversity and inclusion at Reading. These are the BAME Network, LGBT Plus Network, Parent and Family Network, Staff Disability Network, and women@reading network.

Constructive feedback is given to individual staff through mechanisms including the Performance and Development Review and Individual Research Plans (for academic staff). Staff achievements are celebrated and rewarded through the University's mechanisms. Staff are encouraged to nominate others for [celebrating success vouchers or lump sum rewards](#) if they have undertaken one-off roles or activities which are not represented in the standard roles.

The SCFP Workload Model is reviewed each year. The School leadership team reviews the format of the Workload Model and constantly seeks to improve it to make it relevant to staff in a variety of academic roles. The Workload Model is used to provide a foundation for discussions with individual employees about how the different tasks in their portfolio are balanced and managed. It will **not** be used to assess whether a colleague is contributing enough to the School or whether they are performing adequately. Staff will not be permitted to compare their workload with others in the School, except on an anonymised basis in exceptional circumstances.

### **WORKSPACE ETIQUETTE**

If you are sharing an office or workspace, please respect the privacy of others and observe good office etiquette:

- Keep your workspace tidy and limit the number of personal effects.
- Observe quiet working and refrain from holding confidential discussions in a public space.
- If you are sharing office space, if possible, please advise your colleague in advance when you are planning to work with confidential information. If you are a colleague informed of this, endeavour to hold meetings outside of the office, e.g. do not meet with tutees when your colleague is working on exam papers.
- Please take sick leave when appropriate – your colleagues don't want to catch your contagious diseases!

University premises should only be used to store items relating to work activities. Personal items should not be stored on our campus, in our buildings or external storage areas.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP**

SCFP supports ethical behaviour in the stewardship of our environment, facilities, and resources. We encourage staff to develop their environmental awareness in several ways:

- Utilising the recycling facilities provided.
- Reduce energy use: turn off lights upon leaving rooms; shut down computers overnight; turn off monitors when not required for 30 minutes or more.
- Reduce use of paper: when sending items via the internal mail use old used envelopes; think before you print – is it necessary? print and photocopy double-sided and in black and white.
- Reduce unnecessary travel: consider whether your journey is essential or whether you could use Microsoft Teams or a conference call (e.g. Zoom); use public transport where possible for your journey to and from work and when travelling on UK business.