

International Agency for Research on Cancer



ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND CONDUCT OF IARC/WHO STAFF

COMPILATION OF POLICIES AND PRACTICES

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1. IARC/WHO vision, core values and guiding principles

1.1 Introduction

1. The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) is a part of the World Health Organization (WHO) which is a specialized agency of the United Nations that embodies the highest aspirations of the peoples of the world. WHO's primary objective is the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health.

2. IARC staff members are WHO staff members. As such all requirements and rights applying to WHO staff apply to them and all principles listed below for WHO apply to IARC. The highest standards of conduct, competence and performance are expected of all WHO staff members in order to reflect the Organization's values of integrity, independence, impartiality and technical excellence. All staff members have a responsibility to contribute to the goals of the Organization, and to ensure that their conduct is consistent with the standards they are expected to uphold as international civil servants as described in the [WHO Staff Regulations and Rules](#) (Article I Staff Regulations / Section 1 Staff Rules) and the [ICSC Standards of Conduct of International Civil Servants](#).

3. To achieve its purposes and maintain its capacity to attract and retain staff of the highest standards of integrity, competence and effectiveness, IARC/WHO is committed to promoting a productive work environment that encourages trust, responsibility and accountability, mutual respect, open communication and consensus building.

4. With the aforementioned in mind, this Compilation on IARC/WHO Ethical Principles and Conduct (the "Compilation") is intended to provide staff with consolidated information concerning their conduct and performance to ensure that their actions and decisions reflect at all times IARC/WHO's mission and core values.

5. This Compilation also contains at the end a section on Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) which relates to some practical examples staff may be confronted with.

1.2 IARC/WHO's core values and ethical principles

6. Article I of the Staff Regulations and Section 1 of the [WHO Staff Rules](#) set out the duties, obligations and privileges of all IARC/WHO staff members. Upon joining the Organization, all IARC/WHO staff members commit to conduct themselves at all times in accordance with such duties and obligations.

7. This Compilation incorporates the basic principles of ethical behaviour and standards of conduct relevant to all international civil servants within the UN common system.

8. These principles, as applied in IARC/WHO, are:

- loyalty to the Organization's goals, mission, priorities and policies;
- integrity and honesty in actions and decisions that may affect IARC/WHO;
- impartiality and independence from external sources and authorities;
- discretion;
- respect for the diversity, dignity, worth and equality of all persons;
- accountability;
- technical excellence.

9. Additional guidance on expected behaviours is provided in the [Enhanced WHO Competency Model](#), and in the broader [WHO Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct](#). Relevant information on how the Agency implements activities within the applicable policies and procedures is provided on the IARC intranet under "[Basic Principles](#)".

1.3 Objectives of this Compilation

10. This Compilation describes the standards of ethical values and conduct that IARC/WHO expects from all staff members as well as those standards and rights that staff may expect to have recognized and respected by the Organization. It reflects existing policies and other administrative issuances in these areas and sets out procedures to help staff members make ethical decisions. In addition, whenever possible, the Compilation includes reference to documents available on line in the IARC and/or WHO intranets. Reading of the electronic version of the Compilation will facilitate access to all links.

11. As it is difficult to predict all of the ethical challenges staff may be faced with, when in doubt about the implications of an action or decision, you are strongly encouraged to seek advice before you act.

12. Whenever faced with a difficult situation from an ethical perspective, you may keep the following advice in mind:

- Remember to act with common decency, good faith, and honesty.
- Consult Article I of the [WHO Staff Regulations](#) and Section 1 of the [WHO Staff Rules](#), or other relevant staff rules and regulations as appropriate.
- Consult IARC's Financial Regulations and Rules, as contained in the [IARC Statute](#).
- Consult the [ICSC Standards of Conduct of International Civil Servants](#) and this document.
- Address any questions to your immediate supervisor or to DAF who may in turn liaise with HRO and/or the HR Director at Headquarters (WHO/HQ).
- For ethical questions related to commercial transactions or relations, DAF should be contacted who may in turn consult the Office of the Legal Counsel (LEG) in WHO/HQ.

In all cases, ask yourself these questions:

- Are my actions consistent with IARC/WHO's values?
- Do I have all the facts?
- Have I reviewed and considered the facts carefully?
- Will my action reflect negatively or positively on me and/or on IARC/WHO?
- What would a reasonable person think about my actions?
- Would I be embarrassed if others knew I took this action?
- Would it breach a Staff or Financial Regulation or Rule?
- Is there an alternative action that does not give rise to concerns?

1.4 Applicability

13. The contents of this Compilation apply to all staff members of the Organization. All staff members are expected to observe these standards at all times, in their work and where appropriate, private lives, irrespective of whether or not they are in active service, working on a full-time or part-time basis or seconded to IARC/WHO. Persons working at IARC/WHO as Early Career or Visiting Scientists (ECVS), consultants or on Special Services Agreements (SSAs) will be made aware of this Compilation and are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the requirements stated in this document as appropriate.

2. Creating a culture of compliance and prevention

14. By providing all staff members with this Compilation, IARC/WHO wishes to raise the level of staff awareness in order to ensure a culture of responsibility, accountability, and compliance. The aim is also to avert and prevent instances of unethical behaviour, and to encourage and promote positive behaviours and conduct throughout the Organization.

2.1 Rights, responsibilities and obligations

2.1.1 IARC/WHO staff members

15. All IARC/WHO staff members shall:

- follow the applicable rules and regulations and maintain the impartiality required of international civil servants;
- while fulfilling official duties and responsibilities, make decisions that are solely in the interest of the Organization and based on objective criteria;
- give impartial technical advice;
- ensure proper, effective and efficient use of the Organization's resources;
- perform their duties and arrange their private affairs so that confidence and trust in the integrity, objectivity and impartiality of IARC/WHO are maintained and enhanced;
- strive to avoid even the appearance of impropriety in all their actions, conduct, and decisions, both at work and outside the workplace;
- encourage, advocate and promote appropriate conduct and ethical behaviour in the workplace, and implement, monitor, and enforce IARC/WHO's core values and principles and related policies in their own day-to-day work.

16. Managers and supervisors must also:

- serve as models of integrity and act in accordance with the regulations, rules and policies contained in this Compilation and ensure they exhibit the highest level of ethical conduct at all times;
- be familiar with this Compilation so as to explain to and advise their staff on their rights, responsibilities and obligations and to ensure that internal systems, policies, and procedures are applied consistently;
- encourage and allow staff under their supervision to participate in training activities sponsored by the Organization on ethical and professional conduct.

2.1.2 The Organization

17. The Organization shall:

- publish on the intranet, promote and update this Compilation and support staff in understanding its applicability and ensuring adherence;
- brief new staff on Ethical Principles and Conduct of Staff during induction/orientation sessions;
- provide advice and guidance to individual staff members on specific issues upon their request;
- make clear to staff the procedures to follow when reporting violations;
- take action to respond to reported violations;
- take appropriate administrative or disciplinary measures in case of such violations;
- ensure that anyone who reports a suspected violation of the IARC/WHO's policies in good faith is not subject to retaliation [see section 3.7 below].

3. Standards of conduct

3.1 Conduct affecting the workplace

3.1.1 Basic standards of conduct

18. Loyalty

By accepting an appointment with IARC/WHO, staff pledge to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interests of the Organization only in view and under the sole authority of the Director-General or IARC Director as delegated to him/her by the Director-General. Good conduct requires that they respect the international character of their position and that they maintain their independence and not seek or receive instructions relating to the performance of their official duties from any Government, external entity, or person external to IARC/WHO. Staff members who are seconded to the Organization, should be aware that their loyalty lies with IARC/WHO for the period of the secondment and that the obligations of staff members referred to in this Compilation apply to them.

19. Integrity

Staff are required to act with integrity in all activities, avoiding any behaviour that could reflect adversely on them, their colleagues, or on the Organization. Integrity encompasses such things as honesty and incorruptibility. With regards to scientific integrity, staff are required to demonstrate intellectual and moral honesty in proposing, conducting, and reporting research. Staff are expected to adhere to the internationally accepted principles of bioethics upheld by the Organization in order to ensure that confidence and trust in the integrity of IARC/WHO as an Organization are maintained and enhanced.

20. Impartiality

Staff are required to act impartially. Staff members who act impartially take care that their personal views and convictions do not compromise or appear to compromise the performance of their official duties or the interests of IARC/WHO. Their official conduct is at all times characterized by objectivity and professionalism. They do not allow personal relationships or considerations, including bias or favouritism, to influence the performance of their official duties. They avoid situations that create a real or perceived conflict of interest [see also section 3.4 below].

21. Discretion

Staff must exercise the utmost discretion in their actions; showing tact and reserve in their communication and behaving in a manner that is consistent with their status as international civil servants. Staff members who exercise discretion refrain from participating in any activity that is in conflict with the interests of IARC/WHO or might damage IARC/WHO's reputation. They respect and safeguard the confidentiality of information, which is available or known to them because of their official functions.

22. Accountability

IARC/WHO defines accountability as the obligation of every member of the Organization to be answerable for his/her actions and decisions, and to accept responsibility for them. Staff must act within the scope of their authority at all times. They must exercise adequate control and supervision over matters for which they are responsible, in accordance with the principles contained in the [WHO Accountability Framework](#) policy document (to be read as general guidance).

23. Respect

IARC/WHO enjoys a rich, multicultural workplace characterized by a high level of professionalism and diversity of individual backgrounds. The Organization is committed to fostering a multifaceted and inclusive culture marked by the dignity and exemplarity of the way staff interact, view one another, and respect individual contributions. The extensive mix of personalities, experiences, perspectives and talents across the Organization, makes for a stronger and more skilled IARC/WHO. Staff are expected to behave ethically at all times and with utmost respect, without regard to gender, race, religion, creed, colour, citizenship, national origin, age, marital status, family responsibilities and choices, pregnancy, sexual orientation, or disability.

24. Technical excellence

IARC/WHO's performance is ultimately a reflection of the professional commitment of staff. Starting with senior managers, who are expected to act as role models and demonstrate leadership, IARC/WHO staff contribute to the Organization by building their professional competence on a foundation of strong moral values, knowledge in their area of expertise, and personal commitment to the mandate and objectives of IARC/WHO. The Organization is committed to a culture that encourages professionalism and excellence through learning and development. Staff are responsible for their own professional and personal conduct and the commitment to upholding IARC/WHO ethical principles and reputation requires the concerted effort at each level of all staff members.

3.1.2 Harassment free workplace

25. Good conduct requires that staff demonstrate cultural sensitivity and treat their colleagues, whether supervisors, peers, or subordinates, with courtesy and respect, without harassment, or physical or verbal abuse. Good conduct also requires that staff avoid behaviour in the workplace that creates an atmosphere of hostility, offense, humiliation or intimidation. Staff are expected to support all efforts to eliminate any behaviour, action or circumstances that undermine IARC/WHO's commitment to a harassment free workplace.

26. Harassment means any behaviour by a staff member that is directed at and is offensive to others, which that person knows or should reasonably know, would be offensive, and which interferes with work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment. Harassment may include conduct, comment or display related to race, religion, colour, creed, ethnic origin, physical attributes, age, gender, or sexual orientation. It may involve a group or team and may occur among and between all levels of employees. It can take many different forms, including sexual harassment. The most common origin of harassment is unresolved conflict in the workplace; it is often prolonged and malicious. The definition of harassment concerns not only intent but effect. Therefore, if a specific action by a person or group is reasonably perceived as offensive by another person(s), that action might constitute harassment, whether intended or not. Offensive comments or behaviours could amount to harassment if repeated or pervasive.

27. The [IARC/WHO Policy on the Prevention of Harassment](#) explains the informal and formal means of resolving complaints of harassment.

3.1.3 Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse

28. As stated above, IARC/WHO staff must uphold the highest standards of professional and personal conduct and act with integrity and discretion. In addition, sexual exploitation and abuse by IARC/WHO staff would damage the individuals concerned, the image and reputation of IARC/WHO and erode confidence and trust in the Organization. As such, IARC/WHO staff must not use their position to sexually abuse or exploit those who are participating in field studies or beneficiaries of assistance

provided by or channeled through IARC/WHO. This prohibition includes exchange of assistance for sex as well as exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex. All staff should work to create and maintain an environment which prevents such behaviour.

3.1.4 Respect for national laws

29. IARC/WHO respects the privacy of staff members and does not wish to interfere in their personal lives and behaviour outside the workplace. However, the status of an international civil servant carries certain obligations, not only at work, but elsewhere. Staff members are required at all times to observe local laws, and to avoid any action that could be perceived as an abuse of the privileges and immunities conferred on IARC/WHO and its staff members.

30. IARC/WHO would view most seriously conduct by a staff member involving domestic violence or abuse of family members or domestic employees.

31. Staff members are required to meet their private legal obligations, including the payment of child support and alimony. They are expected to cooperate with local enforcement authorities, and to pay traffic fines promptly [see [ICSC Standards of Conduct](#), [WHO eManual III.1.1](#), and [III.3.16](#), para. 180-210]. At all times staff should pay particular attention to and comply with relevant laws and standards governing bank accounts, currency dealings, purchase and disposal of motor vehicles, traffic violations, import/export and employment of domestic employees.

32. If concerns about a staff member's compliance with laws and private legal obligations are brought to IARC/WHO's attention by local or national authorities, IARC/WHO will cooperate with the authorities and may waive privileges and diplomatic immunity. This could include deductions of amounts from a staff member's salary to satisfy an outstanding legal obligation. Failure to comply with private obligations may also be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with [WHO Staff Regulations and Rules 380.5.5](#) and [WHO eManual III.3.16](#), para. 170.

33. Staff must also satisfy all outstanding locally incurred financial debts promptly and in any case prior to leaving the duty station or separating from IARC/WHO.

34. Moreover, while some norms of behaviour and conduct may be acceptable in some countries, they may be illegal or otherwise inappropriate in other countries. Staff are therefore expected to refrain from behaviour that violates accepted norms of behaviour in their duty station or that could damage IARC/WHO's reputation.

35. At all times staff must comply with relevant laws and standards regarding employment of domestic employees.

3.1.5 Conduct with respect to IARC/WHO elections

36. In line with Article I of the Staff Regulations and Section 1 of the Staff Rules [see [WHO Staff Regulations and Rules](#)], during any IARC/WHO election, staff members should continue to work solely with the interests of the Organization in mind. Proper conduct requires, for example, that staff members act impartially with respect to all candidates for elected office in IARC/WHO. They must neither express publicly their views concerning any candidate, nor work in support of any candidacy be it publicly or otherwise.

3.1.6 Personal relationships in the workplace

37. Consensual intimate relationships between colleagues should not interfere with work or create an

environment where other colleagues might feel uncomfortable or professionally disadvantaged because of the relationship. The fact that a relative, spouse/significant other or close friend is working at IARC/WHO does not automatically mean there is a conflict of interest. However, in cases where there is a hierarchical or supervisory relationship, the colleagues have an obligation to bring the relationship to the attention of their respective supervisors, HRO or DAF who will address the matter according to relevant [WHO Staff Regulations and Rules](#) and may decide for example whether one of the persons should be reassigned to a different work unit.

3.1.7 Violence in the workplace, drug and alcohol abuse, smoke-free environment

38. IARC/WHO strives to provide a safe work environment for all its staff and does not tolerate any level of violence or of verbal or physical threats of any kind committed by or against someone working for IARC/WHO. Additionally, the carrying of weapons on IARC/WHO property, in IARC/WHO vehicles, or any place where IARC/WHO conducts business is strictly prohibited. This prohibition does not extend to host government law enforcement officials or authorized professional security personnel at duty stations. If staff become aware that someone is acting in contravention of this provision, they need to report it immediately.

39. IARC/WHO's position on substance abuse is clear: it is incompatible with the health and safety of our workplace and is strictly prohibited. IARC/WHO workplaces must be free from illegal drugs and from the harmful use of alcohol, where the use of alcohol is permitted. Staff must always be able to perform their duties free from the negative effects of illegal drugs or alcohol. Consequently, staff must avoid any such behaviour that may adversely affect the performance of their duties and work objectives, that may be harmful to them or fellow colleagues, or that might bring the Organization into disrepute. With respect to IARC/WHO related meetings where alcohol is served, staff must remember that they represent IARC/WHO and act responsibly.

40. If staff have concerns or questions about drug or alcohol abuse, they may seek confidential assistance through the WHO Health Medical Service or the IARC Staff Physician.

41. Smoking is strictly forbidden on IARC/WHO premises.

3.1.8 Dress code

42. Although IARC/WHO does not have a dress code, staff should nevertheless dress in a manner that reflects professionalism, respect for others, and is appropriate to the work performed. As a general rule, business casual attire is appropriate for most office-based work.

43. Of course, no guidance on appropriate dress can cover all contingencies; staff must use good judgment in their choice of clothing. For example, attire that is appropriate for day-to-day work, or outdoor work in the field, would not be appropriate for an IARC/WHO meeting with government officials or during sessions of the IARC Scientific or Governing Councils. Moreover, appropriate dress can change from one country or region to another, which is important to bear in mind when travelling globally representing IARC/WHO.

44. If staff are uncertain about what is acceptable attire for work, they should ask their supervisor or colleagues for advice.

3.2 Media relations and public statements

45. In general, IARC/WHO technical staff may speak to the media on subjects within their area of responsibility and expertise. However, before speaking, staff should seek advice from their supervisor and the IARC Communications Officer. Staff should bear in mind that they speak for IARC/WHO, not as an individual, an academic or an independent expert in their field. They should speak to and from their knowledge and expertise but should not exceed it. These principles should be applied to any communications opportunity and with any audience, when speaking to media, in meetings or at conferences where they represent IARC/WHO. Additional information and guidance on media communications can be found on the IARC intranet under "[External Communications/ Media Relations](#)". In addition, staff should bear in mind that remarks made to journalists might be important to colleagues elsewhere in the Organization. Therefore, staff should liaise with the IARC Communications Officer and keep relevant colleagues informed about work they do with the media, including the scientific media and journals.

3.3 Use of IARC/WHO's property, resources and information

3.3.1 Use and disclosure of information

46. Staff have a responsibility to protect the security of any confidential information provided to, or generated by, the Organization. To avoid any unauthorized disclosure staff should be careful how they handle confidential information as described in the IARC/WHO Policy on "[Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Systems](#)". In that respect, all IT staff are requested to sign a "confidentiality undertaking" form; this is also applicable to some other staff who have access to a wide range of information through IARC/WHO communication systems and/or databases in the performance of their duties.

47. In addition, staff must not use information known to them because of their official duties for their private advantage, for example, in their personal dealings. This requirement applies even after they cease to be a staff member [see [WHO Staff Regulation 1.6](#)].

3.3.2 Intellectual property - Publications

48. All rights, including title, copyright and patent rights, in any work or invention produced or developed by a staff member as part of official duties is vested in IARC/WHO [[WHO Staff Rule 120](#)]. IARC/WHO has the right to use such work in any manner it deems appropriate, including by choosing to publish or not to publish the work. If staff produce material for external publication, they must comply with the established procedures for [Planning and Reporting Publications](#) for external journals. These provisions remain applicable for staff who have left IARC/WHO in cases where a publication has been initiated while still working at IARC/WHO or where a publication is intended to cover work carried out while still working at IARC/WHO.

49. Staff who have prepared written material in their spare time and in their personal capacity on subjects having no relationship to the work of the Organization, do not have to have the material cleared. Any such published materials are their personal responsibility. They must ensure that, when published, any such work does not refer to their position in, or employment by, IARC/WHO. Any remuneration received for such publications may be retained by the staff member.

3.3.3 Record keeping

50. It is crucial that IARC/WHO maintains accurate records and internal control systems. As such, staff

must record all transactions and prepare accurate and complete records, in accordance with established procedures. Staff must not inaccurately record time for reporting purposes, provide false or intentionally misleading information to the Organization, submit false or misleading claims or falsify any official IARC/WHO documents. Such actions could result in disciplinary actions.

3.3.4 Use of official time and office property including vehicles

51. Staff are responsible for ensuring that the resources of the Organization, including IARC/WHO computers, telephone equipment and vehicles, are used for official business. Good conduct requires that staff devote their time during working hours to the official activities of IARC/WHO. It requires that any personal use of office equipment, in particular internet, e-mail and telephone, be kept to a minimum and not conflict with the interests of the Organization. Moreover, any such use must not disrupt staff work or that of their colleagues, or over-burden the electronic network.

52. In order to demonstrate good professional and ethical conduct, any private telephone calls made from an office or an IARC/WHO mobile telephone or similar equipment must be identified as private and made in accordance with existing procedures. Likewise, if staff have been provided with an IARC/WHO mobile telephone or similar equipment, they must identify and pay their private telephone calls, as per existing procedures.

53. For general guidance on these matters staff should refer to the Policies on "Acceptable Use of Information and Communication Systems" and "E-mail Usage" available on the IARC IT-Helpdesk website under "[IT Usage Policies](#)".

3.4 Conflict of interest

3.4.1 Overview

54. A conflict of interest occurs when, for example, a staff member's financial, personal or other non-IARC/WHO interest or commitment could reasonably interfere – or appear to interfere – with the staff member's ability to act impartially, to discharge their functions and to regulate their conduct with the interests of IARC/WHO only in view. Even if there is no evidence of actual impropriety, the perception of a conflict of interest alone may create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in IARC/WHO or damage the reputation of the Organization. Avoiding and preventing even the appearance of a conflict of interest is one of the primary means by which staff can maintain public confidence in the impartiality and objectivity of the Organization.

55. A conflict of interest may arise when, for example:

- your (or your close family relationships) personal or private interest affects or is reasonably perceived to affect your official responsibilities;
- someone might reasonably question whether your official actions or decisions are influenced by your personal or private interests or the interests of someone closely related to you by blood or marriage, friends, former colleagues or individuals with whom you have a significant relationship or affiliation outside of IARC/WHO;
- you use your contacts or position in the Organization to advance your personal or private interests or those of others including someone closely related to you by blood or marriage, friends, former colleagues or individuals with whom you have a significant relationship or affiliation outside of IARC/WHO;
- you are involved in a decision to award a contract to an individual with whom you share

personal or private relations, such as someone closely related to you by blood or marriage, friends, former colleagues or individuals with whom you have a significant relationship or affiliation outside of IARC/WHO.

56. Any conflict of interest or appearance of a conflict of interest must be resolved in the interest of the Organization. For further guidance on these matters, staff should refer to the WHO eManual III.1.2, para. 20 and to the [IARC Policy on DOI](#).

3.4.2 Disclosing conflict of interest - Declaration of interests

57. If a potential conflict of interest exists, the staff member concerned must make prompt and full disclosure to their supervisor and seek his or her views as to the appropriate action, including whether they should recuse themselves from the situation that is creating the conflict or the appearance of a conflict. In case of doubt, DAF should be consulted, who may in turn consult the Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics (CRE) and/or the Office of the Legal Counsel (LEG) in WHO/HQ on a confidential basis and if judged necessary. Depending on the nature of the conflict staff should also submit a "[Declaration of Interests for Designated WHO Staff](#)" (Form WHO 849), even if they do not fall within the category of staff that is required to fill in this form annually [see paragraph 58 below, and [WHO Staff Rule](#) 110.7 and [WHO eManual III.1.2](#)].

58. Conflicts of interest can relate either to current work or to past or possible future employment. For example, when negotiating for prospective employment outside IARC/WHO, staff must refrain from discussing or revealing IARC/WHO information that is not in the public domain. They should consult with DAF to design mitigation measures (such as recusing themselves from involvement in matters that could benefit, or could be perceived to benefit, the prospective employer, and/or cooling off period before taking up new duties). Similar conduct is required of staff that are on secondment to IARC/WHO concerning dealings with the seconded staff member's parent institution or government.

59. Each year, IARC/WHO staff members in designated employment categories are required to submit a "[Declaration of Interests for Designated WHO Staff](#)" (Form WHO 849) [see also [WHO eManual III.1.2](#), para. 20]. Generally, at IARC this includes staff at grades P5 and above, Group Heads and Deputy Section Heads, and staff involved in procurement.

60. Personal financial affairs

Staff are generally free to conduct their personal financial affairs as they see fit, unless an actual or perceived conflict of interest arises. A conflict of interest would arise, for example, if staff were to own shares in a company with which they are required to have official dealings on behalf of IARC/WHO or in a company whose activities overlap with those of IARC/WHO. Other examples of similar conflicts of interest are included on the "[Declaration of Interests for Designated WHO Staff](#)" (Form WHO 849).

61. Declaration of interests when interacting with external experts

The contribution of external experts and consultants is essential to the work of IARC/WHO. When working with external experts (including experts under contracts, working on a voluntary basis, or experts participating in scientific or technical advisory meetings), staff are required to ensure that they have disclosed any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest related to the subject of the activity in which they will be involved by completing a declaration of interest form. The interests disclosed must be assessed by IARC/WHO before collaboration with the expert can be confirmed. For further guidance on these matters, staff should refer to the [Standard Operating Procedures for DOI by IARC/WHO external experts](#) and consult with DAF and the Compliance Office.

62. Working with non-State actors

In addition to working with Participating/Member States, IARC/WHO also interacts with non-State actors, i.e. non-governmental organizations, private sector entities, philanthropic foundations and academic institutions. In developing relationships with such non-State actors, IARC/WHO's integrity, independence, credibility and reputation must be ensured and the scientific and evidence-based approach that underpins IARC/WHO's work must not be compromised. Staff who interact with representatives of non-State actors must be guided by the "[WHO's Framework on Engagement with Non State Actors \(FENSA\)](#)".

3.4.3 Hiring of spouses and other family members

63. The Organization may employ the spouse of a staff member under the condition stated in [WHO Staff Rule 410.3.1](#), provided they are fully qualified for the position and they are not given any preference for appointment by virtue of the relationship to the staff. However, the spouse cannot be in a supervisory or subordinate position to the staff member with whom they are married [see [WHO Staff Rule 410.3.2.1](#)].

64. Except where another person equally well qualified cannot be recruited, appointment shall not be granted to a person who has any of the following relationships to a staff member: father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister [see [WHO Staff Rule 410.3](#)]. If you become aware that a person closely related to you by blood or marriage, has applied for a position with the Organization, you must immediately advise the Human Resources Officer.

65. Under no circumstances may staff participate in any activity that involves the hiring, advancement, promotion, evaluation or supervision of their spouse or of anyone who is closely related to them by blood or marriage, or with whom they are involved in a significant personal relationship or close friendship [see [WHO Staff Rule 410.3.2.1](#) and [410.3.2.2](#)].

3.4.4 Acceptance of gifts, decorations and honours

66. Ethical conduct requires that staff should never solicit gifts or favours in connection with their IARC/WHO duties [see [WHO Staff Regulation 1.7](#) and [WHO Staff Rule 110.6](#)]. Gifts that are offered should not be accepted if this would give the appearance of impropriety or bias, or would appear to call into question the independence and reputation of IARC/WHO. However, a gift may be accepted when it could cause embarrassment to refuse it, particularly when the gift is inexpensive. Gifts valued at less than USD 100 may be kept and there is no need to report them. If the value of the gift could or does exceed USD 100, staff must report it to DAF. DAF will decide whether the gift may be kept or returned. The gift may have to be appraised if there is a question about its value.

67. Before accepting any honour or decoration offered to them, staff must inform and seek authorization from the Director, IARC [see [WHO Staff Rule 110.6](#)]. If authorization is given, when receiving any such award staff must acknowledge that it is being conferred in recognition of work for IARC/WHO. In cases where the honour or decoration is in recognition of services unrelated to the staff member's official duties with IARC/WHO, the Organization may permit acceptance of such recognition in a personal capacity, subject to the staff member's formal request and the prior agreement of Director, IARC.

68. Staff members must not participate in the selection of nominees or recipients of awards or prizes that are external to IARC/WHO.

3.4.5 Frequent flyer points

69. Staff members may join a frequent flyer scheme and retain for personal use the mileage points that

they accrue while travelling on official business. However, mileage points that have been accrued on personal or official travel cannot be used by staff when procuring air-tickets when they have opted for a lump sum payment for statutory travel [see [WHO eManual III.8.7](#)].

3.4.6 Relations with governments and political activity

70. While staff are expected to maintain courteous relations with governments of IARC Participating States/WHO Member States, they should not interfere with internal affairs of these governments. In order to maintain the impartiality required of international civil servants, staff must remain independent of any authority outside of the Organization and their conduct must reflect that independence. For this reason, they must not seek or obtain, under any circumstance, instructions or assistance from any government official or from any other authority external to the Organization, particularly in an attempt to:

- interfere with the internal deliberations or policy direction of the Organization;
- change an unfavourable action or decision, such as non-renewal of a staff's employment contract, or his/her separation or termination from the Organization; or
- obtain a promotion, benefit or any other type of employment advantage.

71. Staff members must exercise caution and refrain from expressing their opinions publicly or engaging in political actions that might interfere with governmental policies or affairs.

72. Because of the independence and impartiality of international civil servants, as indicated in the [WHO eManual III.1.4](#), and in [WHO Staff Regulation 1.8](#), staff may not participate in political activities, including running for or holding local or national political office, while they are under IARC/WHO's employ.

73. Additionally, while staff may vote and belong to political parties, they must exercise discretion at all times in their personal political activities and opinions, and may not participate in campaigns for fundraising or other campaign activities.

3.4.7 Right of association

74. As indicated in Article VIII of the [WHO Staff Regulations](#) and Section 9 of the [WHO Staff Rules](#), staffs have the right to associate themselves together in a formal organization for the purpose of developing staff activities and making proposals and representations to the Organization concerning personnel policy and conditions of service.

3.4.8 Outside activities

75. While it may be acceptable in certain cases, staff must verify if prior authorization should be requested before they may engage in any external office, occupation or similar activity. Guidance may be found for that purpose in the IARC document on "[Policy and Guidelines on Outside Activities](#)", which is available on the IARC intranet. If staff contemplate any such activity they should first consider, among other things, whether it would: 1) in any way interfere with their work and status as an international civil servant, 2) entail remuneration, and 3) benefit their professional development, skills and competence. Before they enter into any commitment for any external activity staff may need to request permission in writing from DAF and/or Director, IARC as appropriate, through their Section/Group Head [see [WHO Staff Regulation 1.4](#) and general guidance in the above-mentioned IARC document on "[Outside Activities](#)".]

76. As a general rule, staff may not accept financial remuneration from external sources. However, when remuneration is offered which is compatible with their status as an international civil servant, for example, fees and honoraria for lectures or academic papers, and provided they obtain prior permission as appropriate, staff may accept such remuneration in the name of IARC/WHO; any such payment is to be deposited in the IARC/WHO honorarium account.

77. If permission for an external activity is granted, staff may be required to act in their private capacity and in their own time. In particular:

- Service on an editorial or advisory board of a scientific or other journal would normally be approved in their private capacity, provided that: (i) the journal's subject matter is not contrary to IARC/WHO positions or political, and does not give rise to commercial concerns; and (ii) the journal is not so recently established that it is not possible to make an assessment to its seriousness.
- General membership on a grant review panel would normally be approved in a private capacity.
- General membership in an external scientific or professional association would normally be approved in a private capacity.
- Teaching a short course or lecturing in their private capacity would normally be approved, provided that there is nothing in the relationship with the institution that might be harmful to IARC/WHO's interests.

78. IARC/WHO does not allow staff members to carry out managerial or executive functions in an outside entity, even in a private capacity. As a result, staff may not accept an invitation to sit on a Board of Directors or a similar body. Any exception would have to be requested through the Director, IARC and approved by the WHO Director-General. IARC/WHO also does not normally allow staff to be members of outside entities, including advisory bodies, other than as stated above. However, if participation in the work of the outside entity in an official capacity is in the interest of IARC/WHO, permission to participate might be granted by the Director, IARC.

3.5 Duty to comply

3.5.1 Privileges and immunities

79. Privileges and immunities are accorded to staff members in the interest of the Organization only and not for personal benefit. The Organization has the right and the duty to waive the immunity of any staff member in any case where, in its opinion, the immunity would impede the course of justice and such immunity can be waived without prejudice to the interests of the Organization.

3.5.2 Disciplinary measures

80. Actions or decisions by a staff member that may constitute a failure to adhere to the standards of conduct may sometimes be resolved by the supervisor drawing the staff member's attention to the standards and conduct that are expected of all staff. However, failure to observe standards of conduct may also lead to disciplinary proceedings as indicated in Staff Regulations Article X and XI and Staff Rules Section 11 and 12 [see [WHO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules](#)]. Depending on the gravity of the misconduct, staff may be subject to any one or a combination of the following disciplinary measures:

- written censure, to be retained in the staff member's personal record for five years, following which it will be removed;
- fine of up to three months' net base salary;
- loss of up to three steps at grade;
- suspension with partial or no pay for up to one month;

- reduction in grade;
- dismissal;
- summary dismissal for serious misconduct.

Detailed provisions are available in [WHO eManual Section III.11](#).

3.6 Reporting wrongdoing

81. A staff member who has reason to believe that fraud, corruption, breach of integrity, abuse of the Organization's resources or other suspected wrongdoing has occurred has a duty to report it to the [Office of Compliance, Risk Management and Ethics \(CRE, WHO/HQ\)](#).

82. CRE shall be available to receive directly from individual staff members, complaints or information concerning the possible existence of fraud, waste, abuse of authority or other irregular activities. Confidentiality shall be respected at all times, and no reprisals shall be taken against staff members providing such information unless this was willfully provided with the knowledge that it was false or with intent to misinform.

83. Information on the investigation of suspected misconduct is found in IOS document "[The Investigation Process](#)". Guidance in this area is also found in WHO's [Fraud Prevention Policy](#) and in the [IARC Policy on Scientific Misconduct](#).

3.7 Whistleblowing and Protection against retaliation

84. IARC/WHO is committed to ensuring compliance with its Regulations and Rules. As such, any staff member who, in good faith, reports suspected misconduct by another staff member will be protected from retaliation in accordance with WHO's policy on [Whistleblowing and Protection against retaliation](#). However, the intentional filing of a false or misleading report is itself a violation of the Organization's regulations and rules that may constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary proceedings.

3.8 Ethics in Research

85. IARC is the guarantor of protection for study participants by its insistence on internationally consistent and complete ethical review of research. Research at IARC mainly relates to public health with epidemiology and laboratory sciences as core disciplines. There is agreement that epidemiological studies involving patients or participants from healthy populations should receive the same rigour of ethical review as any clinical study. IARC has a duty, as a sponsor of research as well as a practitioner, to show leadership in ensuring that its studies are beyond ethical reproach.

86. The major role of IARC in ethical appraisal is as the final common path for assurance to the international community that whatever constitutes ethical approval, transparently demonstrates the fundamental principles of doing no harm, respect, beneficence and justice. For more information staff may refer to the various documents and guidelines available on the [IARC Ethics Committee website](#).

4. Examples of answers to frequently asked questions

Privileges and immunities

Because I was worried about being late for an IARC/WHO meeting, I drove too fast on the motorway and was fined by the police. As this is related to my IARC/WHO work, may I invoke the privileges and immunities accorded to the Organization and refuse to pay the fine?

No, privileges and immunities are intended not for the personal benefit of staff members, but to safeguard the independent exercise of official functions in connection with the Organization. Moreover, it is for IARC/WHO to invoke immunity where appropriate, not individual staff members. You are expected to pay the fine.

Basic standards of conduct

I am aware that a colleague has submitted a falsified travel claim. Should I report this?

Yes, staff members have a duty to report reasonable suspicions of wrongdoing. If you do so in good faith, you will be entitled to protection against retaliation (see section 3.7).

Respect for persons and cultural sensitivity

A staff member hangs a calendar with sexually explicit photos in the office. Another staff member reports that the calendar makes her uncomfortable. Should the staff member be required to remove the calendar?

Yes, staff are expected to avoid actions that could reasonably be deemed to create a hostile work environment or make others uncomfortable in the workplace. Assuming that this situation meets these criteria, the staff member should be respectful of the colleague's feelings and remove the calendar (see paragraph 25).

My child is fundraising for a school project. May I ask colleagues whether they wish to contribute?

Yes, so long as there is no coercion or pressure placed on colleagues to make a contribution (see paragraph 25).

Respect for national laws

A staff member fails to comply with national laws, such as domestic violence laws, or a court order regarding visitation rights. Does this violate IARC/WHO's standards of conduct?

Yes. Staff members are required to comply with all local laws, including laws involving domestic matters. IARC/WHO has an interest in ensuring that its staff members do not abuse any immunities, engage in acts of violence against household members, or violate court orders (see section 3.1.4).

Personal relationships in the workplace

I am involved in an intimate relationship with a staff member whom I supervise. What should I do?

You should report the relationship to your supervisor or HRO or DAF. It could be decided to reassign one of you or change reporting lines (see paragraph 37).

Media relations and public statements

I have been contacted by a journalist to give an interview on a subject in my area of my expertise. May I accept?

Yes, but ensuring you comply with the guidance provided in paragraph 45.

Use and disclosure of information

I am writing an article for a scientific journal. May I include information I have acquired during the course of my employment with IARC/WHO?

Any publication related to work needs to go through the proper clearance procedures. Information known to you by reason of your official position with IARC/WHO, which has not been made public, may be disclosed provided you have obtained all necessary clearances (see paragraphs 46-48). This obligation remains valid even after you leave the Organization.

Intellectual property - Publications

I wish to write a children's fiction book. May I have it published? Can I be paid for it?

Yes, you may have it published, so long as you have written the book in your own time, have not gained any information used in the book from your work at IARC/WHO and do not make any reference to your status as a IARC/WHO staff member (see paragraph 49). Yes, you may accept and keep any payment in respect of that particular publication/book (see paragraph 49).

Use of official time and office property

My daughter is away at a university abroad. In order to cut down on the cost of telephone calls, I occasionally send her e-mails from IARC/WHO. Is this a violation of IARC/WHO's standards of conduct?

No, provided that the sending of e-mails is kept to a minimum, does not affect the performance of your work or overburden the electronic network, and does not conflict with the interests of the Organization (see paragraphs 51 and 52 re. payment of personal calls).

I am organizing a presentation to be given by an outside speaker at my child's school. To do so, I need to make and receive a few phone calls during working hours. May I do this from my office?

Yes, so long as the number and duration of such calls are limited and do not interfere with the performance of your duties and that the calls you place in this regard are identified as private and therefore paid by you (see paragraph 51).

I am getting divorced. I need to speak to my lawyer on the telephone during working hours. Occasionally, these calls are time-consuming. What should I do?

You should discuss this with your supervisor to find a solution that meets the needs of the office, along with your needs and those of your colleagues. For example, your supervisor might decide that you can take these calls during working hours and make the time up later (see paragraph 51).

Conflict of interest

I learned through my brother-in-law, who works for a software firm, of a new product of that firm that may be useful for IARC/WHO. May I arrange a meeting between the software firm and representatives of IARC/WHO?

No. This could give the appearance of a conflict of interest. However, you could tell your supervisor about the product and be forthright about the source of information (i.e., a relative). You must do nothing to influence IARC/WHO's decision whether to acquire the software or otherwise use the products of this firm (see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

I work for IARC/WHO, but have been recruited to work for a pharmaceutical company. Before leaving IARC/WHO, I am asked to work on a IARC/WHO project that might produce information beneficial to the pharmaceutical sector. In the course of working on this project, I might come across confidential information that might be useful to my next employer. Should I agree to work on that project?

No. You should bring this potential conflict of interest to the attention of your supervisor, who would be expected not to involve you in the project (see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

My work in IARC/WHO involves me directly with vaccine development at a senior level. May I hold shares in a pharmaceutical company that produces vaccines?

No. This would be considered a conflict of interest (see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

I own shares in a tobacco company. May I still work for IARC/WHO?

Yes, provided you sell the shares (see sections 3.4.1 and 3.4.2).

Hiring of spouses and family members

I am sitting in a selection panel as neutral party and my nephew has applied to the position. I know that he is an excellent candidate. What should I do?

You should immediately inform the members of the panel that you have a conflict of interest and ask to be replaced in the selection panel. In addition, you need to inform your nephew to indicate on his application form that you are working for IARC/WHO. Should he be considered for the position, you need to inform HRO.

Acceptance of gifts, decorations and honours

I am invited to accept an award in connection with my alumni activities, which is unrelated to my work with IARC/WHO. May I accept?

Yes, if you do so in your private capacity and do not refer to your connection with IARC/WHO (see paragraph 67).

I have been offered an award for work I have done while working for IARC/WHO. May I accept?

Yes, provided that you beforehand request IARC/WHO and approval is given in advance. If you are given permission to accept the award, when you do so you must acknowledge that the award is also conferred in recognition of the work of IARC/WHO (see paragraph 67).

Relations with governments and political activity

I have been asked to run for the next local elections in my village (1000 inhabitants). May I continue working for IARC/WHO and run for these elections?

No. IARC/WHO policy on "Candidacy for public office and right to vote" states that IARC/WHO staff may not be candidate for public office, local or otherwise, unless they resign from the Organization (see paragraph 72).

Outside activities

I have been invited by a local university to teach a course on a topic within my area of expertise in my own time, for which I have been offered a fee of US\$ 5000. May I accept the invitation?

Yes, provided authorization has been granted as appropriate. However, any payment should be made to the IARC honorarium account (see paragraphs 75 and 76).

I have been asked to become a member of an advisory group of a research institution involved in my area of work. May I accept the invitation?

Yes, provided the work is in the interest of IARC/WHO and approved by the Director. A fundamental part of the role of IARC is to promote research collaboration and capacity, as well as to interact with national cancer research communities.

I have been invited to become a member of the Board of Directors of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). May I accept the invitation?

No. Staff members are not permitted to carry out any managerial or executive functions in outside entities (see paragraph 78).

May I become a general member of a cultural association?

Yes, since the work of the association is unrelated to IARC/WHO's work, and you will be a general member (see paragraph 77).