

# Responsible behaviour

VALUES AND ETHICAL GUIDELINES FOR  
EMPLOYEES AT NHH NORWEGIAN SCHOOL OF  
ECONOMICS

NHH



Approved by NHH's  
board on 9 Dec 2015

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## 1. RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

At NHH, our shared values, professional norms and ethics are an important part of our identity. Sometimes issues will arise that underline a need to emphasise how these values and guidelines should influence our day-to-day behaviour.

We have chosen to present NHH's values, ethical guidelines and the consequences these shall have on our behaviour, in the document entitled "Responsible Behaviour". In the introduction, the document describes our goals and our visions as well as our most important values. In addition, we have chosen to collate, and briefly present, our ethical guidelines with underlying guidelines, regulations and routines. There are also descriptions of key aspects of our social responsibility, desired behaviour and reputation.

These elements are closely linked. Our values - committed, open and ambitious - together with our ethical guidelines, are instructive for the management of our social responsibility and our collegial responsibility. This impacts on our reputation and good standing.

This document shall be used as a source in discussions regarding ethical dilemmas, as a basis for reflection, as support for consultation and as assistance in making correct decisions. All employees must familiarise themselves with the document. In addition, all managers are encouraged to share and review the document with their staff. At NHH, we expect that our employees are aware of and comply with the ethical guidelines. This is also important for NHH to be able to retain and further develop its good reputation.

The guidelines apply to both permanent and temporary NHH employees. Behaviour that is contrary to what is stated in "Responsible Behaviour" and accompanying guidelines and regulations may result in consequences for staff at NHH.

## 2. VISION AND VALUES

### A. Purpose and vision

**NHH will be a driving force for development in business and society and will educate people for the purposes of value creation and sustainable development.**

NHH is a business school that is engaged in education, research and dissemination at all levels in the field of economics and business administration. NHH is characterised by close links with the business community and society as a whole. Relevance and interdisciplinarity are emphasised in study programmes, research and dissemination.

### B. Values

**Quality, high ethical standards and dedication to common goals shall characterise all activities at NHH. Students, staff and other members of the NHH community are committed, open and ambitious.**

There is a strong quality culture at NHH. This means that the school's research, teaching and dissemination activities must be of a high academic standard and that the administrative support functions have the required expertise.

The principle of free and independent research shall form the basis for NHH's activities and the academic freedom must be exercised within legal and ethical frameworks.

NHH's three core values are **committed, open** and **ambitious**. For us, *committed* is about identifying with the institution, contributing to a high level of activity and playing an active part in the community.

*Open* reflects a number of qualities that characterise those of us in the NHH community:

- that we are intellectually open and eager for knowledge
- that we are inclusive
- that we are internationally oriented
- that we have open communication, both internally and externally.

*Ambitious* reflects the fact that individuals set high goals for themselves and for the institution.

NHH's values are specified in more detail in [Strategy for NHH 2014-2017](#).

### 3. ETHICAL GUIDELINES

Ethical evaluations must be a key factor in decision-making at all levels at NHH. As public servants we require that society trusts that we perform our duties in a proper and adequate manner. We shall prevent impartiality problems and conflicts of interest, whether these be of a financial, political, religious or other value-based character. We will clarify the role we have when we make our assessments and decisions.

The most important and NHH-specific guidelines that we have to follow are summarised below. More information can be found in the various regulations and guidelines.

## A. Ethical Guidelines for the Public Service

As a government entity, NHH comes under the [Ethical Guidelines for the Public Service](#). These guidelines are intended to increase the awareness of state employees with regard to ethical standards for the services that are provided and the authority that is exercised.

The guidelines contain expectations regarding:

- Our responsibility for the reputation of the state
- our duty of loyalty to our employer
- our duty to promote transparency in government administration
- our responsibility that citizens have trust in government administration
- our duty to be professionally independent

## B. Gifts received in a professional capacity, events and other benefits

Gifts received in a professional capacity are regulated through [Section 20 of the Civil Service Act](#) that stipulates that civil or public servants are prohibited from receiving gifts. The prohibition targets conditions that have the objective of or are intended to influence an employee and therefore can provide reason for doubt about the person in question's impartiality or objectivity.

As an employee at NHH you cannot, in principle, either for yourself or on behalf of others, accept or give gifts, discounts, travel, participate in events and the like that could influence your actions or those of the recipient. Moderate forms of attention, hospitality and social involvement are part of generally accepted and polite behaviour. Particular care is required in relation to suppliers and external partners. Accepting and being offered gifts and other benefits is regulated through Section 4.5 and 4.6 of the [Ethical guidelines for the public service](#), and referred to in more detail in [Guidelines for gifts while in a professional capacity](#).

## C. Ethical guidelines for public servants pertaining to the purchase and acceptance of sexual services.

To prevent people being abused as victims of human sex trafficking, there are also [Ethical guidelines for public servants pertaining to the purchase and acceptance of sexual services](#).

Based on the general ethical guidelines for the public service (section A), NHH has prepared a number of specific guidelines in individual areas. Below is a brief description of some of the key areas.

## D. NHH's guidelines for research ethics.

[NHH's guidelines for research ethics](#) stipulate that academic freedom is a fundamental requirement for research, teaching and dissemination. In addition, the guidelines emphasise NHH's expectations for employee behaviour in relation to research and teaching. The content

relates to the challenges and dilemmas that our employees face in their everyday work and that it is a requirement that all academic staff familiarise themselves with the ethical guidelines.

#### E. NHH's regulations concerning honesty

[NHH's regulations concerning honesty](#) have been prepared to assess scientific misconduct in the NHH community. These regulations set requirements for individual researchers that their scientific work is in accordance with norms pertaining to scientific honesty, including rules regarding plagiarism and good reference practices.

#### F. NHH's guidelines on external work

[NHH's guidelines concerning external work](#) have been prepared to prevent conflicts of interest between the external work of employees and NHH's interests, as well as to safeguard the trust and integrity of staff. Each employee must have a high level of ethical awareness when assessing external work. External work must not conflict with one's principal work at NHH.

As a main rule, external work is registered in NHH's central external work register which is publicly available<sup>1</sup>. All employees who have external work must familiarise themselves with the content of the regulations concerning this.

NHH does not compile a register of the private financial interests of employees. Employees must give notice of such interests when this is relevant for their research, dissemination and participation in public debate and should be cautious about making investments that restrict their opportunities to provide statements about matters within their own areas of expertise. Employees must act with due care and in accordance with good business practices in all situations.

#### G. Notification of censurable conditions

In NHH's routine for notification of censurable conditions, it stipulates that each employee has the right to notify about censurable conditions relating to NHH's activities. Notification must be given in an appropriate manner and you are protected against retaliation in connection with notification. The provisions relating to notification are established by law in the Working Environment Act and the ability to notify is considered to be a safety valve in instances in which undertakings do not act in the correct manner pursuant to legal provisions and responsible management and/or in violation of the undertaking's agreed goals and values. Reference is made to the HSE Handbook for NHH which contains notification routines at NHH ([link](#)).

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<sup>1</sup> A permanent registration system will be established during 2016. Until then, a provisional online system will be used.

## 4. YOUR BEHAVIOUR AND YOUR COLLEGIAL RESPONSIBILITY

NHH's culture is based on fundamental values that contribute to making NHH a good and stimulating workplace. We spend a great deal of time at work. It is therefore important that we find the work to be meaningful and that we have a good working relationship.

Interaction requires openness. We must work to further develop our ability to include, cooperate and communicate openly. In debates that concern NHH's own development, NHH expects that staff act openly and constructively. Criticism should be put forward internally before it is potentially aired in the public sphere. We are dependent on one another for establishing good work processes and strengthening the culture that makes NHH a good and meaningful place to work. The collegial responsibility requires that we are active in situations in which colleagues need support.

Employees at NHH must behave with common courtesy and politeness. This means that all verbal and non-verbal communication, including the communication we have with students, partners, guests etc., must be characterised by respect and honesty. Be aware that this also includes dialogue in emails and in social media.

NHH has a separate policy on intoxicating substances<sup>2</sup>. This stipulates that employees must not be under the influence of intoxicating substances while at work. Moderation is expected in connection with representation or in social settings when you are acting in the capacity as an NHH employee.

NHH has prepared [Guidelines for dealing with bullying and harassment](#) (reference is made to the HSE Handbook). The purpose of the guidelines is to highlight what is considered acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, prevent bullying and harassment from occurring, and to clarify responsibilities and roles. The guidelines provide a framework that ensures orderly and proper handling of reported cases of bullying or harassment.

Our priorities must be based on NHH's purpose and vision, core values and ethical guidelines. In addition, we must also safeguard requirements that are set for our professional practice and deliver work with a high level of quality. In some instances, our professional obligations and our moral responsibilities may conflict with our personal desires or colleagues' interests. In order to make good decisions in these instances, reflections based on our values and ethical guidelines will guide our alternative courses of action.

Our culture must ensure that decisions are made based on a proper process and that they are grounded in NHH's values. When a decision is made, we respect this and support it. Decision-making processes and different roles are described in more detail in the document, [Operating Framework](#).

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<sup>2</sup> Will be implemented in May 2016.

## **5. SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Social responsibility refers to the responsibility enterprises assume for how people, society and the environment are impacted by the enterprise beyond compliance with statutory laws and rules.

NHH will be a driving force for development in business and society and will educate people for the purposes of value creation and sustainable development. NHH's vision emphasises the importance of social responsibility to the entire enterprise. As an important, national educational institution, NHH has a considerable responsibility in relation to dissemination and society. NHH encourages all researchers to participate in public debate within their own fields of expertise and to be positive towards involvement in various expert committees and councils. For more detailed information, see section 6 regarding reputation.

Research, teaching and dissemination shall be designed and organised such that it is attractive to both men and women and gives students and employees of both genders equal opportunities to use their talents. Therefore, NHH must have an organisational culture and a working environment that are inclusive and fair for both genders. To achieve gender balance, it is required that each and every one of us takes a gender equality perspective when planning and making decisions.

When entering into cooperative agreements with external parties, NHH must ensure that these parties also pledge to follow generally accepted ethical guidelines.

NHH shall work to manage our activities in the most environmentally-friendly manner possible. As an employee, you must take the environment into consideration in your daily work.

As part of our social responsibility, NHH takes on apprentices in different fields. NHH also works together with the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) to provide individuals with the opportunity to receive on-the-job training at our workplace. In addition, NHH strives to provide working conditions for employees with disabilities.

## **6. REPUTATION AND GOOD STANDING**

As a public institution, it is our responsibility to ensure transparency about our activities. This means that all documents at NHH shall be open to inspection, unless otherwise regulated by law. NHH's reputation is based on how the society views us over time. The key to a good reputation is in our behaviour. There is a connection between society's expectations of us and



how we act in practice. How we communicate and how we establish relations also influence opinions about NHH.

As an employee at NHH, each and every one of us has an independent and personal responsibility to contribute to NHH having a good reputation. Through our daily work, we will ensure that there is a connection between each individual's behaviour and NHH's goals, visions and values. All employees at NHH have full freedom of expression. NHH expects that employees have a high level of integrity and act as a representative of the institution when academically relevant. NHH will actively defend an employee's right to put forward controversial viewpoints that have an academic basis. At the same time it is important to encourage individuals to be aware of any consequences for NHH's reputation due to comments that go beyond one's own field of expertise. For you as an employee to be aware of NHH's expectations, you must actively familiarise yourself with the relevant guidelines and regulations.

If your behaviour or your external work are ethically questionable or you have a conflict of interest, this may constitute a risk to NHH's reputation. It is your responsibility to continually assess your alternative courses of action and make responsible choices. If you are in any doubt as to what is correct behaviour, you must discuss the matter with your immediate superior or a colleague. We shall work together to further develop our good culture.

## **7. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ETHICAL REFLECTION**

"Responsible Behaviour" provides an overview of NHH's values, ethical guidelines and relevant legal regulations. In some areas, the document provides clear and unequivocal answers. In some areas it does not. "Responsible Behaviour" encourages ethical reflection. Ethical reflection best occurs in conversation with others. We want NHH to be a good workplace for discussing ethical dilemmas and alternative courses of action. This requires that we interact with one another with openness, inquisitiveness and respect. In this way we can together assist one another in displaying responsible behaviour.

The following questions may assist you in your own understanding of a problem, in reflection and in discussion with others at NHH:

- Have I taken community interests, NHH's interests and the well-being of my colleagues into consideration in my choices and actions?
- Is the action in accordance with NHH's values?
- Am I comfortable with the expected consequences of the action? If the answer is no, then why?
- How do I think those around me will react to the expected consequences of my actions?
- Have I treated everyone equally or fairly?

- Am I comfortable with and willing to defend my choice in the public sphere, in front of my colleagues or those closest to me?