



Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Councillor Code of Conduct

A. Preamble

Name

This is the Sydney University Postgraduate Representative Association (SUPRA) Councillor Code of Conduct.

Commencement

This code commenced on 21 September 2011.

Code is binding

This code binds SUPRA, its members and Councillors.

Statement of intent

- (1) SUPRA is committed to demonstrating high standards of personal and professional conduct.
- (2) This code:
 - a) applies, and provides guidance to all Councillors on the standards of behaviour expected of SUPRA Councillors.
 - b) is a set of overarching principles to be followed rather than an exhaustive list. The code cannot address all possible issues and scenarios which may be faced by Councillors in the course of performing their duties for SUPRA.

- c) supports the SUPRA Constitution ('the Constitution') and shall not be interpreted so as to contravene the Constitution;
- d) should be read in conjunction with the SUPRA Safer Spaces Policy and the other policies in the SUPRA Policy Manual which cover specific areas of personal and professional conduct.
- e) should also be read in conjunction with the SUPRA Offices and Resources Use Regulations.

B. Code

1. Definitions

- 1.1 The definitions set out in the Constitution, the SUPRA Safer Spaces Policy, and the SUPRA Offices and Resources Use Regulations shall apply to this code.
- 1.2 In addition, for the purposes of this code:
 - 1.2.1 **Material Interest** means any actual or potential benefit or detriment, whether direct or indirect, monetary or non-monetary, which a Councillor or a close associate of a Councillor has or could have, that could foreseeably cause a possible conflict with the performance of their duties as a Councillor.

2. General Obligations

2.1 Standards of Behaviour

- 2.1.1 Councillors are expected to be familiar with, adhere to, and uphold:
 - a) the policies and regulations of SUPRA as set out in the SUPRA Policy Manual; and
 - b) the University's *Student Charter* and other policies.
- 2.1.2 Councillors shall act:
 - a) in a manner that supports a culture of inclusiveness and respect for difference;
 - b) in a manner that promotes the value of diversity at every level of the University;
 - c) in a manner consistent with SUPRA's Safer Spaces Policy;

- d) to uphold the reputation of SUPRA;
 - e) to foster positive recognition of SUPRA within the University;
and
 - f) in the best interests of postgraduate students and SUPRA.
- 2.1.3 Councillors shall not:
- a) use or threaten to use violence;
 - b) engage in bullying, harassment, oppressive behaviour or vilification; or
 - c) use physical, emotional, or other intimidation to influence a motion at any SUPRA meeting, or to influence the outcome of a meeting or hearing.
- 2.1.4 Councillors are required to work actively towards the prevention of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace by:
- a) ensuring that bullying is not tolerated in SUPRA Spaces;
 - b) being aware of, identifying, and taking early corrective action to deal with unacceptable behaviour in the workplace;
 - c) committing to a workplace that is free from all forms of unlawful discrimination and behaving in a way which is consistent with the principles of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination;
 - d) providing leadership by being a role model with respect to appropriate behaviour in the workplace; and
 - e) responding promptly, sensitively, and confidentially to all situations where unacceptable behaviour is exhibited or alleged to have occurred.

2.2 Accountability and Disclosure

- 2.2.1 SUPRA values ethical decision making and accountability and expects that Councillors will take responsibility for their actions within the scope of their position on Council.
- 2.2.2 Councillors shall ensure that all their decision making is reasoned, transparent, documented and conducted without bias.
- 2.2.3 Ethics and accountability entail an obligation to report on, explain and be responsible for one's actions and their consequences. Councillors:
- a) act with care, diligence and honesty;
 - b) are accountable for official conduct and decisions;

- c) exercise care and probity in the use of equipment and financial resources;
 - d) avoid and report on any possible corruption or misuse of SUPRA funds;
 - e) acknowledge and take responsibility for their actions;
 - f) comply with the principles of health and safety at work, and report health and safety risks and incidents through appropriate channels; and
 - g) ensure that compliance with legislation, regulations and policy is observed at all times, and that it is undertaken in the spirit of the law.
- 2.2.4 All Councillors shall be accountable to the Council and the members in general.
- 2.2.5 All Councillors shall report back to Council on the time spent and duties undertaken by them in their role as Councillor.
- 2.2.6 Reports made by Councillors pursuant to subclause 2.2.5 of this code must be in writing where a Councillor is claiming or intends to claim a stipend in recognition of undertaking those duties.

2.3 Conflicts of Interest

- 2.3.1 Councillors shall not use their position to obtain any gain or advantage for themselves, their family, friends or close associates, or for any entity in which they have a present or potential financial interest.
- 2.3.2 A conflict of interest exists when it is likely that a Councillor could be influenced or perceived to be influenced by a material or personal interest in discharging their duties as a Councillor.
- 2.3.3 Conflicts of interest include, but are not limited to:
- a) being on a selection panel and having a close personal relationship with a job candidate;
 - b) having a financial interest in an organisation which has a business relationship with SUPRA;
 - c) being a member of a postgraduate group or community group and also part of a subcommittee deciding on a proposal to grant funds to that group; or
 - d) being employed by the University and participating in advocacy to the section of the University in which you are employed.
- 2.3.4 It is the responsibility of all Councillors to declare any actual or potential conflict of interest that arises or is likely to arise as soon

as they become aware of the conflict.

- 2.3.5 Where a Councillor considers that they may have a possible conflict of interest they are encouraged to consult with or seek advice from the President or from the committee chair where it relates to a particular matter to be considered at a meeting.
- 2.3.6 Where the conflict of interest relates to a matter to be considered at a meeting, the conflict is to be dealt with as set out in the Constitution.

2.4 Privacy

- 2.4.1 Councillors are required to understand their obligations with respect to privacy as prescribed in the SUPRA Policy Manual.
- 2.4.2 Any information obtained by a Councillor in the course of their duties may only be used in a manner consistent with the privacy provisions of the relevant policy.
- 2.4.3 All Councillors must ensure the security of any confidential information or documents in their custody and must surrender all material received as a Councillor at the completion of their term.
- 2.4.4 Councillors must not disclose or offer to supply confidential or sensitive information except when authorised to do so as part of their duties or when required or permitted to do so by law.

2.5 Acceptance of Gifts and Benefits

- 2.5.1 Gifts or benefits that are offered to SUPRA Councillors must be managed as follows:
 - a) Councillors must never accept bribes or gifts in the form of cash or monetary gifts.
 - b) Councillors must never seek out gifts or other benefits.
 - c) Councillors must not accept any gift or benefit that may create or be perceived by a reasonable person to create a conflict of interest.
 - d) Gifts must never be accepted from any third party currently or about to be engaged with SUPRA in a contractual relationship with a commercial benefit.
 - e) Gifts or benefits offered to family members, friends or other associates of Councillors to avoid the requirements of this policy, must never be accepted.
- 2.5.2 As a general rule, and wherever practical, Councillors should decline acceptance of any gifts or benefits to avoid compromising situations that may be perceived as corrupt or

unethical.

- 2.5.3 Occasional gifts such as small mementos or tokens of appreciation may be accepted by Councillors provided they do not confer a benefit on a third party and do not exceed a nominal value of \$50.
- 2.5.4 The President must be informed in writing of the following:
 - a) Any offer of a bribe;
 - b) Where a Councillor has received or declined a series of gifts over a period of time where the cumulative value of the series of gifts or benefits within a 12-month period would exceed \$50.

3. Governance

3.1 Discharge of Duties

- 3.1.1 Councillors shall ensure that their governance of SUPRA is in accordance with:
 - a) the policies, procedures, and regulations of SUPRA as set out in the SUPRA Policy Manual; and
 - b) the principles of good governance, including transparency and accountability.
- 3.1.2 In performing their duties, Councillors shall:
 - a) consult with postgraduate students over matters affecting them;
 - b) develop and maintain knowledge and understanding of any area they are responsible for as a Councillor;
 - c) exercise their best judgement to make decisions objectively based on the information to hand;
 - d) act fairly and reasonably at all times;
 - e) not prevent, undermine, or obstruct other Councillors or staff from carrying out their duties; and
 - f) not behave in a matter that creates a hazard or endangers any person.
- 3.1.3 Where a Councillor holds an office, they shall undertake the full range of duties as set out in their duty statement. In the event that they are unable to undertake the full duties of their role, they shall resign to allow another Councillor to take up that office.
- 3.1.4 Councillors shall attend:

- a) all meetings of Council where possible;
 - b) as many of the meetings of any subcommittee of which they are a member as possible; and
 - c) as many SUPRA events as possible.
- 3.1.5 Councillors shall make every attempt to be familiar with:
- a) the resolutions of Council to facilitate SUPRA's purpose and agenda;
 - b) the activities and services of SUPRA to ensure that SUPRA can discharge its obligations to the members; and
 - c) University policies, and policies and legislation in the higher education sector which may impact on postgraduate students to ensure SUPRA can be responsive in this area.

3.2 Volunteer Commitment

- 3.2.1 Councillors are expected to volunteer time and labour at SUPRA events, including but not limited to:
- a) faculty inductions and orientations;
 - b) Welcome Week stalls;
 - c) social and outreach events; and
 - d) seminars and forums.
- 3.2.2 Councillors are expected to volunteer to provide support as needed, including time and labour, to SUPRA projects and representative work, including but not limited to:
- a) campaigns and actions;
 - b) publications;
 - c) representation on University committees; and
 - d) the preparation of submissions.

4. Council Relations

4.1 Internal Relations

- 4.1.1 Councillors are expected to:
- a) show respect towards each other at all times;
 - b) contribute to discussion and debates constructively;
 - c) act in a way that is inclusive of other Councillors with backgrounds, abilities, and/or opinions different from their

- own;
- d) report behaviour which breaches this code to the Council.

4.2 Public Relations

- 4.2.1 The President is the only person authorised to make public comment and sign any form of document, including but not limited to agreements, contracts, and submissions, on behalf of SUPRA.
- 4.2.2 Where a matter for public comment relates to a SUPRA equity group, the relevant equity officer will assist the President in the formulation of any public statement.
- 4.2.3 Where a matter for public comment relates to a SUPRA office, the relevant office bearer will assist the President in the formulation of any public statement.
- 4.2.4 Councillors are not authorised to make any public comment on behalf of SUPRA unless they have first been authorised to do so in relation to a specific matter by the President or Council.
- 4.2.5 Where a matter for public comment is initiated by a Councillor, the President shall consult with that Councillor in the formulation of any public comment.
- 4.2.6 Any public comment made by a Councillor, other than those authorised pursuant to subclause 4.2.4, must carry a statement that the Councillor is expressing their own view and that such a view is not necessarily that of SUPRA.
- 4.2.7 Councillors are not authorised to sign any document on behalf of SUPRA, or to use SUPRA letterhead, the SUPRA logo, SUPRA address, or SUPRA email addresses, except where:
 - a) permission has first been granted for their use by the President or Council; or
 - b) their use is by an office bearer for the purpose of discharging their duties as set out in their relevant duty statement.
- 4.2.8 Public comment or external communication must not be used to cause embarrassment or loss or reputation to SUPRA as an organisation.

5. Employer Responsibilities

5.1 Council as Employer

- 5.1.1 Council serves as the employer of SUPRA staff. As such, Councillors are required to familiarise themselves with and fulfill the legal obligations and duties required of an employing body. This includes but is not limited to familiarising themselves with the SUPRA Enterprise Agreement or any other agreement governing staff in force at the time.

5.2 Relations with Staff

- 5.2.1 While Councillors may request the assistance of SUPRA staff, only the President has authority to give staff a directive.
- 5.2.2 Councillors may request that the President gives staff a directive.
- 5.2.3 The President may not request or direct staff to undertake any action which may be unlawful, unethical or in breach of the SUPRA Policy Manual.
- 5.2.4 In working with SUPRA staff, Councillors are expected to:
- a) adhere to any requirements set out in the SUPRA Policy Manual;
 - b) maintain high ethical standards of behaviour;
 - c) treat all staff with courtesy and respect;
 - d) treat all staff fairly and without favour or exclusion; and
 - e) provide support and encouragement.
- 5.2.5 Any requests for assistance from Councillors or directives given by the President must:
- a) comply with the SUPRA Enterprise Agreement in force at the time;
 - b) be mindful of existing lines of management;
 - c) be in accord with the terms of the individual staff member's engagement;
 - d) be relevant to that staff member's position and the tasks they usually perform in that position;
 - e) include any information relevant to the task;
 - f) include the details of the scope of the staff member's decision-making in relation to the task;

- g) not single out individual staff members for any unreasonable or unfair treatment; and
 - h) not subject the staff member to an environment that may harm their health, wellbeing, or ability to perform their job.
- 5.2.6 Councillors shall not divulge personal disputes between themselves and other Councillors to SUPRA Staff.

5.3 Workplace Health & Safety

- 5.3.1 As the employing body, Council has responsibility for the health and safety of any person in the workplace. This includes staff, students, clients, contractors and other visitors, and SUPRA Spaces.
- 5.3.2 Councillors are required to ensure that:
- a) safety risks are identified, and eliminated or controlled;
 - b) adequate information, training and supervision are provided;
 - c) appropriate safety gear is provided where needed;
 - d) safety procedures are developed for the use of any equipment or substance;
 - e) the layout of SUPRA spaces does not put anyone at risk; and
 - f) the facilities provided for staff are adequate.

6. Reporting Corruption, Misconduct, & Maladministration

6.1 Reporting Obligations

- 6.1.1 All Councillors have an obligation to report any instance of corruption, misconduct, and maladministration, including any substantial waste of SUPRA Resources.
- 6.1.2 In the first instance, all such occurrences should be reported immediately to the President.
- 6.1.3 If the instance being reported is against the President, the Councillor must report it to a member of the executive who will raise the matter at Council.
- 6.1.4 If a Councillor is unable to report the matter as set out in subclauses 6.1.2 or 6.1.3 of this code, the Councillor must call

an Extraordinary General Meeting to report it, or can report it at the Annual General Meeting provided the Annual General Meeting has already been called.

6.2 Confidentiality

6.2.1 All information received regarding any corruption, misconduct, or maladministration must be treated as confidential. Names will not be disclosed unless necessary to take the appropriate disciplinary action.

6.3 Investigation

6.3.1 Upon receiving a report, the President will conduct an investigation.

6.3.2 In the event that the President, or members of the executive are subjects of the allegation, the responsibility for conducting the investigation will fall to other members of the executive in the following order:

- a) Vice President;
- b) Education Officer;
- c) Secretary;
- d) Treasurer; or
- e) a Councillor nominated by Council.

6.3.3 The President or other Councillor responsible for conducting the investigation under subclause 6.3.2 of this code will provide reports on the investigation at Council meetings held whilst the investigation is on foot. These will be dealt with in camera during Council meetings.

6.3.4 In the event that fraud is uncovered during the investigation, the appropriate law enforcement authorities will be advised.

NOTES

SUPRA Code of Conduct

Date ratified by Council: 21 September 2011

Date commenced: 21 September 2011

Date last amended: 29 July 2021

Administrator: Vice President, SUPRA

Review date: 29 July 2023

Amendment History

Rescinded:

This code now integrates the following which is rescinded:

1. SUPRA Submission Development Procedures 2015.

This code and the Safer Spaces Policy 2021 now integrate the following which is rescinded:

1. SUPRA Communication Policy 2017.

Dates amended:

1. 13 June 2017
2. 29 July 2021