



# Code of ethics

Equality - Integrity - Innovation - Equity - Partnership

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Unité de santé  
internationale  
École de santé publique

Université   
de Montréal  
et du monde.

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## **BASIC PRINCIPLES**

### **Purpose and Scope**

This Code of Ethics defines the mission, values and principles that the International Health Unit (IHU) seeks to apply in each of its actions, whether at its head office or in the different countries in which it operates. Management, staff, interns, consultants and all those working with the IHU are committed to complying with this Code.

The Code governs activities performed by staff on behalf of the IHU. The private conduct of staff falls within the personal sphere, unless it affects the reputation, image or integrity of the IHU, its staff or its partners.

For projects not managed by IHU staff, the Code of Ethics will be offered as a management tool by project management, which will be responsible for it being signed by staff.

### **Basic Principles**

The International Health Unit expects that all those representing it will respect and contribute to the promotion of its basic principles—namely that improving the health of developing and transitioning countries involves:

- Enhancing the capacities of individuals and health sector partner organizations.
- Formulating and implementing equitable and effective healthcare policies and programs.
- Making integrity, discipline, respect, openness, efficiency and equality part of everything we do.
- Applying a partnership-based approach, so we find solutions with our partners that are tailored to local needs, rather than simply transferring Canadian practices.

The International Health Unit is committed to contributing to the support and supervision staff require so that they can do their work under the best possible conditions and adopt appropriate conduct in trips abroad to nations of intervention.

### **Mission and Values**

The IHU has been contributing to improvements in the public health of developing and transitioning nations, since 1989. Thanks to its many partners, the IHU works collaboratively with communities and healthcare networks, and in partnership with government bodies, to improve public health. Through its mission, the International Health Unit:

- Contributes to the improvement of public health in low- and middle-income countries.
- Supports the formulation and implementation of healthcare policies and the deployment of equitable and effective programs and services (including the mobilization of communities and the bolstering of local partners' qualifications).
- Combines activities involving expertise, training and research.

Board members, management, the staff and interns are committed to complying with the IHU's values, which are at the heart of all IHU projects and serve as inspiration for all its activities.

- Innovation: The IHU is constantly striving to improve and incorporate creative projects so its projects can achieve more.
- Equity: The IHU encourages mindset changes in its efforts to achieve equality in practice for its projects. Thanks to its advocacy initiatives, the IHU seeks to implement human rights to those targeted by its projects.
- Partnerships: The IHU works with its partners to achieve shared goals. Together, they seek to identify issues and formulate solutions meeting the expectations of all parties.
- Integrity: The IHU demonstrates integrity and transparency in carrying out its mission. It applies high ethical standards and is committed to most effectively meeting its abilities to fulfil the expectations of its service recipients and partners, through its Code of Ethics.
- Equity: The IHU is committed to taking the measures necessary to provide equitable access to healthcare to women, children, at-risk and marginalized groups.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS**

The Code of Ethics has been established by the employer and complements the laws and regulations of institutions employing IHU staff.

Consequently, if one or more rules of conduct are violated, this Code applies in addition to any legal or administrative decision made by institutions affiliated with IHU staff.

This Code applies at all times and under all circumstances to management, staff, interns and consultants in performing their duties with respect to IHU activities and projects.

The following parties are responsible for supervising and enforcing the Code:

- IHU management with respect to head office staff and interns.
- IHU project coordination and management with respect to consultants.
- Project coordination and the project's field lead for staff hired in the field.

In the event of a violation of this Code, an *ad hoc* advisory ethics committee will be set up. This committee will consist of management and two staff members not involved in the project in question, appointed by people participating in IHU coordination meetings. If necessary, the committee can call on someone outside the IHU who is well acquainted with the local culture. This process of selecting advisory committee members is designed to ensure their impartiality. This committee will meet as needed, at the request of management. Conduct inconsistent with Code requirements constitutes sufficient grounds for repatriation or any other appropriate disciplinary measures.

## **Reporting**

Every staff member is invited to report any abuse in the use of this Code to its management. Those who lodge complaints must not be subject to any disciplinary measures or reprisals. However, a manifestly unfounded or frivolous complaint will be considered abusive.

If a report concerns a case of sexual violence, the complainant may use one of the procedures set out in Appendix 1 of the Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Violence.

## **Disciplinary Measures**

Those who violate this Code may be subject to disciplinary measures up to and including dismissal or contract termination.

## **COMMITMENTS**

All staff members of the International Health Unit represent the organization and are its ambassadors. Consequently, those working for the IHU in intervention countries are committed, during and outside of work hours, to:

### **Ensure Good Management and Governance by:**

- Providing the expected quality of service.
- Applying thorough, honest and transparent management of contracts and agreements.
- Complying under all circumstances with IHU policies and procedures and project contracts, particularly with respect to the procurement of goods and services.
- Through the responsible use of facilities and resources provided to staff in Canada or in the country of intervention.
- By refraining from any real or apparent conflict of interest that could negatively impact the IHU's mission.

### **Project an Appropriate Public Image by:**

- Maintaining a professional and private life consistent with the IHU's Code of Ethics.
- Respecting delegations of representative power among the public, the media and partners.
- Respecting for caseworkers and service recipient populations in PR activities, and by ensuring no provocation of or participation in situations that could negatively impact the IHU's partnership or partners.
- Demonstrating caution and discretion in publicly expressing personal opinions that might negatively impact the IHU's image or reputation.

### **Ensuring the Confidentiality of Information by:**

- Not disclosing, without prior authorization, proprietary IHU logs, reports, procedures, documents, business plans, strategies, methods, processes or methodological tools.
- Applying this confidentiality principle even within IHU's internal interactions (discussions within a committee, emails, etc.). This obligation shall remain for a period of two years after the person's employment has ceased.
- Ensuring that information and documents contained in IHU files or discussed in work sessions is solely used for operational purposes.
- Not leaving records and documents containing sensitive or confidential information in sight of the public or uninvolved employees.
- Not disclosing any information pertaining to reports made under this Code of Ethics or Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Violence.

### **Respect Partners and Service Recipient Populations by:**

- At all times maintaining strict political and religious impartiality and by complying with local

- and national laws, as long as they do not contravene the IHU's principles.
- Respecting the opinions, knowledge, cultures, beliefs and attitudes of service recipients, national populations and international staff.
- Ensuring equitable treatment, without distinction, exclusion or preference based on race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic/national origin, family status, age, disability or any other grounds.
- Remaining sensitive to conditions of vulnerability and inequalities, particularly with respect of gender equality and concern for cultural diversity.
- Working in conjunction with outside partners.
- Taking no action that could unlawfully restrict the ability of another organization to complete freely in the cooperation sector.

### **Behave Properly and Respectfully to Partners and the Local Community**

Any use of personal power or position to adversely impact or unduly facilitate the work or career of another person will be considered an abuse of power and must be reported. "Abuse of power" includes such acts as intimidation, violence, threats, blackmails, harassment and coercion. Failure to respect the private life of staff will also be considered an abuse of power, unless it does not violate this Code.

Any abuse of power, aggression, harassment or act of sexual violence is considered serious misconduct that can result in dismissal. Disciplinary measures will be determined by management and by any other remedies sought by the victim. The process for handling a report of sexual violence will be determined by management in conjunction with the General Secretariat. Dealing with this kind of situation requires a high level of confidentiality and is why a minimum number of people will be involved.

Staff members who have been victims of harassment or any other abusive or violent conduct made refer to the Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Violence and any other policy or directive from their institutions (CHUM or the Université de Montréal).

The use of drugs and the abuse of alcohol are behaviours that have been formally condemned by the IHU, particularly while working in the country of intervention.

### **Following Health and Safety Rules**

Respect all management safety decisions and comply with safety directive and regulations while travelling abroad.

Any situation that could result in adverse health or safety repercussions will encourage any witnesses to contact their own chain of command or advise management as soon as possible.

### **Do Not Encourage or Commit Any Form of Sexual Violence**

Violating any provision of the Code for The Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Violence may result in disciplinary measures up to and including contract termination or dismissal.

The Code must be followed, including during stays in the country of intervention. The following behaviours will not be tolerated:

- Any sexual relationships with minors are strictly forbidden, whatever the local laws on sexual majority.

- The exchange of money, goods, services or work in exchange for a sexual favour is forbidden.
- Sexual or romantic relationships with direct service recipients are forbidden.
- The production, purchase or distribution of pornographic material within the offices of the IHU, in Canada or in intervention countries, is formally forbidden. This includes visiting pornographic sites or emailing pornographic material.

Anyone who has experienced harassment or any other type of violence is strongly encouraged to inform management or a trusted co-worker. If this individual feels the need, they may also make a report as described in the Code of Conduct for the Prevention and Eradication of Sexual Violence.

## Statement of Agreement

I understand that my actions must comply with the IHU's values and I agree to comply with the standards set out in this Code.

I understand that violating any provision of this Code may result in disciplinary measures up to and including termination of my contract.

I, the undersigned, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby declare that I have read and understood this Code of Ethics Conduct and will comply with it.

**SIGNATURE:**

**DATE:**