Code of Conduct for Members

Passed on 22nd October 2026

For further information please email: Amanda Suwart, Membership and Partnerships Manager

Summary: This Code of Conduct sets out the principles, standards and expectations that apply to all GuildHE Members, including Full, Associate, Research and Creative Members. It reflects GuildHE's charitable objects, its Articles of Association, and the responsibilities that accompany Membership.

The Code is intended to promote high standards of integrity, governance, academic quality and professional behaviour across the GuildHE community, and to protect the reputation and effectiveness of GuildHE and its Members. By committing to this Code, Members agree to act in a manner consistent with GuildHE's values, to engage constructively with regulators and stakeholders, and to contribute positively to the collective work of GuildHE in advancing higher education.

Introduction and Purpose

1. GuildHE exists to promote and improve higher education in the United Kingdom, in direct furtherance of the objects and missions of its Members, through representation, policy development, information, advice and collaboration.

2. This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour and practice expected of all GuildHE Members, including Full Members, Associate Members, Research Members, and Creative Members (together referred to as "Members").

3. The Code supports GuildHE's charitable objects, as set out in its Articles of Association, and complements the rights and obligations of Membership. It is intended to protect the reputation, effectiveness and integrity of GuildHE and its Members.

4. Membership of GuildHE is conditional upon a commitment to uphold this Code of Conduct. The governing body of each Member is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Code as a condition of continued membership of GuildHE. The governing body is also responsible for ensuring that any representative of the Member participating in a GuildHE meeting, event or other activity complies with paragraph 18 below.

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Shared Principles and Responsibilities of Membership

5. GuildHE Members will:
    a. Support GuildHE's objectives and strategic aims, and act in a manner consistent with those;
    b. Recognise that Membership carries collective responsibility, and that the conduct of individual Members reflects upon GuildHE as a whole;
    c. Commit to acting in good faith, with integrity, transparency and professionalism in all matters relating to GuildHE.

6. Members shall not act in any way that could reasonably be expected to bring GuildHE, its Members, or the UK tertiary education sector into disrepute.

Ethical and Responsible Institutional Practice

7. Members are expected to operate to high ethical standards and to:
    a. Act honestly and responsibly in dealings with students, staff, partners, regulator, funders and the public;
    b. Communicate clearly, accurately, and transparently about their legal status, governance, academic provision, admissions processes, fees, student outcomes and partnerships;
    c. Ensure that marketing, recruitment and admissions practices are fair, lawful and aligned with academic standards, giving students a reasonable expectation of success.

8. Members shall maintain appropriate governance and management arrangements proportional to their size, mission and risk profile, including effective oversight of academic quality, financial sustainability and institutional performance.

Regulatory Compliance and Due Diligence

9. Members must use their best endeavours to comply with all applicable laws, regulations and regulatory conditions in the jurisdiction(s) in which they operate, including (where applicable) requirements of the Office for Students (OfS), devolved administrations, professional bodies and other regulators.

10. Members shall:
    a. Engage constructively with relevant regulatory and statutory bodies;
    b. Notify GuildHE promptly of any significant regulatory, legal or governance issues that may reasonably be expected to affect their Membership or pose a reputational risk to GuildHE;
    c. Provide accurate, complete and timely information as part of GuildHE's Membership application, renewal and ongoing due diligence processes.

11. Members acknowledge that GuildHE may request further information to assure itself of their continued eligibility for Membership, particularly in the event of material

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changes to corporate form, ownership, governance, regulatory status or financial position.

Academic Quality, Research, and Creative Practice

12. Members commit to maintaining appropriate academic standards and quality assurance arrangements consistent with their provision and regulatory context.

13. GuildHE Research Members and Creative Members shall:
    a. Uphold principles of academic freedom, research integrity and responsible innovation;
    b. Conduct research and creative practice ethically and in accordance with legal, professional and funder requirements;
    c. Promote the responsible use and dissemination of research outputs and creative works.

Students, Staff and Institutional Communities

14. Members shall place the interests of students at the centre of decision-making, and where appropriate seek student views on matters that materially affect them.

15. Members are expected to:
    a. Provide appropriate support for student welfare, well-being, and success;
    b. Maintain safe, inclusive and respectful learning and working environments;
    c. Ensure that students have access to fair, transparent and independent complaints and appeals processes, including relevant statutory schemes where applicable.

16. Members shall support equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion within their institutions.

Participation in the GuildHE Community

17. Members are expected to engage constructively with GuildHE and with other Members, including through participation in consultations, meetings, networks and events.

18. Any representative of a Member attending a GuildHE activity shall:
    a. Treat all participants with courtesy and respect, recognising the importance of open and constructive dialogue;
    b. Respect the confidentiality of information shared in GuildHE meetings, forums and communications, unless disclosure is authorised, consented, or legally required;
    c. Be open to sharing good practice and learning from others within the GuildHE community.

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19. Where possible, Members are encouraged to contribute to GuildHE's work by volunteering for committees, networks, working groups and initiatives aligned with their expertise and capacity.

Conflicts of Interest

20. Members shall identify, disclose and/or manage any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest that may arise in connection with their participation in GuildHE activities.

21. Members must not use their Membership or involvement in GuildHE for improper personal or institutional advantage, or in a manner that undermines trust and fairness.

Reputation, Public Statements and Use of GuildHE Name

22. Members shall not make public statements purporting to represent GuildHE policy or positions unless authorised to do so.

23. Use of GuildHE's name, logo or Membership status must be accurate and in accordance with any guidance issued by GuildHE.

Breach of the Code and Membership Action

24. Where concerns arise that any representative of a Member may have acted in breach of paragraph 18 of this Code, the Chair of the Board of Trustees (or nominee) may determine that action should be taken, which may include engagement with the representative, requests for information, or, where appropriate, a request that the representative does not participate in future GuildHE activity on behalf of the Member. Where that person is the Member's authorised representative under the terms of the Articles of Association, the Board of Trustees will ask the Member to nominate an alternative representative.

25. Where concerns arise that a Member may have breached this Code, the Chair of the Board of Trustees may review the matter in order to determine whether any action should be taken against the Member.

26. Action may include engagement with the Member, requests for information, or, where appropriate, the Chair will undertake such investigation as they deem necessary. The Chair may decide that the Member should be suspended from Membership in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association pending the outcome of any such investigation.

27. If the Chair concludes that there are good grounds for removing the Member from Membership in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of Association, they will make a recommendation to the Board of Trustees which will be considered at a meeting called for that purpose.

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28. The Member's authorised representative will be invited to attend the meeting to respond to the concerns, and may also submit a written response.

29. In instances where the Board of Trustees determines that Membership should be suspended or terminated, the CEO will provide written notice.

Review and Amendment

30. This Code of Conduct will be kept under review and may be amended from time to time by the Board of Trustees in accordance with its governance arrangements.

31. Members will be notified of any material changes to the Code.

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