

London Academy for Applied Technology (LAAT)

Ethical Framework

Policy Title: LAAT Ethical Framework

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Department / Function: Governance / Academic / HR

Policy Owner: Academic Dean

Oversight Committee: Academic Board

Approving Body: Board of Governors

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Supersedes: N/A

Regulatory Alignment with Office for Students (OfS) Conditions

The Ethical Framework Policy supports London Academy for Applied Technology's (LAAT) commitment to integrity, transparency, and responsible conduct in all academic and operational activities. The policy aligns with **OfS Condition E1 (Public Interest Governance)** and **E2 (Management and Governance)** by setting clear expectations for ethical behaviour, decision-making, and accountability across the institution, ensuring that governance arrangements operate in the public interest and are appropriate to the scale and complexity of the provider.

The policy also aligns with **OfS Condition E3 (Accountability)** by defining responsibilities, reporting mechanisms, and oversight arrangements that ensure ethical issues, conflicts, or concerns are identified, managed, and escalated appropriately. By embedding ethical principles into institutional practice, the policy supports effective compliance with regulatory requirements and underpins LAAT's wider quality assurance, risk management, and governance frameworks.

Additionally, the Ethical Framework contributes to **OfS Condition C5 (Treating Students Fairly)** by promoting fairness, consistency, and integrity in academic and administrative decision-making that affects students, thereby reinforcing trust, transparency, and confidence in LAAT's processes.

Term of Reference

1. Purpose

LAAT is committed to the highest standards of ethical conduct, integrity, transparency, and accountability in all its academic, operational, and partnership activities. This Ethical Framework supports compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory requirements and aligns with

the ethical expectations of Plymouth Marjon University (PMU, UK) as LAAT's collaborative partner.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Ethical Framework is to establish clear ethical principles, expectations, and governance controls that guide decision-making, behaviour, and institutional practice across LAAT. It provides assurance that academic standards, student protection, staff conduct, partnership activity, and governance processes operate with integrity, fairness, and transparency. The Framework also ensures that ethical risks are identified and managed proactively, that concerns can be raised safely and addressed appropriately, and that LAAT fulfils its regulatory obligations under the OfS Conditions of Registration and its partnership responsibilities to Plymouth Marjon University.

2. Scope

This Ethical Framework applies to all individuals and entities engaged in or act on behalf of the London Academy for Applied Technology (LAAT). This includes governors, senior leaders, academic and professional staff, and students, as well as agents, contractors, consultants, and institutional representatives. The Framework also extends to academic and non-academic partners, external stakeholders, and local communities where LAAT activities, partnerships, or institutional operations have ethical, academic, or reputational implications. All people and organisations within this scope are expected to uphold the principles and standards set out in this Framework when undertaking activities connected to LAAT's academic provision, governance, partnerships, or student engagement.

3. Definitions

Ethical Conduct: Behaviour that demonstrates integrity, fairness, transparency, accountability, and respect for others.

Conflict of Interest: A situation where personal, financial, or professional interests could improperly influence institutional decision-making.

Ethical Breach: Any action or omission that violates this Framework or associated codes of conduct.

4. Ethical Principles

LAAT adopts the **Nolan Principles of Public Life:**

- Selflessness,
- Integrity,
- Objectivity,
- Accountability,

- Openness,
- Honesty,
- Leadership.

These principles underpin all decision-making, governance, teaching, assessment, partnerships, and student support.

5. Governance and Accountability

Ethical conduct at LAAT is overseen through its formal governance and academic assurance structures. The Board of Governors holds ultimate accountability for institutional ethical standards and integrity, while the Academic Board provides oversight of ethical practice in academic delivery, assessment, research activity, and student engagement. Senior leaders and managers are responsible for ensuring that this Framework is implemented consistently across all areas of institutional activity. All individuals within the scope of this Framework are required to comply with its provisions and with supporting institutional policies and procedures. Breaches of ethical standards may result in action under relevant disciplinary, contractual, academic, or student conduct procedures, applied fairly and proportionately. Where ethical matters arise that are not explicitly addressed within this Framework or related policies, they must be considered in the spirit of the Nolan Principles and escalated to the appropriate governance body for determination. The Framework is reviewed annually to ensure ongoing alignment with Office for Students regulatory expectations, Plymouth Marjon University partnership requirements, and evolving sector good practice.

- Ethical conduct is overseen by LAAT's governing and academic bodies.
- All members are required to comply with this Framework and support policies.
- Breaches may result in action under disciplinary, contractual, or student procedures.
- Ethical issues not explicitly covered must be resolved in the spirit of this Framework and escalated where appropriate.
- The Framework is reviewed annually.

6. Ethical Practice

LAAT will:

- Treat all individuals fairly, respectfully, and without discrimination
- Promote equality, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Safeguard students and staff and maintain safe learning environments
- Protect personal data and confidentiality
- Prevent bribery, fraud, corruption, and conflicts of interest
- Uphold academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law
- Act responsibly towards the environment and society

- Respect intellectual property and scholarly integrity

8. Partnerships

LAAT will maintain ethical academic partnerships by:

- Ensuring academic standards, student protection, and quality assurance
- Respecting cultural contexts while upholding UK HE ethical standards
- Referring ethically sensitive partnerships for appropriate oversight
- Expecting partners to honour shared ethical values and regulatory obligations

9. Supporting Policies

This Framework is underpinned by LAAT's policies on governance, finance, data protection, equality, safeguarding, freedom of speech, sustainability, staff conduct, and student complaints and discipline.

10. Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Ethical Governance

10.1 Process Overview

This SOP defines how ethical concerns, conflicts of interest, and ethical risks are identified, assessed, escalated, investigated, and resolved to ensure compliance with OfS governance expectations and PMU partner assurance requirements.

10.2 Step-by-Step Process

1. Ethical concern or risk identified
2. Initial advice or triage by Governance / Academic Dean
3. Risk and safeguarding assessment (if required)
4. Formal investigation initiated where threshold met
5. Findings and outcomes determined by authorised body
6. Actions implemented and recorded
7. Anonymised reporting to Academic Board
8. Serious risks escalated to Board of Governors

10.3 Templates and Records

- Ethical Concern Reporting Form
- Conflict of Interest Register
- Gifts and Hospitality Register
- Ethical Investigation Record
- Annual Ethical Assurance Report

11. Monitoring, Compliance and Review

11.1 Monitoring

Ethical concerns, trends, and risk indicators are monitored through Academic Board reporting and institutional risk management processes.

11.2 Compliance

Failure to comply with this Framework may result in disciplinary, contractual, or governance action. Serious or systemic ethical risks are escalated to the Board of Governors.

11.3 Review

This Framework is reviewed annually, or sooner where required by:

- OfS regulatory updates
- PMU partnership requirement changes
- Legislative change
- Institutional risk review outcomes

12. Responsible People / Roles Include

- **Academic Dean (Policy Owner):** Dr Manoj Ponugubati
Provides leadership for ethical governance, ensures implementation of the Framework, oversees reporting and review, and ensures alignment with OfS and PMU expectations.
- **Academic Quality Lead:** Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda
administration, guidance, and procedural oversight
- **HR Manager:** [insert name]
Model ethical behaviour, promote awareness of the Framework, and escalate concerns promptly.

List of Responsible People & Contacts

Role	Name	Contact email
Academic Dean (Framework Owner)	Dr Manoj Ponugubati	manoj@laat.ac.uk
Academic Quality Oversight	TBC	TBC
HR manager	Ginny Mishra	Ginny.m@laat.ac.uk
Safeguarding Lead	Jai Sharda	Jai.sharda@laat.ac.uk
Student Reporting Contact Point	Fahmaan	studentsupport@laat.ac.uk

14. List of Document (LoD)

- Ethical Concern request form
- Ethical breach investigation completion

- Code of Conduct (staff and academic)
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom Code
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Data Protection & Information Governance Policy

15. Evidence

- Ethical Concern request form
- Ethical breach investigation completion
- Code of Conduct (staff and academic)
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Safeguarding and Prevent Policy
- Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom Code
- Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
- Data Protection & Information Governance Policy

Evidence Item	Purpose / What it Demonstrates	Relevant OfS Condition(s)
Ethical Concern Request Form	Provides a clear and accessible mechanism for staff and students to raise ethical concerns, ensuring issues are captured, reviewed, and managed appropriately within institutional governance arrangements.	E2 (Management and governance), E3 (Accountability), C5 (Treating students fairly)
Ethical Breach Investigation Completion Record	Demonstrates that reported ethical concerns are formally investigated, outcomes recorded, and actions completed, providing assurance of effective oversight and institutional accountability.	E2 (Management and governance), E3 (Accountability), E1 (Public interest governance)
Code of Conduct (Staff and Academic)	Sets out expected standards of professional and ethical behaviour for staff, supporting integrity, professionalism, and consistent decision-making across academic and operational activities.	E2 (Management and governance), E3 (Accountability), B1 (Academic experience)

Conflict of Interest Policy	Establishes arrangements to identify, declare, and manage conflicts of interest, protecting academic integrity, fairness, and effective governance.	E1 (Public interest governance), E2 (Management and governance), E3 (Accountability), C5 (Treating students fairly)
Safeguarding and Prevent Policy	Demonstrates institutional arrangements to protect students and staff from harm, including safeguarding, welfare, and Prevent duties, with clear escalation and oversight mechanisms.	E2 (Management and governance), C5 (Treating students fairly), E6 (Harassment and sexual misconduct)
Freedom of Speech & Academic Freedom Code of Practice	Demonstrates LAAT's commitment to lawful freedom of speech and academic freedom, balanced with institutional responsibilities, governance oversight, and respectful conduct.	E1 (Public interest governance), E2 (Management and governance), B1 (Academic experience)
Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy	Sets out controls to prevent bribery, corruption, and unethical financial practices, supporting integrity, transparency, and appropriate use of funds.	E1 (Public interest governance), E2 (Management and governance), E8 (Fraud and inappropriate use of public funds)
Data Protection & Information Governance Policy	Ensures lawful, secure, and confidential handling of personal and institutional data, supporting reliable information management and regulatory compliance.	C1 (Consumer protection law), E2 (Management and governance), F2 (Information controls)

Annex A: Alignment with OfS Conditions of Registration

Condition B – Quality and Standards

OfS Expectation: The provider delivers a high-quality academic experience and maintains reliable academic standards.

Ethical Framework Alignment

LAAT's Ethical Framework supports this condition through:

- Commitment to academic freedom, intellectual inquiry, and academic integrity
- Ethical approaches to teaching, learning, assessment, and research
- Fair, transparent, and inclusive assessment practices
- Ethical oversight of academic partnerships and delivery arrangements

Evidence for OfS

- Ethical Framework (Sections 3, 5, 7, and 8)
- Academic governance and assessment policies

Condition C – Student Protection

OfS Expectation: The provider takes appropriate steps to protect the interests of students.

Ethical Framework Alignment

LAAT's Ethical Framework supports student protection through:

- Fair treatment of students, based on dignity and respect
- Clear and robust complaints and grievance processes
- Safeguarding and student welfare commitments
- Transparent communication and accurate public information

Evidence for OfS

- Ethical Framework (Sections 5 and 7)
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Safeguarding Policy

Condition E – Management and Governance

OfS Expectation: The provider is effectively managed and governed, with appropriate accountability and risk management arrangements.

Ethical Framework Alignment

LAAT's Ethical Framework supports this condition through:

- Adoption of the Nolan Principles of public life
- Clear accountability for ethical conduct
- Oversight by governing and academic bodies
- Annual review of the Ethical Framework and escalation of ethical concerns
- Controls relating to conflicts of interest, gifts, and inducements

Evidence for OfS

- Ethical Framework (Sections 3 and 4)
- Governance, financial, and whistleblowing policies

Condition F – Provision of Information

OfS Expectation: The provider ensures that information provided to students, applicants, and other stakeholders is accurate, transparent, and accessible.

Ethical Framework Alignment

LAAT's Ethical Framework supports this condition through:

- Commitment to openness, honesty, and transparency
- Provision of accurate and up-to-date public information
- Ethical communication with students and stakeholders
- Compliance with data protection and information governance requirements

Evidence for OfS

- Ethical Framework (Sections 5 and 9)
- Data Protection and Freedom of Information policies

Annex B: Cross-Mapping to PMU (UK) Validation & Partnership Requirements

PMU Expectation	LAAT Ethical Framework Alignment
Academic integrity and standards	Nolan Principles; ethical teaching, assessment, and research
Protection of students	Safeguarding, complaints handling, fair assessment
Ethical governance	Board oversight, accountability, transparency
Equality, diversity, and inclusion	Fair treatment, inclusive learning, reasonable adjustments
Academic freedom	Explicit protection of freedom of speech and inquiry
Ethical partnerships	Shared values, oversight of partnership risks
Compliance with UK HE norms	Alignment with OfS conditions and sector practice
Reputation of the awarding body	Ethical conduct across all activities

Statement of Assurance

LAAT confirms that its Ethical Framework is aligned with PMU (UK) partnership expectations and that PMU will be notified of any material ethical risk, breach, or concern relating to academic delivery or student protection.

LAAT – Ethical Governance Standard Operating Procedures Pack

This Ethical Governance SoP Pack consolidates all operational procedures supporting the LAAT Ethical Framework. It provides clear, auditable, and regulator-ready workflows aligned to the Office for Students (OfS) Conditions of Registration and Plymouth Marjon University (PMU) partnership expectations.

This pack should be read alongside the LAAT Ethical Framework and supporting policies.

SoP 1 – Ethical Concern, Advice & Escalation (OfS: C, E, F)

START

Ethical concern or uncertainty identified

Advice only? → YES: Submit Ethical Advice Form → Guidance given → END

NO → Does it involve safeguarding?

YES → Escalate to Safeguarding Lead → END

NO → Potential ethical breach identified

Escalate to Dean / Governance Officer

Route to relevant SoP (COI / Gifts / Breach)

Outcome recorded and reported

END

SoP 2 – Conflict of Interest Management (OfS: E)

START

Appointment or new interest arises

Complete Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

Conflict identified?

NO → Register updated → END

YES → Is conflict material?

NO → Monitor and record → END

YES → Mitigation (recusal / role adjustment)

Approval by Chair / Governance Officer

Register updated and reported

END

SoP 3 – Gifts & Hospitality (OfS: E)

START

Gift or hospitality offered

Value above nominal threshold?

NO → Declare and record → END

YES → Seek approval

Decision: Accept / Decline / Donate

Record in register

Report material issues to Audit & Risk Committee

END

SoP 4 – Ethical Impact Assessment (OfS: B, E, F)

START

Proposed initiative or partnership

Affects students, standards or governance?

NO → Proceed normally → END

YES → Complete Ethical Impact Assessment Form

Risk rating assigned

Medium/High risk?

NO → Operational approval → END

YES → Escalate to Academic Board / SLT / Board

Decision and mitigations recorded

Monitor and review

END

SoP 5 – Ethical Breach Investigation (OfS: C, E)

START

Ethical breach reported

Initial triage by Dean / Governance Officer

Credible and within scope?

NO → Close and record → END

YES → Appoint investigator / panel

Investigation conducted

Findings reached

Outcome determined

Notify PMU / OfS if required

Actions logged and monitored

END

SoP 6 – Ethical Framework Review & Assurance (OfS: E, F)

START

Annual review scheduled

Collect data and evidence

Prepare Annual Review Report

Review by Governance / Academic Board

Changes required?

NO → Board assurance → END

YES → Update Framework and SoPs

Board approval

Publish updated documents

END

FORMS

Ethical Concern Advice Request Form

Reporter Name:

Role (Student/Staff/Governor/Partner):

Contact Details:

Nature of Ethical Concern or Advice Sought:

Individuals Involved:

Urgency Level (Low/Medium/High):

Preferred Outcome:

Date Submitted:

Signature:

Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

Name:

Role:

Department/Committee:

Description of Interest:

Type of Interest (Financial/Personal/Other):

Potential Impact on LAAT:

Mitigation Proposed:

Declaration Date:

Signature:

Gifts and Hospitality Register

Name:

Role:

Description of Gift/Hospitality:

Estimated Value (£):

Source:

Decision (Accepted/Declined/Donated):

Authorising Officer:

Date:

Ethical Impact Assessment Form

Project/Decision Title:

Description:

Ethical Risks Identified:

Relevant OfS Conditions:

Risk Rating (Low/Medium/High):

Mitigations:

Approval Required From:

Decision Date:

Ethical Breach Investigation Record

Case Reference:

Nature of Allegation:

Date Reported:

Investigating Officer:

Summary of Evidence:

Findings:

Outcome/Actions:

Reported to PMU/OfS (if applicable):

Date Closed:

Ethical Framework Annual Review Report

Reporting Year:

Reviewing Committee:

Summary of Ethical Issues Raised:

Themes and Trends:

Actions Taken:

Effectiveness Assessment:

Recommendations:

Board Approval Date: