
Fjölmenningarsetur Multicultural Information Centre

General Code of Conduct for Government Employees

To bolster professional working methods and increase trust in government agencies, the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs confirmed the general code of ethics for government employees that follows, cf. Paragraph 2 Article 15 Act no. 70/1996 on the rights and obligations of government employees. In preparing the rules, consultations were held with government employees' associations, the Association of Directors of Government Institutions, the Institute of Ethics at the University of Iceland and the Coordinating Committee on Ethical Standards for Public Administration.

Each employee, in turn, is responsible for ensuring that the rules are followed. Administrators of government agencies must also ensure that employees are aware of the rules and that they are a normal facet of their work. In doubtful cases that may arise, advice may be sought from the Coordination Committee on Ethical Standards for the Administration, cf. paragraph 3 (b) Article 25 Act no. 115/2011 on the Government of Iceland. Furthermore, suggestions may be made to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, who shall, among other things, ensure that administration is carried out in accordance with this Code of Conduct, which is established based on Act no. 70/1996, Coll. Paragraph 1 2. gr. Act no. 85/1997 on the Parliamentary Ombudsman. If anyone believes that a breach of the Code of Ethics has also meant that he himself has been wronged, it is possible to file a complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman, cf. Paragraph 2 Article 4 Act no. 85/1997.

These codes of conduct must be viewed in the context of more specific codes of conduct that may apply, cf. Code of Conduct for Staff of the Government of Iceland, no. 410/2012, rules that have been set for individual institutions, cf. authority in the 3rd sentence. Paragraph 1 Article 24 Act no. 115/2011, and the Code of Ethics for Professionals.

Furthermore, the code of ethics should reflect certain core values in government work such as integrity, impartiality, and efficiency.

Government employees must:

1. Work in the public interest with diligence, honesty, and good judgment.
2. Adopt work methods that can create trust in their work and institution.
3. Restrain from waste of and ineffective handling of funds.
4. Raise awareness of equality and other human rights.
5. Promote transparent working methods and good communication in the workplace.
6. Allow colleagues to enjoy truth and fairness.
7. Maintain the reputation of the workplace in communication outside of work.
8. Encourage colleagues to seek assistance if they feel they have been violated.

9. Treat clients with consideration and respect.
10. Respect freedom of opinion and expression.
11. Avoid all conflicts of interest.
12. Make sure that personal relationships do not affect their work.
13. Seek co-operation in resolving issues as far as possible.
14. Protect impartiality and professional independence.
15. Draw the attention of appropriate parties to illegal decisions and actions.
16. Take responsibility for your own decisions and actions.