

INNER TEMPLE GUIDANCE ON POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS AND POTENTIALLY UNACCEPTABLE CONDUCT

The following examples are intended to illustrate behaviours that may support or undermine the standards set out in The Inner Temple Code of Conduct. They are illustrative only and are not exhaustive. Whether conduct amounts to a breach of the Code will depend on the circumstances.

Scenario	Positive Conduct	Potentially Unacceptable Conduct
Welcoming new members or students	Introducing yourself, helping newcomers feel included and facilitating introductions to others. Appreciate that new members and students come from a range of diverse backgrounds. Ask questions about their motivations, experience and interests.	Deliberately excluding individuals from conversations, networking opportunities or social groups. Asking questions of a personal or potentially intrusive nature, for example about their background or protected characteristics, or making comments about their appearance.
Educational events and training sessions	Engaging respectfully with participants, encouraging questions and creating an environment in which individuals feel comfortable contributing.	Belittling questions, making participants feel foolish for speaking up, or creating an atmosphere in which others feel unable to participate.
Committee meetings and discussions	Listening respectfully to differing views. Encouraging contributions from all participants, particularly those who are more junior or newer committee/group members.	Regularly interrupting, dismissing or talking over others; ridiculing contributions; using status or seniority to silence disagreement.
Organising events	Taking reasonable steps to ensure events are accessible, inclusive and well communicated, including considering timing, format, venue, dietary needs, accessibility requirements and the diversity of speakers, trainers and panels.	Ignoring known accessibility requirements or creating barriers that unnecessarily exclude participation.
Providing feedback	Delivering constructive feedback focused on performance, conduct or work product in a professional and respectful manner.	Humiliating, mocking or criticising an individual in a manner that is disproportionate or personal.
Professional disagreement	Challenging ideas robustly while treating individuals with courtesy and respect. Consider speaking to the individual in private rather than in a public setting.	Resorting to personal attacks, insults, offensive or aggressive behaviour when disagreements arise.

Electronic communications	Communicating professionally and respectfully in emails, messaging platforms and social media. Pause before sending communications in “the heat of the moment”.	Sending hostile, offensive, intimidating or inappropriate messages, particularly where there is a disparity in seniority or influence.
Supporting students, pupils and junior members	Sharing knowledge, providing encouragement and helping others develop professionally.	Dismissing requests for guidance, exploiting a junior person's desire for advancement, or making them feel indebted for assistance provided.
Mentoring relationships	Maintaining a supportive and professional mentoring relationship with clear and appropriate boundaries.	Blurring professional and personal boundaries, creating dependence, or using the mentoring relationship to pursue personal interests.
Networking opportunities	Including students, pupils and junior members in professional conversations and introductions.	Socialising exclusively with established colleagues. Reserving networking opportunities exclusively for favoured individuals or excluding people for arbitrary or discriminatory reasons.
Interactions involving seniority or influence	Recognising that others may feel unable to refuse requests from more senior members and ensuring that participation is genuinely voluntary.	Pressuring a student, pupil, junior member or staff member to attend social events, provide disproportionate personal attention or engage in activities they may be uncomfortable declining.
Allocation of opportunities	Making decisions about opportunities, appointments or recommendations fairly and transparently.	Showing favouritism, creating the appearance of impropriety or suggesting that opportunities depend upon personal relationships.
Social events and dinners	Behaving professionally and respectfully throughout the event and helping create a welcoming atmosphere.	Engaging in behaviour that others may reasonably perceive as intimidating, offensive, humiliating or inappropriate.
Alcohol-related situations	Consuming alcohol responsibly, remaining mindful of professional obligations and respecting others' choices not to drink.	Becoming intoxicated to the point where judgement or behaviour is impaired; encouraging excessive drinking; criticising or pressuring others who choose not to consume alcohol.
Social interactions after events	Respecting personal boundaries and accepting refusals gracefully.	Persistently seeking private meetings, social contact or personal attention after an individual has indicated they are not interested.

Professional boundaries	Conducting mentoring, supervisory and educational relationships in a transparent and professional manner.	Using a professional position to seek personal, romantic or sexual relationships where there is a significant power imbalance.
Respecting personal boundaries	Being attentive to verbal and non-verbal indications that an interaction is unwelcome and responding appropriately.	Persisting with unwanted communications, comments, invitations or conduct after boundaries have been expressed.
Witnessing inappropriate behaviour	Intervening where appropriate, supporting affected individuals and reporting concerns through appropriate channels.	Ignoring serious concerns, dismissing complaints without consideration, or encouraging others not to report misconduct.
Receiving a concern	Listening respectfully, treating concerns seriously and directing individuals to appropriate support or reporting mechanisms.	Trivialising concerns, blaming the person raising them or discouraging them from pursuing the matter.
Investigations and complaints processes	Cooperating honestly and professionally with investigations and maintaining confidentiality where appropriate.	Obstructing investigations, providing misleading information or discussing matters in a way that undermines the integrity of the process.
Representing the Inn	Acting in a way that promotes confidence in the Inn, the profession, the administration of justice and the rule of law.	Engaging in conduct that may reasonably bring the Inn or profession into disrepute.
Online conduct	Using social media and other public platforms responsibly and respectfully.	Posting abusive, discriminatory, harassing or otherwise inappropriate content.
Responding to mistakes	Acknowledging concerns, reflecting on conduct and taking reasonable steps to address issues where appropriate.	Refusing to engage with legitimate concerns or retaliating against those who raise them.
After a complaint or report has been made	Continuing to treat all parties professionally and avoiding speculation or gossip.	Victimising, excluding, disadvantaging or subjecting an individual to adverse treatment because they have raised a concern or participated in a complaints process.
Leadership and senior roles	Encouraging a culture in which concerns can be raised safely and respectfully.	Creating an environment in which individuals fear adverse consequences for speaking up or reporting concerns.
Working with the Inn's staff	Recognising that the Inn's staff are a professional team with expertise in their areas of work. Using respectful language, listening actively without interruption, and	Undermining staff members' dignity at work. Showing favouritism; dismissing or talking over them; ridiculing contributions; using status or seniority to silence

	acknowledging their contributions. Respecting boundaries by avoiding after-hours emails or calls unless previously agreed upon. Actively soliciting opinions from quieter staff members or those with different backgrounds to ensure all voices are heard.	disagreement. Deliberately excluding staff from projects, communications or events critical to their role. Setting impossible deadlines or constantly changing tasks to set staff up to fail, causing undue stress.
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