



# CODE OF CONDUCT

Published: 2023 AUGUST  
Next revision: 2026 AUGUST



## PURPOSE

The primary objective of the AQLITY Code of Conduct is to establish a framework that ensures the respectful and dignified treatment of our Staff, Associates, as well as the children, young people, and communities we engage with. It serves as a comprehensive guide, aligning individuals with their roles and organisational values. The Code of Conduct aims not only to set clear expectations for acceptable behaviour but also to underscore instances of conduct that are deemed unacceptable.

Crucially, the Code of Conduct is crafted to guarantee adherence to associated policies, facilitate the transparent reporting of suspected breaches, and uphold the professional reputation of the organisation. This commitment is integral to realising our mission of fostering a just world that advances the rights of children and promotes equality for girls. As representatives or "ambassadors" of AQLITY, employees are mindful that their actions and behaviour, both within and beyond working hours, contribute significantly to the organization's public perception.

### **The AQLITY Code of Conduct is a binding document:**

**If you fail to adhere to any of the provisions set out in this document you can face disciplinary action, dismissal or even legal action.**

**You are obliged to read and fully understand the content of the document. If you have any questions please ask your supervisor for clarification.**

**You have a duty to report any breach of this Code to your supervisor or through AQLITY's established reporting mechanisms. AQLITY staff also have a duty to inform beneficiaries and others with whom AQLITY is working of the Code of Conduct that AQLITY staff must adhere to, including how and to whom they can report any misconduct or failure committed by AQLITY staff.**

**All reports and concerns will be properly considered and treated with discretion. AQLITY will take all necessary steps against any form of retaliation suffered by staff or others reporting possible breaches of this Code.**

**If you are a manager, you will have particular responsibilities to set a good example and to create a working environment conducive to upholding the standards in the Code of Conduct.**



## APPLICATION AND SCOPE

1. This Code of Conduct is binding on all AQLITY CLG Staff and Associates. AQLITY Staff and Associates will be required to sign an acknowledgement to show that they have read and understood the Code of Conduct.
2. AQLITY Staff and Associates are individually and collectively responsible for complying with this Code of Conduct:
  1. As a AQLITY member of Staff or Associate you are an ambassador of the organisation and your actions and behaviour both during and outside of working hours (whether inside or outside of the office environment) can enhance or hinder our reputation. As such, AQLITY Staff and Associates are responsible for managing their behaviour both within and beyond our work in accordance with this Code of Conduct and associated Policies and procedures.
  2. If you are in a position of management or leadership within AQLITY you are entrusted by AQLITY with greater responsibilities regarding transparency and accountability, and to create working environments that support our Staff and Associates so that we can uphold these standards of conduct.
  3. If you work or travel internationally for us your conduct will also be more visible and subject to scrutiny, as will be that of your accompanying household members.
3. This Code should be read in conjunction with local legislation (where possible), however should the Code of Conduct demand a higher standard than the local laws then this Code will prevail.
4. This Code should also be read and understood in conjunction with the following associated Policies, as may be amended from time to time:
  - Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People
  - Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination Policy
  - Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Corruption Policy
  - Grievance Policy
  - Disciplinary Policy

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

AQLITY's work is based on deeply held values that are embedded in our culture and are the guiding principles behind all our decision-making. We frequently work in complex and insecure environments, and in situations where we are in positions of power and trust (in relation to the children, young people and beneficiary communities we work with, with other organisations and one another). We must under no circumstances abuse this power and trust.



## 1. RESPECT

### I will:

- Respect the rights of all people without discrimination.
- Always act fairly and honestly and will treat people with dignity and respect.
- Maintain AQLITY's professional reputation, upholding and complying with AQLITY and Global policies and standards.
- I will respect all persons equally and without any distinction or discrimination based on nationality, race, ethnicity, tribe, gender, religious beliefs, political opinion or disability.
- I will respect local laws, customs and habits of the local culture.
- I will always take into consideration the difficult experiences that IDPs, refugees and other persons of concern to AQLITY have faced and survived, as well as the disadvantaged position in which they may find themselves in relation to those who hold power or influence over certain aspects of their lives.

### I will not:

- Take part in any form of discrimination, harassment, or abuse (physical, sexual or verbal), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way infringe the rights of others.

## 2. SAFEGUARDING

### I will:

- Adhere to the Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People and be open and honest in my dealings with children and young people, their families, and communities participating in programmes, projects, processes, events and activities.

### I will not:

- Engage in any form of sexual activity or develop physical/sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not a defence/excuse based on the unintended harm.
- Engage in sexual relationships with AQLITY clients/beneficiaries, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally, as these undermine the credibility and integrity of AQLITY work and are based on inherently unequal power dynamics.
- Withhold information about any criminal convictions, charges or civil proceedings relating to child abuse, either prior to or during the course of my employment with AQLITY.

## 3. PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

### I will:

- Ensure that my behaviour does not jeopardise AQLITY's political and religious neutrality.
- Be open and honest in dealings with AQLITY.
- Declare any criminal convictions or any criminal charges against me.
- Adhere to any professional code of conduct applicable to my role and profession.
- Ensure the proper use of AQLITY's resources and prevent them from theft, fraud or other damage.
- Seek to ensure that my conduct does not bring AQLITY International into disrepute.
- I will observe local laws, will meet all my legal and financial obligations, and will not seek to take personal advantage of any privileges or immunities that have been conferred on me in the interest of AQLITY.
- I will uphold the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity in my professional life. I will demonstrate truthfulness, dedication and honesty in my actions.
- I will dress in a manner appropriate to the assignment and the cultural setting.
- I will act in conformity with all of AQLITY's instructions and policies.

**I have made myself familiar with the AQLITY security policy and will conduct my work accordingly, bearing in mind that common sense always prevails, and each situation is dealt with individually.**

### I will not:

- Pursue personal or family gain or advantage in my dealings with or on behalf of AQLITY.
- Accept bribes, significant gifts, favours of financial value or other services offered as a result of my employment with AQLITY or in respect of our help, goods, or services of any kind.
- Enter into any business relationship on behalf of AQLITY without authorization from my line manager.
- Behave in a way which creates unnecessary risk to my security or the security of others.
- Drink alcohol or use any substances in a way that adversely affects your ability to do your job or affects AQLITY's reputation.
- Possess or profit from the sale of illegal goods or substances.
- Use AQLITY's computer equipment, mobile phones, video and digital cameras or other equipment to view, download, create or distribute

inappropriate material, including but not limited to material which is pornographic, defamatory, abusive, sexist, racist or otherwise exploitative.

- Exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or any other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour.
- Release any private or confidential information relating to AQLITY or its Staff, Associates or beneficiaries to others unless it is a requirement of my job or I am legally required to do so.

## 4. MEDIA AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

### I will:

- Ensure that the portrayal of individuals and their circumstances is fairly represented in terms of their capacities and vulnerabilities. All efforts must be made to explain how photos and stories will be used and to obtain permission from the individuals for the use of their photos and stories.
- Will refrain from making comments to the media or to journalists on behalf of AQLITY without prior agreement with the Country Director. *I am aware that journalists are to be considered as such also after working hours. I must clarify my role as a media spokesperson before I pass on information other than general information on AQLITY's mandate and programmes when meeting journalists in informal settings.*
- Exercise necessary caution and discretion in regard to political or military matters in official or private communications, including telephone calls, radio messages, e-mails and letters.
- Maintain electronic files and archives in a responsible manner. Information that may be considered illegal, offensive or inappropriate must under no circumstances be processed, downloaded, stored or disseminated.

### I will not:

- Issue statements to the press or other agencies of public information or submit articles, books or other material for publication if such act relates to the activities or interest of AQLITY without prior approval from the Country Director.
- reveal any confidential information, both while working for and after leaving AQLITY, I have obtained while working for AQLITY to any third party. I am aware that the breach of professional secrecy both while employed and after leaving the organization, might lead to a claim for compensation and/or prosecution.

## 5. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

## **I will:**

- Perform my official duties and conduct my private affairs in a manner that avoids conflict of interest, thereby preserving and enhancing public confidence in AQLITY.
- Work to serve the mandate, objectives and values of AQLITY and ensure that personal views, behaviour and beliefs, including political and religious convictions, do not adversely affect official duties or activities performed on behalf of AQLITY.
- Ensure that my actions will be free of any consideration of personal gain, and I will resist any undue political pressure in decision-making. I will neither seek nor accept instructions regarding the performance of my duties from any government or from any authority external to AQLITY

## **I will not:**

- Engage in any outside occupation or employment without prior authorisation. I will not accept supplementary payments or subsidies from a government or any other source.
- I will not assist private persons or companies in their undertakings with AQLITY where this might lead to actual or perceived preferential treatment. I will never participate in activities related to procurement of goods or services, or in human resource activities, where a conflict of interests may arise. I will act in conformity with all AQLITY policies, guidelines and instructions

## **6. FOR MANAGERS**

As a manager, I have particular responsibilities to set a good example when it comes to my behaviour both on and off duty.

I will not engage in or tolerate any form of harassment in the workplace, including but not limited to bullying, sexual harassment and abuse of power. All managers are obliged to prompt actions when harassment is alleged.

As a manager/supervisor, I will be open to the views of all team members. I will provide timely feedback on the performance of each team member through guidance, motivation and full recognition of their merits.

As a manager, I will endeavor to ensure that the health and well-being of staff are not subject to undue risk.

As a manager, I will not solicit favors, loans or gifts from staff, nor will I accept unsolicited ones that are of more than token value.



I recognize that there is an inherent conflict of interest and potential abuse of power in having sexual relations with AQLITY staff and volunteers. Should I find myself in such a relationship, I will advise my manager immediately and resolve this conflict of interest without delay.

## **7. REPORTING ANY CONCERN OR INCIDENT RELATING TO THIS CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **I will:**

- Report any matter which appears to break the standards contained in the Code of Conduct or associated Policies that I witness or am made aware of to the appropriate management, using the relevant and/or country-specific procedures.
- Support any investigation into suspected, alleged or known breaches of this Code or AQLITY International's associated Policies, including as a witness.

### **I will not:**

- Withhold any relevant information.
- Undertake any action on my own that is not in line with local policies and procedures and/or, without guidance from relevant focal points and managers.

## **IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING OF THE CODE**

The Directors are responsible for ensuring the implementation and monitoring of the Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to AQLITY's Code of Conduct and the standards of behaviour it promotes and requires could result in disciplinary action (including, potentially, your dismissal or termination of all relations with AQLITY including contractual and partnership agreements). In some cases, the matter may be so serious that it will lead to criminal prosecution or we may choose (and in some cases be obliged) to report to any relevant professional or government authorities.

### **AQLITY will:**

- Take all concerns and reports seriously at all levels.
- Investigate and act on reports immediately.
- Take appropriate legal or other action against anyone making a false and/or malicious accusation.





**DECLARATION**

As an integral part of the AQLITY team,

**I acknowledge that I have received, read, and understood the AQLITY Code of Conduct.**

**I am committed to upholding the principles and standards outlined in this document.**

I recognize the importance of aligning my actions with AQLITY’s values and fostering a work environment that prioritizes respect, integrity, and accountability.

I have a duty to inform beneficiaries and others with whom AQLITY works, of the Code of Conduct to which AQLITY staff must adhere, including how and to whom they can report any misconduct or failure committed by AQLITY staff or anyone representing AQLITY.

I will report any information received indicating a situation where any of the above agreements are broken through one of the following reporting channels:

- 1) Through my line manager or any senior manager
- 2) Through appointed focal points or Staff Representatives
- 3) Through e-mail: [safeguarding@aqlity.org](mailto:safeguarding@aqlity.org)

**I am aware of the fact that any breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to disciplinary action, dismissal or even legal action and that intentionally false accusations and reports are seen as a breach of the Code of Conduct and will be subject to disciplinary action.**

By signing this acknowledgement, I affirm my dedication to promoting a workplace culture that reflects the highest ethical standards and contributes to the positive impact we aim to achieve.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>EMPLOYEE’S NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS</b> |  |
|---|--|

|  |  |               |  |
|--|--|---------------|--|
| <b>DATE</b>                            |  | <b>PLACE</b>  |  |
| <b>SIGNED</b><br>(ON BEHALF OF AQLITY) |  | <b>SIGNED</b> |  |