Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic)

Document Control:

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Amendment History:

Version Number	Effective Date	Summary of Amendments	Author
V3.0	August 2025	Rewrite of version 2 of the code to remove the process of responding to a breach of the Learner Code of Conduct (now separate policy). The forms of misconduct have been classed as misconduct and serious misconduct, and potential sanctions for breaching the code have now been listed.	David Makepeace, Compliance Enablement Lead Jemma Ansell, Safeguarding Implementation Lead
V4.0	April 2026	Updated to align with the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process v2 by incorporating freedom of speech protections (including Prevent), strengthening our wording on additional needs, defining professional 'fitness to practice' and 'Adults at risk,' and clarifying the role of impact statements and the “Director’s Decision” in determining outcomes.	Julia Bindley, Director of Learner Success

1. Introduction

The Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) serves to define types of non-academic misconduct not tolerated at Multiverse and links to the procedures employed by Multiverse to address these behaviours.

The terms of this Code of Conduct are communicated to all learners upon signing the Apprenticeship Training Plan and the Apprenticeship Agreement. Multiverse ensures these standards are applied with consistent fairness and transparency, and nothing within this Code shall limit or diminish a learner's statutory rights.

Learners agree to adhere to the Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) upon signing their Apprenticeship Training Plan. Learners are consequently subject to the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process, should they breach the Learner Code of Conduct.

Nothing in this Code of Conduct shall be interpreted or applied in a manner that amounts to illegitimate interference with learners' human rights under the **Human Rights Act 1998**, including the rights to lawful freedom of expression, association, and assembly. Furthermore, in accordance with the **Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023**, Multiverse is committed to taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure that freedom of speech within the law is secured for its learners, staff, and visiting speakers.

2. Scope

2.1. The Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) applies to all learners upon signing the Apprenticeship Training Plan, until they complete or stop studying their programme at Multiverse.

2.2. The Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) covers all enrolled learners at Multiverse. It includes learners at all levels, full-time or part-time.

2.3 Multiverse reserves the right to take disciplinary action (potential sanctions detailed in Appendix 2) for alleged misconduct (detailed in Appendix 1) by learners who have interrupted their programme, taken a break in learning, or who have been temporarily suspended, or excluded, or are in some other way still members of the Multiverse community. If disciplinary action under this Code of Conduct has been commenced against a learner who then leaves Multiverse, the disciplinary process can continue in a bid to reach an outcome. To ensure fairness and clarity, disciplinary action against a learner who leaves Multiverse should ideally conclude within a reasonable timeframe, generally not exceeding three months from their departure date. However, this period may be extended in complex cases, such as those involving

criminal investigations or extensive evidence gathering, provided the learner is kept informed of the reasons for the delay.

2.4 Where allegations of misconduct are serious enough to raise concerns about a learner's fitness to practice as a professional in a regulated profession, Multiverse reserves the right to share details of proven findings of misconduct and any resulting sanctions with the relevant professional regulatory body, where such disclosure is required by statute or is reasonably necessary to protect the public interest. The learner will be notified in advance and given the opportunity to make written representations before disclosure is made, unless statute requires immediate reporting or disclosure is prohibited by applicable law.

2.5 This policy covers conduct carried out by learners, both online and in person, during:

- 2.5.1 Programme sessions and training.
- 2.5.2 Assessment and examination processes.
- 2.5.3 Multiverse events.
- 2.5.4 Online usage of Multiverse platforms.
- 2.5.5 Interactions with Multiverse learners and staff.
- 2.5.6 Any representation of Multiverse.

2.6 This policy does not cover Academic Misconduct. Academic Misconduct will be handled under the Assessment Policy for programmes where Multiverse awards academic credit at level 4 and above.

2.7 Details on how Multiverse interacts with the Employer during misconduct proceedings are set out in the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process (Sections 4.3.4 and 18.13).

3. Policy Statement

3.1 Any learner alleged to have breached Multiverse's Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) will be subject to the procedures detailed in the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process. These procedures detail the process for investigating allegations of misconduct, determining outcomes, and applying any necessary sanctions.

3.2 Multiverse upholds freedom of speech within the law, fully recognising its statutory duties under the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023. In the application of this Code, particularly regarding allegations of bullying or harassment, Multiverse will distinguish between the expression of lawful, even if controversial, views and behaviour that breaches the required standards of conduct. No disciplinary action will be taken against a learner for the lawful exercise of their freedom of speech within the

scope of the Act. Where a learner is enrolled on an OfS-registered programme (degree apprenticeship), the protections of the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 apply as a statutory obligation. For all other learners, Multiverse extends substantively equivalent protections as a matter of institutional policy.

3.3 Where a full disciplinary hearing is not deemed proportionate to the alleged breach, a Director's Decision may be issued. While this is not a formal finding of proven misconduct, it may require the learner to undergo awareness-raising or educational activity as a resolution.

3.4 Multiverse's Learner Code of Conduct (Non-Academic) will be applied consistently, transparently, and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be provided for learners with disabilities as defined by the Equality Act 2010, including but not limited to physical, neurodivergent, and mental health-related conditions.

3.5 Allegations of misconduct will be determined on the balance of probabilities, as detailed in the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process (Section 4.1.3).

4. Definitions

4.1 Academic Misconduct: Defined as any action or attempted action by a learner that gives or has the potential to give them or any other learner an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity and academic standards essential to examinations and research.

4.2 Adults at Risk: As defined in Section 42(1) of the Care Act 2014, identifying individuals who may require additional support or specific safeguarding pathways. This definition is used to ensure that the safety and well-being of vulnerable learners remain the paramount consideration in all decision-making.

4.3 Appendix 1: A non-exhaustive list of behaviours that could be considered as misconduct or serious misconduct under this code. This is a guide and not an exhaustive list.

4.4 Appendix 2: A non-exhaustive list of actions and sanctions that may be applied in cases of misconduct and serious misconduct under this code. This is a guide and not an exhaustive list.

4.5 Bullying: Defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour involving the misuse of power. Power does not always mean being in a position of authority but can include both personal strength and the power to coerce through fear or intimidation. Bullying can take the form of physical, verbal, non-verbal and online conduct. Actions may constitute bullying whether or not the person behaving in that

way intends to cause offence. This also applies to people who are not the subject of the bullying, but who may witness and be offended by it.

4.6 Coercive Behaviour: Defined as an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation, and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, frighten, isolate, or create dependence.

4.7 Controlling Behaviour: Defined as a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent.

4.8 Cyber Bullying: Defined as bullying with the use of digital technologies. It can take place on social media, messaging platforms, gaming platforms and mobile phones. It is repeated behaviour, aimed at scaring, angering or shaming those who are targeted.

4.9 Director's Decision: A discretionary outcome issued by a Senior Director or VP in cases where a full Discipline Committee hearing is not deemed proportionate to the alleged misconduct. This may involve mandatory educational or awareness-raising activities designed to correct behaviour without a formal finding of proven misconduct.

4.10 Discrimination: In line with the Equality Act 2010, discrimination is defined as treating a person less favourably than someone else because of certain protected characteristics.

4.11 Fitness to Practice: The suitability of a learner to engage in a regulated profession. If misconduct raises concerns regarding this suitability, Multiverse may be required to disclose details of the case to the relevant professional regulatory body.

4.12 Freedom of Speech: The right to express lawful views and opinions within the law. Multiverse distinguishes between the expression of controversial or unpopular views and behaviour that constitutes a breach of the Code, such as bullying, harassment, or unlawful discrimination. In line with the Prevent Policy, this right does not extend to speech or conduct that is unlawful, including but not limited to the incitement of violence, terrorism offences under the Terrorism Act 2006, or the dissemination of materials that risk the radicalisation of members of the Multiverse Community.

4.13 Harassment: Defined as unwanted behaviour or conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment, or causing a person distress or alarm. Harassment may consist of persistent behaviour, although one single act may be considered sufficiently serious to warrant disciplinary action. Actions may be harassment whether or not the person behaving in that way intends to cause offence. Actions may also be considered harassment if they are conducted online. These behaviours or conduct might be because of, or connected to, one or more of the

protected characteristics. We would also consider harassment to include any incidents of physical violence towards another person(s) on the basis of a protected characteristic.

4.14 Impact Statement: A written account submitted by a Reporting Party that describes the physical, emotional, or educational impact the alleged misconduct has had on them. This statement is used specifically during the mitigation and sanctioning phase to help the Discipline Committee determine a proportionate outcome.

4.15 Inappropriate: Actions, words, or behaviours that are unsuited to the Multiverse apprenticeship setting, violating professional, social, or ethical standards. This includes actions that are offensive, humiliating, disruptive, or harmful, such as bullying, harassment, sexual advances, or abusive language.

4.16 Informal Resolution: Defined as the process for addressing and resolving disputes, complaints, or conflicts outside of formal investigative or disciplinary procedures. The primary goal is to find a mutually acceptable solution or understanding between the parties involved.

4.17 Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process: Defined as the process and associated procedures undertaken to identify and investigate allegations of non-academic misconduct, applying appropriate sanctions when those allegations are upheld. This procedural document may also be referred to as the 'disciplinary process.'

4.18 Misconduct: Defined as an act or failure to act by a learner which is inappropriate and which negatively affects, could negatively affect, or has negatively affected Multiverse (including its property and/or reputation) and/or any member of the Multiverse community.

4.19 Multiverse Community: Defined as being all Multiverse learners, all staff (with any form of contract to undertake work at or for Multiverse), and visitors to Multiverse premises or online events.

4.20 No Contact Order: Defined as a formal notice or agreement put in place by Multiverse to restrict two or more learners from directly or indirectly contacting or communicating with each other. This is typically used as a risk management tool to ensure safety and prevent further problematic interactions.

4.21 Precautionary Measures: Temporary actions or restrictions put in place during an investigation to protect individuals, prevent further misconduct, or ensure a fair process. These are not sanctions or an inference of misconduct and may include No Contact Orders, temporary suspensions, or restricted access to platforms.

4.22 Relationship abuse: (Also known as Domestic Abuse or Domestic Violence) is defined as any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, and/or violence between those aged 16 or over, who are, or have been, in a personal relationship with the individual(s) abusing them, regardless of gender or sexuality.

4.23 Reporting Party: Defined as the person(s) who has made an allegation of, or raised a concern about possible misconduct. The Reporting Party can be an individual inside or outside of the Multiverse Community.

4.24 Responding Party: Defined as the learner(s) about whom an allegation of misconduct has been made.

4.25 Serious Misconduct: Defined as misconduct (as defined above) where the negative impact is, could have been, or could be serious or significant. This may include sustained or repeated misconduct.

4.26 Sexual Misconduct: Covers a broad range of inappropriate, unwanted, or attempted unwanted, behaviours of a sexual nature. It covers all forms of sexual violence, including penetration without consent, sexual assault, sexual abuse (including online and image-based abuse), non-consensual sexual touching, sexual harassment (unwanted behaviour of a sexual nature which violates your dignity; makes you feel intimidated, degraded or humiliated or creates a hostile or offensive environment), stalking, abusive or degrading remarks of a sexual nature, and a vast range of other behaviours.

4.27 Stalking: Defined as a specific type of harassment involving a pattern of unwanted, fixated, or obsessive behaviour that is intrusive and causes fear or distress, occurring both online and in person.

5. Associated Policies at Multiverse

- Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process
- Community Guidelines
- Support Hub Users Code of Conduct
- Devices and Acceptable Use Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Attendance Absence and Withdrawal Policy
- Assessment Policy for Advanced Programmes
- Safeguarding Policy

- Prevent Policy

6. Data Protection

Personal data processed in connection with this Code will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018, and Multiverse's Privacy Notice. Disciplinary records will be retained per Multiverse's Data Retention Policy.

Appendix 1 - Examples of Misconduct

This is not intended to be an exhaustive list of misconduct and Multiverse is able to take action under this code for any type of misconduct.

It is recognised that these examples might fall into the category of either misconduct or serious misconduct, depending on the circumstances of the allegation and the impact on others. The categorisation of the examples provided below is intended to be indicative rather than prescriptive. There will be occasions where an investigation highlights that the misconduct is more, or less, serious than first assessed and it should be escalated or de-escalated as appropriate.

No.	Example and definition of misconduct/ serious misconduct	Misconduct	Serious Misconduct
1	Disruption to, or improper interference with the learning, coaching, administrative, social or other activities of Multiverse.	X	
2	Disruption to, or obstruction of/improper interference with, the functions, duties or activities of any member of the Multiverse Community.	X	
3	A breach of Multiverse regulations or policies e.g. the 'Community Guidelines.'	X	
4	Anti-social conduct, including causing a public nuisance by drunkenness or disorderly conduct.	X	
5	Unauthorised use of, theft of, or minor damage to, Multiverse property.	X	
6	Failure to leave any part of Multiverse premises when reasonably required to do so.	X	
7	Offences against the criminal law, where these offences involve other learners directly, thereby compromising their safety or the Multiverse Community, or directly affects Multiverse's interests, such as its reputation, operations, or financial well-being.	X	X
8	Breach of the Devices and Acceptable Use Policy or Online Safety Policy can range from minor to serious, primarily distinguished by the nature of the content accessed or activity performed, the intent, the impact on the Multiverse Community, and the potential legal ramifications. A minor instance typically involves low-risk, unintentional, or isolated	X	X

	deviations from the policy with minimal negative impact. A serious instance, conversely, involves deliberate, high-risk activities that compromise security, expose Multiverse to legal or reputational harm, or create an unsafe environment.		
9	Encouraging or assisting any person to commit misconduct against this code or the Assessment Policy and procedures can range from minor to serious, distinguished by the intent, the impact of the encouraged/assisted misconduct, and the degree of involvement of the encourager/assistant.	X	X
10	Complaints demonstrated to have been fabricated with deliberate intent to cause harm. An unsubstantiated complaint made in good faith is not malicious. No learner will face proceedings under this provision for reporting in good faith.		X
11	A serious or persistent breach of any Multiverse policies, which refers to actions that either significantly violate a single policy (e.g., fraud, discrimination) or involve repeated, uncorrected violations of any policies, even if individually minor (e.g., consistent lateness, misuse of company property).		X
12	Failure to comply with a previously imposed warning (either verbally or in writing), Precautionary Measures or sanctions imposed following the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process.		X
13	Falsification or serious misuse of Multiverse records, including degree or qualification certificates.		X
14	False pretences or impersonation of others, within or outside Multiverse, including but not limited to in connection with academic attainments or financial awards.		X
15	Significant breach of health and safety requirements, endangering the wellbeing of the Multiverse community (including but not exclusive to inappropriately setting off or tampering fire or other safety equipment in a Multiverse building)		X
16	The use of physical violence, force, or power, either threatened or actual, against another person, group or community.		X

17	Harassment		X
18	Discrimination		X
19	Sexual Misconduct		X
20	Stalking		X
21	Relationship Abuse		X
22	Controlling Behaviour		X
23	Coercive Behaviour		X
24	Bullying		X
25	Cyber Bullying		X

Appendix 2 - Possible Sanctions Following the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process

The following is a list of actions and sanctions that may be applied in cases of misconduct or serious misconduct, following the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process.

The specific sanction to be applied will be determined on an individual basis for each case, based on the circumstances and seriousness of the misconduct, along with any relevant mitigating/ aggravating factors.

Multiverse may deem it appropriate to employ informal resolutions, such as mediation, coaching, guidance, a verbal warning, education and training, instead of or alongside sanctions.

In cases where misconduct is proven, Multiverse considers the impact of the behaviour on the affected individuals. As part of this, and as outlined in the Learner Non-Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Process, the Reporting Party is entitled to submit a statement describing the impact of the misconduct, which the Discipline Committee will consider alongside any mitigating factors provided by the Responding Party when determining an appropriate sanction.

All sanctions must be proportionate to the severity of the proven misconduct. More severe sanctions will only be applied where the seriousness or pattern of misconduct makes a lesser sanction insufficient.

Below is a list of all possible sanctions following a disciplinary process:

- Written reflection (if appropriate)
- Formal Written Warning
- The requirement to make good the cost in whole or in part of any damage caused and/or repay/make good any financial loss to Multiverse
- No Contact Order
- A requirement to undertake suitable training or awareness programmes
- A requirement to undertake an informal resolution
- Formal Performance Improvement Plan
- Loss of progression (for learners on advanced programmes)
- Partial Suspension, such as a ban from the Multiverse premises or platform
- Suspended permanent or temporary withdrawal from Multiverse
- Limitation of references provided by Multiverse (e.g. provision of a factual reference only)
- Temporary withdrawal from Multiverse
- Permanent withdrawal from Multiverse
- Exclusion from future programme participation at Multiverse