



## Quality Assurance Handbook PART A1

### **POLICY No.5: Apprentice Code of Conduct Policy**

#### 5. Purpose of Policy

Policy No.5 aims to ensure apprentices and employers know what they can expect from an apprentice while active on a programme in terms of an agreed set of reasonable and expected behaviours and performance during all on and off-the-job programme elements.

##### 5.1 Policy Scope

This policy aims to set out and outline measures that can maintain acceptable standards of behaviour within the apprentice community, encourage individuals to accept their obligations and maintain FIT's good standing with the collective of approved and participating employers. This policy also sets out expectations that will help ensure a collegial and positive environment that contributes to best practice in a vibrant and diverse community of learning, facilitating the successful completion of a Tech Apprenticeship. FIT does not intend this to be an exhaustive document or with onerous provisions but to compliment the broader *Solas Code of Practice for Employers and Apprentices* and with due regard to an apprentice also being an employee of an Approved Employer while active on the programme.

##### 5.2 Overarching Considerations

FIT appreciates that positive interactions and the timely progress of an apprentice on their learning journey provide employer confidence in the individual apprentice and the wider initiative more generally. A negative experience or series of negative behaviours in the off-the-job element of the programmes or workplace can damage the employer's intent to participate in the programme in the future. Consequently, through rigorous monitoring of apprentices' progress on Tech Apprenticeship programmes, FIT, where possible, attempts to ensure early identification of any issue presented.

Apprentices have responsibilities to fulfil on an ongoing basis throughout the programme. These responsibilities are critical regarding interactions with an apprentice's respective employer while

insitu in the workplace and separately with fellow apprentices, tutors and delivering partner ETBs while in off-the-job study. Most importantly, however, apprentices have responsibilities to themselves. At the programme outset, each apprentice signs up to the *FIT Apprentice Charter and Participation Agreement* provisions. This document embeds a Charter, which sets out a series of clear expectations for those active and participating in a programme.

### 5.3 Policy Statement

FIT expects each active apprentice, per the conditions of the Apprentice Charter and Participation Agreement, to be responsible for their own learning throughout their time on a programme that incorporates a mix of classroom-based training and Industry-based learning and assessment. Apprentices must conduct themselves appropriately and respectfully throughout their interactions with and on behalf of FIT and should not engage in any activity that may negatively impact the name of FIT, an Education and Training Board, their sponsoring employer, and its staff or any learners. All outgoing apprentice communications noting FIT or any of its stakeholders must be respectfully based on dignity, equality, and inclusion.

Apprentices must be committed to an appropriate manner regarding general behaviour, satisfy the programme requirements and regulations, and maintain active in-class face-to-face sessions or attend virtually any live webinar as required. Importantly, apprentices must also ensure at all times positive conduct, responsible use of aligned social media, and respect for premises, property, and staff associated with all apprenticeship ecosystem stakeholders. Any act or omission that adversely affects the rights of any other member of the apprentice community, including partners or external stakeholders, or that disrupts the conduct of any apprenticeship activity will be considered a breach of the Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary proceedings. In summary,<sup>1</sup> apprentices must:

- Attend and actively participate in each module/element of the programme,
- Meet the requirement for full attendance and punctuality,
- Attend all classes face-to-face or virtually on time where applicable,
- Behave in the workplace with due regard to all employer conduct policies,
- Always behave respectfully, considering the needs of others,
- Not engage in any discriminatory or disrespectful language to any stakeholder,
- Ensure conformance with all Health and Safety requirements of FIT and delivering partners',
- Where possible, keep the physical learning environment clean (classroom & lab),
- Complete all forms and other paperwork required by FIT and delivering partners',
- Treat the property of all stakeholders with due care and respect,

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<sup>1</sup> Full details noted in the FIT Apprentice Charter and Participation Agreement

- Complete and satisfy all Apprentice Programme content, assessments, assignments, and work practice.

#### 5.4 Breach of the Code of Conduct



During the lifetime of the Tech Apprenticeship programmes, only in rare instances has it been necessary for FIT, a Delivering Partner ETB, or an employer to instigate any form of disciplinary proceedings. Participation in a Tech Apprenticeship ensures access to timely support that facilitates the completion

of a Tech Apprenticeship programme. In instances where an apprentice does not fairly engage in accepting appropriate apprenticeship support and their level of performance does not improve, disciplinary proceedings may commence in consultation with stakeholders. However, instigating such proceedings is seen as a last resort.

##### 5.4.1 Issues Relating to Performance in the Workplace

Approved employers will manage an apprentice issue or series of apprentice issues in the workplace through their Human Resource policies consistent with Irish employment rights legislation. Employers will notify FIT of any outcome likely to impact an apprentice's capacity to remain in employment or where a breach of the Code of Practice may have occurred.

##### 5.4.2 Issues Relating to Performance in Off-the-Job (ETB/College Based Study)

Approved delivering partner ETBs will manage an apprentice issue or series of apprentice issues through their respective disciplinary policies. The ETB will notify the registry Team/Registrar of any outcome that is likely to impact an apprentice's capacity to remain in off-the-job training or where a breach of the Code of Practice may have occurred.

##### 5.4.3 Issues Relating to General Programme Progression/Disengagement

During programme participation, it is likely that when an issue of apprentice engagement occurs, this may impact progression through both the on and off-the-job elements of the programme. In cases where an apprentice does not satisfactorily rectify a matter of not making the required progress, i.e., being up to date with the various on and off-the-job assessments, FIT reserves the right to impose a caution, reprimand, or seek an academic termination from the programme at the next available sitting of the Examination Board. Apprentices are advised that should they be academically withdrawn; this will likely jeopardise their standing and employment status with their employer. In cases where a severe disciplinary item emerges during off-the-job programme elements, this will be managed/processed through a sitting of the Disciplinary Committee, comprising the FIT Registrar (Chairperson), an ETB and an employer representative. An apprentice may appeal the outcome of this process to the FIT Director of Academic Affairs.

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