

Supplier Code of Conduct for Quebec Universities

Preamble

This Common Code of Conduct (hereinafter referred to as “Code of Conduct”) was jointly developed by several Quebec universities to support their sustainable development goals, the goals of the Quebec government, and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals.

Objectives

With this Code of Conduct, Quebec universities are aiming to communicate their expectations in terms of social, economic and environmental responsibility in their business relationships with suppliers. For suppliers, this involves managing risks and positively impacting the development of communities and ecosystems throughout the supply chains, while striving for continuous improvement.

Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to all suppliers¹ to Quebec universities that use this Code of Conduct, whatever their sphere of activity. Its contents and objectives should also be communicated to their subcontractors. Suppliers to Quebec universities are encouraged to work closely with their own suppliers and subcontractors to achieve the aims of this Code of Conduct. Furthermore, suppliers should not limit themselves to the principles and expectations set forth in this Code of Conduct, which represent a minimum threshold of engagement that suppliers may, or must, go beyond according to their contractual agreements and issues relating to their sphere of activity.

Mandate

Quebec universities that use this Code of Conduct value transparency and continuous improvement. They require their suppliers to take the necessary measures (environmental management systems, third-party certifications, policies, strategies, etc.) to comply with this Code of Conduct. Suppliers are encouraged to report, and make public if they wish, their efforts to improve the triple (social, economic and environmental) bottom line of their operations, products, services and supply chain. However, they may neither promote nor publicize their compliance with this Code of Conduct.

¹The term “supplier” as used in this document includes the terms “suppliers,” “service providers” and “contractors” under the Act respecting contracts by public bodies (RSQ c. C-65.1) and its regulations.

1. Transparency and commercial ethics

Quebec universities that use this Code of Conduct expect their suppliers to demonstrate transparency and honesty in all their business relationships, including relationships with their own suppliers and subcontractors. The following principles should apply.

1.1 Regulatory Compliance

Suppliers must, at the very least, comply with the regulatory obligations that apply to all their activities, whether they are carried out here, elsewhere in Canada, or abroad. This includes demonstrating integrity and transparency in their commercial practices, notably by respecting legislation, regulations, and local, regional, national and international codes governing the release of information on their commercial activities, their structure, and their financial situation.

In the event that suppliers perform activities in places where legislation and regulations diverge from international conventions, Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct expect their suppliers to apply the most ambitious principles.

1.2 Ethical principles

Suppliers must not offer or give, directly or indirectly, any benefits intended to influence the conduct of an employee, professor, student or executive in any manner that contravenes McGill University's policies. This includes gifts, privileges, hospitality, travel and entertainment, as well as all other similar benefits, no matter to whom they are given or offered.

1.3 Healthy Competition

Quebec universities that use this Code of Conduct take all necessary measures to ensure plurality and healthy competition among their suppliers. Furthermore, they expect their suppliers to do the same while carrying out their own procurement activities. No privileged information (regarding prices, bidding strategies, terms and conditions, technologies and/or specifications) is to be shared between bidders in such a way as to adversely impact or restrict competition. Quebec universities that use this Code of Conduct collaborate with the appropriate authorities when they suspect any collusion.

1.4 Intellectual Property Rights and Confidentiality

In their activities with Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct, suppliers may not use proprietary information, patented technology or copyrighted software, documentation, or other materials without obtaining authorization from their owner. Suppliers must safeguard confidential information and implement and consistently apply effective and enforceable controls in such a way that the universities are able to verify that the suppliers' contractual obligations are fully met.

2. Social Principles

Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct seek to uphold human rights and labour rights, as defined under Quebec and Canadian law and by the relevant international organizations. They expect their suppliers and subcontractors to do the same throughout their supply chain. The contents of the following conventions and declarations are to be respected:

2.1 Human rights and the rights of Indigenous peoples

Respect for the principles set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), including:

- a) The right to a fair salary, sufficient to cover the family's basic needs (Art. 25 of the UDHR);
- b) The right of Indigenous peoples, without discrimination, to improve their economic and social conditions (Art. 21 of the UNDRIP).

2.2 Labour rights

Respect of the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and 11 fundamental instruments of the International Labour Organization (ILO):

- a) Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)
- b) Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- c) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) (and its 2014 Protocol)
- d) Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105)
- e) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138)
- f) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- g) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100)
- h) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111)
- i) Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155)
- j) Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187)

2.3 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct are committed to equity, diversity and inclusion in all of their activities. They encourage their suppliers to adhere to the same principles in the management of their human resources, including the recruitment and promotion of staff and managers. Furthermore, the universities expect suppliers to make genuine efforts to include minority groups overall.

3. Environmental Principles

The biosphere's capacity to sustain human activity is limited. Therefore, the universities seek to limit their consumption of natural resources and energy, and prioritize suppliers who are respectful of the environment and respect the following principles:

3.1 Environmental management and life cycles

Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct expect their suppliers to reduce the negative environmental impacts of their operations, products and services, and those of their own supply chain, over their full life cycle. Suppliers should endorse the precautionary principle throughout their decision-making, and seek to apply principles similar to the 3R hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, recovery of materials and recovery of energy) in relation to the management of their energy, water, and material flows.

3.2 Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation

Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct expect their suppliers to quantify, manage and reduce, to the extent possible, greenhouse gas emissions generated throughout the lifecycle of their operations, products and services. Suppliers should favour options that reduce climate-related impacts and support the universities' carbon neutrality goals.

3.3 Biodiversity

Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct expect their suppliers to quantify, manage and reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity throughout their supply chain. To the extent possible, suppliers should undertake regenerative activities that aim to restore or improve ecosystems and biodiversity where those may be affected by their operations, products or services.

4. Animal welfare

Suppliers whose operations or supply chains involve animals must follow best practices in supporting animal welfare and conduct their activities in respect of the internationally recognized Five Freedoms for animals:

- a) Freedom from hunger and thirst
- b) Freedom from discomfort
- c) Freedom from pain, injury or disease
- d) Freedom to express normal behaviour
- e) Freedom from fear and distress

Where local animal welfare laws and regulations differ from the Five Freedoms, the stricter requirements shall prevail and must be respected by suppliers to Quebec universities using this Code of Conduct, and their subcontractors.