Community Values and Learning Culture

The mission of Harvard Business School is to educate leaders who make a difference in the world. Achieving this mission starts with creating an environment of trust and mutual respect, free expression and inquiry, and a commitment to truth, excellence, and lifelong learning. We view diversity as a source of strength that contributes to a dynamic, creative learning and work environment. Bringing people together from all political, religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds, in the spirit of academic freedom, creates an environment for a full exchange of ideas.

The HBS learning model is special in many ways. It is designed to enable participants and faculty to teach and learn from one another through a process of active participation. This participation in shared learning comprises a powerful foundation for adult learning. Our model requires everyone to engage with the process, and to participate in all its elements: individual preparation of all materials, small-group discussions to explore and expand on this initial work, full engagement in class, and post-class reflection.

The following Community Values are accepted by all members of the HBS community including Executive Education program participants, MBA and Doctoral students, faculty, staff, and alumni. These values are defined more fully in our Community Values and Learning Culture Defined.

- Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
- Honesty and integrity in dealing with all members of the community
- Accountability for personal behavior

HBS can and should be a living model of these values. To this end, community members have a personal responsibility to integrate these values into every aspect of their experience and during all program engagement (inclusive of any optional online social groups). Through our personal commitment to these values, we can create an environment in which all can achieve their full potential. During the program, you may receive feedback regarding your adherence to these values from faculty, staff or fellow participants.
Community Values and Learning Culture Defined

RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS, DIFFERENCES, AND DIGNITY OF OTHERS

If each of us makes an honest effort to ensure that we treat others with professional respect and dignity, all of us will enjoy the maximum possible benefit from working and learning together.

- All members of the community are entitled to respect. All individuals are expected, in their interactions with others, to demonstrate respect for each person’s worth, dignity, and capacity to contribute.
- Discrimination can discourage a participant from active contribution both in the class and during other program activities. It is important to be attentive to interactions with others and be diligent in recognizing discriminatory behavior, and in speaking up when it is observed.

HONESTY AND INTEGRITY IN DEALING WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY

We aim to foster an environment where individuals can have open discussion, reflect on their thinking, and learn from one another. This can only happen when we create an environment in which we adhere to moral and ethical principles.

- During the program you may engage in exercises where you are asked to share personal and professional information to deepen your learning experience. When confidential information is shared, we expect you will not share it with anyone not present in that discussion within or outside of the program.
- In the HBS classroom, it is common practice that participants address each other and our faculty and staff by their first or given names; this is not intended to be disrespectful or discourteous.

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERSONAL BEHAVIOR

Because inappropriate conduct can arise from a lack of understanding of community norms, we offer general guidelines to participants to clarify the School’s standards and your obligations to meet them.

- The faculty, staff, and fellow participants you will work with are professionals, and your relationship with them should be professional at all times.
- Staff and faculty often socialize with participants in the context of program activities. This kind of friendly social interaction should not be interpreted as an invitation, or signal of availability for, a more personal relationship.
- All members of the Harvard Business School community are entitled to work in an environment that is free from threat, harassment, abuse, or discrimination. Disrespectful behavior, sexual harassment, or racial/ethnic slurs should be reported to the Program Director immediately, as this behavior will not be tolerated.
- The HBS Learning Model (which includes the case method, case preparation, the Executive Education classroom environment, and group learning) depends upon each participant being an active contributor in all aspects of learning. To the extent that a participant is absent from class and/or scheduled group meetings, his/her learning suffers as does the learning of other colleagues. Therefore, unexcused absences, lack of preparation, or inconsistent participation could result in program dismissal.
- If you are facing challenges with fully engaging in the program due to a disability or language barrier, please speak, confidentially, with your program director to determine if an accommodation would be appropriate.
HBS Executive Education Sample Violations

As members of the Harvard Business School community, Executive Education participants are responsible for upholding the School’s Community Values of honesty, integrity, respect for others, and personal accountability. Similarly, in coming to HBS, students make a commitment to participate in, foster, and uphold the School’s Learning Model, which relies on a process of active participation and shared learning. Participants are expected to conduct themselves professionally in all they do, whether in academic or social settings. Failure to do so can result in dismissal from the program. Below are sample violations of Community Values and HBS policies:

Detracting from the Learning Process
- Disruptive classroom and/or discussion group behaviors
- Absence from class
- Being late to class
- Being unprepared for group discussions and/or class
- Using mobile devices/technology in unpermitted or non-class-enhancing ways
- Not participating in living-group study sessions and class exercises

Inappropriate Behavior / Social Activity
- Disrespecting other members of the HBS community (e.g., staff, fellow participants, students)
- Excessive alcohol use
- Destruction of HBS property
- Smoking indoors
- Loud/disruptive gatherings
- Lack of adherence to HBS policies (listed on the program website)

Harassment / Violence
(Title IX, a federal civil rights law prohibiting gender discrimination may apply. Visit the Harvard website at http://odr.harvard.edu/home for more information on Harvard’s position on gender-based discrimination)
- Inappropriate behavior or comments (verbal or written) based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity
- Unwanted touching; sexual threats or acts of violence
- Lewd or sexually suggestive comments, jokes, innuendoes, or gestures
- Sexual assault

Misrepresentation / Failure to Disclose
- Misrepresenting your identity (e.g., when sending an email)
- Misrepresenting your personal record (e.g., application, employment, academic, criminal) to HBS officials or others

Financial & Other Policies
- Non-payment of Harvard bills
- Unauthorized use of HBS or Harvard name or resources

Unlawful Activity
- Civil or criminal offenses

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Please note: This document includes sample violations and is therefore not a comprehensive list.