



02.310 ETHICS POLICY

Authority: Chancellor

History: Revised February 7, 2007; Reformatted and Revised July 11, 2005; April 18, 2001; January 11, 2001; supersedes former MSC 1.00 policy and MSC 1.50 policy

Related Policies: Harassment Prevention Policy; Improper Relationships between Students and Employees Policy; Responsible Use of Electronic Resources Policy; Misuse of State Property Policy; Research Misconduct Policy; Conflict of Interest Policy

Responsible Office: Chancellor

I. Purpose

The University of North Carolina Wilmington hereby adopts this ethics statement in the belief that a shared statement of ethical values will strengthen the overall quality of the university community.

II. Policy

- A. General Policy - The university is committed to maintaining the highest professional standards in all of its academic and administrative operations; promoting ethical practices among its administrators, faculty, staff, and students; and ensuring a level of accountability appropriate for a public institution. Individuals are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws including, but not limited to, those pertaining to equal opportunity, nondiscrimination, harassment, ethics and lobbying.
- B. Intellectual Honesty - Personal interactions among university community members should be characterized by truthfulness, openness to new ideas, civility, and consideration for the rights of others. Each member of the university should respect the right of others to freedom of thought, opinion, speech, and association.
- C. Personal Conduct - Individuals shall present information accurately, comply with policies to the best of their ability, cooperate in university investigations, and use the institution's resources appropriately. Each employee is responsible for avoiding real or apparent conflicts of interest, ensuring that authority is exercised within a framework of accountability; and ensuring that information is managed in accordance with relevant public record and privacy statutes. Employees must ensure that the university's interests are foremost in all official decision making and shall remove themselves from decision making roles which involve the

employee in any personal capacity or which involve friends or family members.

- D. **Shared Responsibility** - The achievement and continuation of an ethical educational and administrative environment is a shared responsibility among administrators, faculty, staff, and students. Consultation with appropriate university departments or officials will be treated as confidential to the extent allowed by law. Employees may exercise a right of appeal through the chain of command up to and including their division vice chancellor or the senior officer responsible for the academic or administrative function at issue. Individuals shall be free from retaliation for voicing concerns, filing grievances, and for participating in university investigations.
- E. **Related Policies** - A number of university policies establish ethical guidelines or standards for appropriate professional conduct for particular educational or administrative functions. These policies include, but are not limited to, responsible use of electronic resources, the harassment prevention policy, misuse of state property policy, the policy on academic freedom and tenure, policy on freedom of expression, academic honor code, EEO/AA policy, statement on diversity in the university community, policy on research misconduct, policy on protection of human subjects, and conflict of interest policy. By way of example, the following are brief summaries of the principles embodied in three key areas.
1. **Electronic Resources Ethics** - Computing resources are available for processing university business and communications. Access to and use of computing technology places a responsibility on each employee to conduct computing business in the same ethical manner that is required of all other official conduct with added concerns for: 1) legal use of licensed software; 2) protection of confidential information; 3) authorized use of hardware/software/periphery devices; 4) authorized access to and valid use of data; 5) asset management; 6) protecting private information such as social security numbers; and 7) respect for and safeguarding of security passwords, user identity, and system access.
 2. **Research Ethics** - Research shall be characterized by the highest standards of integrity and ethical behavior. Every effort shall be made to ensure that all research data or results of projects or programs sponsored by, or under the administrative supervision of, the university are represented completely and accurately. An employee who is designated as the principal investigator on an awarded contract or grant is prohibited from profiting personally in connection with its activities. Additionally, all research involving

human subjects must be approved by the Institutional Review Board, and all research involving the use of animals must be approved by the Institution's Animal Care and Use Committee.

3. Business Ethics – Employees may have no financial interest in the outcome of any business dealings in which they have authority to act on behalf of the university. Employees may not utilize the influence of his/her position within the university to profit personally from any contract or other business dealings of the university. Employees may not sign university contracts for which they have not received written delegated signature authority.

III. Reporting Concerns and Complaints

Individuals who have concerns about the conduct of a particular individual or the propriety of a given situation should: 1) consult with the director of the office responsible for the educational or administrative function at issue; or 2) notify their department chair, dean, director, or an administrator in their supervisory chain at a level sufficient to allow objectivity in evaluating the subject of concern. Concerns about ethical practices may also be reported anonymously to the State Auditor's Fraud and Abuse Hotline by calling 1-800-730-8477 or filing an anonymous complaint online at <http://www.ncauditor.net/WebProject/>. The vice chancellor or senior officer responsible for the academic or administrative function at issue shall respond to university community members who express concerns about ethical practices to the extent allowed by law and shall inform the chancellor regarding the response.

IV. Resources and Assistance

Questions concerning this policy may be addressed to the Provost, the Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, the Vice Chancellor for Information Technology Systems Division, the Director of Human Resources, the Internal Auditor, or the General Counsel. These officers are prepared to explain what the ethical conduct standards mean and what options for resolution are available.

V. Violations

Any member of the university community found in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, including probation and suspension for students and including a reprimand, suspension without pay, and dismissal for employees depending on the nature and severity of the violation.