Procedure: Personnel Code of Conduct

Authority for procedure granted by UWG PL #4001, Human Resources Administrative Practice and Services.

A. Purpose

The Code of Conduct (Code) applies to all individuals within the University of West Georgia (UWG) Community.

This Code signifies our commitment to uphold ethical, professional, and legal standards, guiding our daily decisions and actions. We hold ourselves accountable as individuals and as a community to adhere to these standards and comply with all relevant laws, regulations, and policies. The Code aligns with the Board of Regents (BOR) Policy Manual, Sections 6.8 Disruptive Behavior, 8.2.18 Personnel Conduct and Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual (HRAP), Disruptive Behavior.

B. Core Values

All individuals within the University Community are required to follow the University System of Georgia’s (USG’s) established Statement of Core Values, encompassing Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect, as well as the Code of Conduct (refer to BOR Policy Manual, Sections 8.2.18.1.2 and 8.2.18.1.4). These core values and the accompanying Code are oriented towards nurturing, upholding, and ensuring trust within the University Community. This recognizes that each member bears the responsibility of maintaining the highest levels of competence and moral character.

The Code aids University Community members in integrating the fundamental core values in their daily decisions and choices.

C. Principles

1. Ethical Considerations. University Community members shall comply with applicable laws, USG policies, and UWG policies while making decisions and demonstrating responsible behavior. They shall act with integrity, honesty, and fairness at all times.

The standards of conduct outlined in this procedure guide decision-making and memorialize the institution’s commitment to responsible behavior.

UWG employees who are members of occupations or professions having established standards of conduct shall, in addition to any obligations and responsibilities imposed by these procedures, be bound by the standards of conduct applicable to such occupations or professions.

In practicing and modeling ethical conduct, University Community members are expected to:
● Act according to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct;
● Be personally accountable for individual actions;
● Conscientiously fulfill obligations towards students, advisees, and colleagues in performing duties as part of the University Community; and
● Communicate ethical standards of conduct through instruction and example.
2. **Fairness and Respect.** University Community members shall treat others respectfully, fairly, and with civility, promoting diversity and tolerance while avoiding harassment, discrimination, threats, or violence.

3. **Responsible Management.** Supervisors, instructors, and advisors shall ensure proper training, policy compliance, impartial performance reviews, and foster a healthy and innovative atmosphere.

4. **Resource Stewardship.** University Community members shall use UWG resources responsibly, prevent waste, and follow sound financial practices. Members are expected to:
   - Use University property, equipment, finances, materials, electronics and other resources for legitimate University purposes;
   - Promote efficient operations;
   - Protect and safeguard University assets, reporting any loss, damage, or theft promptly to the appropriate authority.

5. **Compliance Culture.** University Community members shall learn and follow all laws, regulations, and policies applicable to University activities, report suspected violations, and are prohibited from retaliating against whistleblowers.

6. **Academic Freedom and Responsibilities.** Academic freedom is essential to achieving the University’s mission. University Community members shall promote academic freedom, respect differing views, and uphold scholarly competence. (See BOR Policy Manual 6.5 and UWG PL #1006 Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom)

7. **Ethical Teaching and Research.** University researchers shall conduct research with integrity, protect human subjects and animals, and transmit research findings faithfully. University Community members are expected to:
   - Learn, follow, and demonstrate accountability for meeting the requirements of sponsors, regulatory bodies, and other applicable entities;
   - Fairly assign authorship credit based on an appropriate array of significant intellectual contributions, including conception, design, and performance; analysis and interpretation; and manuscript preparation and critical editing for intellectual content.

8. **Communication and Representation.** When representing UWG, University Community members shall communicate honestly, accurately, and professionally. University Community members are expected to use appropriate communication channels for official University matters, ensuring that information is disseminated in a timely and efficient manner.

9. **Conflicts of Interest and Commitment.** University Community members shall avoid conflicts of interest and/or commitment, disclose potential conflicts, and ensure impartial decision-making. University Community members are expected to:
   - Refrain from using their position for personal gain or engaging in activities that may compromise their objectivity or impartiality
   - Ensure personal relationships do not interfere with objective judgment in decisions affecting University employment or the academic progress of a community member
   - Refuse to accept a gift or thing of value (directly or indirectly) that will influence their performance or failure to perform any official action

   *See UWG PL 4001 Associated Procedure, Conflict of Interest and Commitment*

10. **Confidential Information.** University Community members shall maintain confidentiality of information, follow data security measures, and abide by public access and privacy laws. Expectations are to:
    - Learn and follow laws and University policies and agreements regarding access, use, protection, disclosure, retention, and disposal of public, private, and confidential information;
- Follow document preservation and retention guidelines; and
- Maintain data security using electronic and physical safeguards.

11. **Workplace Health and Safety.** University Community members shall promote a safe and secure environment, report suspicious activities or incidents, and protect the environment by carefully handling hazardous waste and other potentially harmful agents. University Community members are expected to:
   - Follow safe workplace practices, including participating in applicable education sessions, using appropriate personal safety equipment, and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations;
   - Maintain security, including securing University assets and facilities.

D. **Interpretation and Sources**

The Core Values outlined in this procedure do not cover every possible situation or ethical dilemma that members of the USG community may encounter. In such cases, members are expected to use their good judgment, considering relevant policies, laws, and regulations set forth by the BOR and UWG.

An individual should contact their supervisor or other competent authorities such as the offices of Legal Affairs, Internal Audit, or Human Resources, for any specific inquiries related to personnel Code of Conduct.

E. **Delegation of Authority**

The University President or delegate shall maintain administrative policies supporting this Code and promulgate the Code and policies through education, explanation, and evaluation.

The University reserves the right to modify or amend this Code as deemed necessary and will communicate any changes to employees in a timely manner.

F. **Reporting Violations**

Code violations or any suspected misconduct shall be reported to the appropriate authority (i.e., supervisor, Office of Human Resources, or Office of Legal Affairs). Employees shall cooperate fully in any investigation conducted by the University regarding a reported violation or misconduct. The University shall ensure that employees who report violations or participate in good faith in an investigation are protected from retaliation.

G. **Compliance**

Violation of the Personnel Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment. By adhering to this Code, University Community members contribute to a positive and principled workplace environment and uphold the institution's policies, procedures, values, and reputation.

Employees are expressly prohibited from engaging in any form of prohibited conduct in all interactions with each other, whether on or off campus. Visitors to campus shall not engage in prohibited conduct, and may be barred from campus. Employees who engage in prohibited conduct will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including expulsion or dismissal. Nothing in this procedure shall be interpreted to interfere with any person’s right to free speech as provided by the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America.
Definitions

Core Values – Integrity, Excellence, Accountability, and Respect – that form and guide the daily work of the organization.

- **Integrity** – We will be honest, fair, impartial, and unbiased in our dealings both with and on behalf of the USG.
- **Excellence** – We will perform our duties to foster a culture of excellence and high quality in everything we do.
- **Accountability** – We firmly believe that education in the form of scholarship, research, teaching, service, and developing others is a public trust. We will live up to this trust through safeguarding our resources and being good stewards of the human, intellectual, physical, and fiscal resources given to our care.
- **Respect** – We recognize the inherent dignity and rights of every person, and we will do our utmost to fulfill our resulting responsibility to treat each person with fairness, compassion, and decency.

University Community: All individuals enrolled at or employed by the University, including

- Faculty, staff, and students of UWG;
- Members of UWG Affiliated Foundations;
- Consultants, contractors, vendors, and third parties (when performing services for the University or interacting with members of the University Community, acting on behalf of the University, or otherwise required under contract to comply with this Code);
- Volunteers and other representatives when speaking or acting on behalf of the University, and
- Visitors.

Guidelines/Related material

- [USG Board of Regents Policy Manual, Section 8.0 Personnel](#)
- [UWG PL #4001 Human Resources Administrative Practice and Services](#) and associated procedures
- [UWG PL #1006 Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom](#)
- American Association of University Professors (AAUP) - Statement on Professional Ethics
- Students enrolled in academic programs or attending classes are governed by the [Student Handbook and Wolf Code of Conduct](#).

Keywords

Amorous Relationships, Gratuities