HOTLINE

If you are aware of fraudulent activity related to the University System of Georgia or simply wa ongoing operations, we want to know about it! You may anonymously report online or call us a

Audit Management System

TeamCentral Portal
(IP restricted and login required)

TeamMate Docs & Software
(IP restricted and login required)

USG Audit Forum

CCH TeamMate Community

Ethics Policy

8.2.20 University System of Georgia Ethics Policy

8.2.20.1 Introduction

The USG is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct in pursuit of i educated Georgia. Accomplishing this mission demands integrity, good judgment and dedication of the USG community.

While the USG affirms each person’s accountability for individual actions, it also recognizes that enterprise of its institutions require a shared set of core values and ethical conduct to which each must be held accountable. Furthermore, the USG acknowledges that an organizational culture gi supporting these core values and ethical conduct.

The following Statement of Core Values and Code of Conduct are intended to build, maintain an each member of the USG community is responsible for doing his/her part by upholding the highe character.
8.2.20.2 Applicability

The USG Ethics Policy applies to all members of the USG community. The USG community includes:

1. All members of the Board of Regents;
2. All individuals employed by, or acting on behalf of, the USG or one of the USG institutions, including contractors; and,
3. Members of the governing boards and employees of all cooperative organizations affiliated with USG institutions.

Members of the Board of Regents and all individuals employed by the USG or one of its institutions will be required to participate in USG Ethics Policy training, and shall certify compliance with the USG Ethics Policy on a periodic basis as provided in the USG Business Procedures Manual. Cooperative organizations, vendors, and contractors shall certify compliance with the USG Ethics Policy by written agreement as provided in the USG Business Procedures Manual.

The USG Ethics Policy governs only official conduct performed by or on behalf of the USG. Violations of the USG Ethics Policy can result in disciplinary action including dismissal or termination.

8.2.20.3 Statement of Core Values

Every member of the USG community is required to adhere to the USG Statement of Core Values, which include:

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

8.2.20.4 Purpose of the Code of Conduct

The USG recognizes that each member of the USG community attempts to live by his or her own personal code of conduct. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to guide members of the USG community in making decisions and choices that are consistent with the USG Ethics Policy and the USG Statement of Core Values to the decisions and choices that are made in the course of everyday business. Each member of the USG community must ensure that its institutional ethics policies are consistent with this USG Ethics policy.

8.2.20.5 Code of Conduct

We will:
I. Uphold the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity in the conduct of the grants administration.

II. Act as good stewards of the resources and information entrusted to our care.

III. Perform assigned duties and professional responsibilities in such a manner so as to

IV. Treat fellow employees, students and the public with dignity and respect.

V. Refrain from discriminating against, harassing or threatening others.

VI. Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and professional standards.

VII. Respect the intellectual property rights of others.

VIII. Avoid improper political activities as defined in law and Board of Regents Policy.

IX. Protect human health and safety and the environment in all USG operations and activities.

X. Report wrongdoing to the proper authorities; refrain from retaliating against those who cooperate fully with authorized investigations.

XI. Disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.

XII. Refrain from accepting any gift or thing of value in those instances prohibited by law.

XIII. Not use our position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or relative.

8.2.20.6 Interpretation and Sources

The Statement of Core Values and Code of Conduct do not address every conceivable situation faced by members of the USG community. Members of the USG community are expected to exercise guidance from this policy or other applicable laws, rules and regulations.

Specific questions pertaining to the Statement of Core Values or Code of Conduct should be directed to the competent authority at the University System Office or at the institution's office of Legal Affairs, Human Resources, Academic Affairs, or other appropriate office.

There are also multiple sources of authority that address specific questions or situations. Examples include:

1. Board of Regents Policy Manual
2. Board of Regents Business Procedures Manual
3. Board of Regents Human Resources Administrative Practice Manual
4. Institutional policies, handbooks and procedures
5. State Laws and Regulations
6. Federal Laws and Regulations

Further specific explanatory notes and references may be found on the USG's website at http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/ or its successor reference (BoR Minutes, November 2012).
Explanatory Notes and References

1. **Uphold the highest standards of intellectual honesty and integrity in the conduct of grants administration.**

   Members of the USG community engaged in research are expected to do so in accordance with professional standards while upholding the highest standards of integrity, intellectual honesty, and research integrity. Violations of research integrity include, but are not limited to: (a) plagiarism defined as using or intellectual property and representing it as your own original work, (b) falsification of data, findings, or failing to disclose data that would substantively change the research findings, and (c) not reporting conflicts of interest.

   Research integrity requires that principal investigators and others with a fiduciary obligation maintain the integrity and accuracy of data. Research involving human subjects shall be conducted only after appropriate review and approval by institutional review boards (IRBs) and be conducted in accordance with IRB principles.

2. **Act as good stewards of the resources and information entrusted to our care.**

   USG property is intended for use in support of the USG mission and legitimate public purposes.

   USG property shall not be used for personal gain or purposes except for incidental personal local telephone call or incidental Internet use that is not inconsistent with applicable laws and policies. Members of the USG community should note that such use must not interfere with the performance of official duties or job performance. Additionally, members of the USG community should understand that their personal material is placed on a government system.

   Members of the USG community are required to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the documents they are responsible. No employee may alter, falsify or destroy any original record or document. Members of the USG community must also comply with the USG Records Retention Series. URL: [http://www.usg.edu/usgweb/busserv/series/search.phtml](http://www.usg.edu/usgweb/busserv/series/search.phtml).

   The USG is the custodian of many types of information, including that which is confidential. Employees who have access to such information are expected to be familiar with and to comply with applicable agreements pertaining to access, use, protection, and disclosure of such information. Compliance is subject to law and USG policy.

   USG employees are required to maintain the integrity and accuracy of all documents and records, including vacation/annual leave and all other forms of leave.

   The following policies should be read in concert with this section of the code of conduct:

http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/
• BOR Policies 8.2.7.1-8.2.7.8 regarding leave,
• BOR Policy 7.11.9 for information on removing laptops and similar items off site,
• BOR Policy 9.10.6.4 for information on removing other institutional property from campus,
• BOR Policy 7.7.2 for information on prohibited personal use of institutional purchasing cards,
• BOR Policy 7.11.2 for information on the operation of private business enterprises on a campus,
• BOR Policies 9.10.6.3-9.10.6.4 for information pertaining to use of a campus facility by the public,
• USG Appropriate Use Policy number 2009-014 regarding use of information technology.

3. **Perform assigned duties and professional responsibilities in such a manner so as to fulfill organizational missions and goals.**

   All members of the USG community are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with scholarship, public service and integrity. This requirement encompasses both a responsibility to contribute to the success of the USG in a manner consistent with their duties and responsibilities.

   Effective internal controls are one method that can be employed to assist the USG in achieving the processes employed at all levels to help ensure that USG business is carried out in accordance with procedures, institutional policies and procedures, applicable laws and regulations and sound controls promote efficient operations, accurate financial reporting, safeguarding of assets and proper use of institutional resources.

4. **Treat fellow employees, students and the public with dignity and respect.**

   Members of the USG community are required to maintain a professional work environment. A romantic or sexual relationship between a member of the USG community and a student or patient is strongly discouraged. A romantic or sexual relationship between a member of the USG community and a student or patient is strongly discouraged. Refrain from discriminating against, harassing or threatening others.

5. **Refrain from discriminating against, harassing or threatening others.**

   The USG Statement of Core Values emphasizes the “inherent dignity and rights of every person and the responsibility to treat each person with fairness, compassion and decency.” As such, any form of discrimination on the grounds of race, color, creed, age, disability and status as a veteran is specifically prohibited by state law and BOR policies. Additional information on Equal Employment Opportunity within the USG is available at [http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/](http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/).
Sexual harassment of members of the USG community or students in the USG is prohibited dismissal or other sanctions after compliance with procedural due process requirements. Unrequests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual standing; or (B) Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis decisions affecting an individual; or (C) Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. See BOR information on Sexual Harassment.

The University System of Georgia is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and working environment. A safe and secure environment is a fundamental prerequisite for fulfill teaching, research and public service. The University System of Georgia will not tolerate any committed by or against students or members of the USG community. Workplace violence is conduct or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace. Violations of the work appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. USG employees bear a specia potential acts of violence on campus as evidenced by, but not limited to, unusual statements behavior. Members of the USG community who, in good faith, report what they believe to be cooperate in any investigation will not be subjected to retaliation.

6. **Comply with all applicable laws, rules, regulations and professional standards.**

Compliance with laws, rules and regulations governing USG institutions is both a legal and associated with non-compliance can be significant. Significant risks include loss of reputatio penalties, loss of accreditation and potential criminal prosecutions. Members of the USG cor USG legal counsel to clarify the laws, rules and regulations impacting official duties.

Failure to comply with applicable laws, rules and regulations by a member of the USG com action. Members of the USG community may be governed by ethical codes or standards of expected that those USG community members will comply with applicable professional stan regulations.

It is the policy of the USG to conduct its business in an open and transparent manner consis members of the USG community and Open Government laws. USG employees have a resp made pursuant to the Open Records Act are immediately routed to the office charged with th that accept grants from public or private organizations to perform as outlined in the grant ha that the grant funds are expended in a manner consistent with the grantor's guidelines and regulations. The submission of false or misleading documentation in connection with a feder employment action and criminal prosecution. Members of the USG community must exerc use of grant funds.
Compliance with the rules and regulations governing athletics is a multi-faceted and challenging task that maintain athletic programs. Members of the USG community are expected to comply with association rules.

Requests for reimbursement for expenses incurred on behalf of the USG must be accurate in accordance with laws and regulations. Submission of false or misleading expense reimbursement documents community submitting the documents to the risk of both termination of employment or criminal prosecution.

7. **Respect the intellectual property rights of others.**

USG employees associated with the production of intellectual property have the responsibility to respect institutional policies governing intellectual property. Extensive BOR and institutional policies govern intellectual property. See [BOR Policy 6.3](http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/) for a detailed description of the BOR policies governing intellectual property.

Employees who use software licensed to the USG or a USG institution must abide by applicable laws and may copy licensed software only as permitted by the license.

It is also the practice of the USG to comply with copyright laws. USG employees or any individual not violating copyright laws to include publications, recordings and other electronic media. It's not notice is no longer required by law. This means that individuals copying material must take into account whether the material is in the public domain or may be copied under the “Fair Use” doctrine. USG employees should consult institutional legal counsel for additional guidance on this topic.

8. **Avoid improper political activities as defined in law and Board of Regents Policy.**

USG employees are encouraged to participate as responsible and interested citizens in our democracy. However, political activities that are inconsistent with the roles and responsibilities of USG employees may participate in a political campaign which interferes with performance of official duties. Employees must obtain a leave of absence prior to the qualifying as a candidate in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. Appointment may be held by a USG employee if there is no conflict or interference with the employee's University duties.

See [BOR Policy 8.2.15.3](http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/) for additional information on employee participation in the political process and for information on use of campus facilities for political purposes.

9. **Protect human health and safety and the environment in all USG operations and activities.**

The Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia is strongly committed to protecting health and safety in all of its operations. In working to meet this commitment, the Board of Regents has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to ensure that all employees, students, and visitors are aware of their responsibilities.

http://www.usg.edu/audit/compliance/ethics/
efforts must be made to ensure that sound environmental, health, and safety planning is inte
System decision making. Additionally, all members of the USG community bear a responsib
safety and the environment in those areas for which they are responsible. See BOR Policy 5 pertaining to environmental compliance.

10. **Report wrongdoing to the proper authorities; refrain from retaliating against those who cooperate fully with authorized investigations.**

All members of the USG community have a responsibility to follow university policies and pr
and regulations and speak up when they see or suspect misconduct. Members of the USG c possible unethical behavior or noncompliance with Board of Regents policy are encouraged use the Ethics and Compliance Hotline. Retaliation against a member of the USG communit prohibited by federal law, state law and BOR policy.

Members of the USG community are required to cooperate fully with authorized internal inve subject the individual to disciplinary action to include termination of employment or contract. community who are unsure as to the legitimacy of an investigation should consult a supervis

11. **Disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.**

USG employees are expected to devote their primary efforts to the USG’s mission. Outside interfere with performance of official duties. Additionally, outside activities may create conflic must be properly disclosed and managed. See BOR Policy 8.2.15 for additional information. community who are not USG employees are subject to other conflict of interest provisions a

12. **Refrain from accepting any gift or thing of value in those instances prohibited by law**

No member of the USG community shall directly or indirectly solicit, receive, accept or agre inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of the thing will influence his/her performance of action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward or consideration where the purpose of the gift is community in the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under state law. See Bt description of the prohibition on receiving gifts.

13. **Not use your position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or re**

No member of the USG community will use his or her position or authority improperly to adv relative. Any benefit granted to an individual will be based on merit and/or written procedure a department or unit which will result in the existence of a subordinate-superior relationship
relative of such individual through any line of authority. See BOR Policy 8.2.3 and O.C.G.A. information on this topic.