



University System of Georgia

Creating A More Educated Georgia

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 g 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, its subsidiaries, vendors, and contractors; and,
3. Members of the governing boards and employees of all cooperative organizations affiliated with the USG or its institutions.

Members of the Board of Regents and all individuals employed by the USG or one of its institutions shall complete USG Ethics Policy training, and shall certify compliance with the USG Ethics Policy on a periodic basis. 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 may 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: Integrity, Accountability, and Respect – that form and guide the daily work of the organization.

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 our work.
3. **Accountability** – We firmly believe that education in the form of scholarship, research, teaching, and 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 best 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 moral principles in the course of their work-making processes. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to guide members of the USG community in applying the USG Statement of Core Values to the decisions and choices that are made in the course of everyday work. 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 seek 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 2011).

Explanatory Notes and References

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

Members of the USG community engaged in research are expected to do so in accordance professional standards while upholding the highest standards of integrity, intellectual honest 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 Research integrity requires that principal investigators and others with a fiduciary obligation manner consistent with the grantor's terms and conditions and applicable laws, rules and re human subjects shall be conducted only after appropriate review and approval by institution: 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 purpos:

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 an USG community should note that such use must not interfere with the performance of officia job performance. Additionally, members of the USG community should understand that ther any personal material is placed on a government system.

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

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

USG employees are required to maintain the integrity and accuracy of all documents and re 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:

- [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 card
- [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 students
- 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

All members of the USG community are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of scholarship, public service and integrity. This requirement encompasses both a responsibility to advance the organizational missions and goals. Individuals in positions of greater authority bear a greater responsibility to advance the organizational missions and goals in an effective and efficient manner. However, all members 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 its mission. Internal controls are the processes employed at all levels to help ensure that USG business is carried out in accordance with applicable procedures, institutional policies and procedures, applicable laws and regulations and sound business practices. Internal controls promote efficient operations, accurate financial reporting, safeguarding of assets and

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. Harassment, including sexual harassment, may result in disciplinary action. See [BOR Policy 12.2](#) for additional information pertaining to harassment.

A romantic or sexual relationship between a member of the USG community and a student (or a patient) is strongly discouraged in instances where the individual has the responsibility for directly supervising, evaluating, instructing, or otherwise overseeing the student or patient. Romantic or sexual relationships between employees and students are strongly discouraged.

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 is inconsistent with USG core values. Additionally, discrimination on the grounds of race, color, sex, age, disability and status as a veteran is specifically prohibited by state law and BOR Policy 12.2 for additional information on Equal Employment Opportunity within the USG.

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. Ur requests 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 for decisions affecting an individual; or (C) Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working or academic environment. See [BOR I](#) information on Sexual Harassment.

The University System of Georgia is committed to the prevention of workplace violence and a safe working environment. A safe and secure environment is a fundamental prerequisite for fulfilling teaching, research and public service. The University System of Georgia will not tolerate any violence committed by or against students or members of the USG community. Workplace violence is any conduct or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace. Violations of the workplace violence policy will result in appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. USG employees bear a special responsibility to report potential acts of violence on campus as evidenced by, but not limited to, unusual statements or behavior. Members of the USG community who, in good faith, report what they believe to be workplace violence will 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 an ethical requirement. Non-compliance with laws, rules and regulations associated with non-compliance can be significant. Significant risks include loss of reputation, financial penalties, loss of accreditation and potential criminal prosecutions. Members of the USG community should consult 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 community is a violation of the USG Code of Ethics. Members of the USG community may be governed by ethical codes or standards of professional organizations. It is expected that those USG community members will comply with applicable professional standards and regulations.

It is the policy of the USG to conduct its business in an open and transparent manner consistent with the USG Code of Ethics, the USG Open Government laws. USG employees have a responsibility to ensure that records made pursuant to the Open Records Act are immediately routed to the office charged with their maintenance. Members of the USG community that accept grants from public or private organizations to perform as outlined in the grant have a responsibility to ensure that the grant funds are expended in a manner consistent with the grantor's guidelines and applicable laws, rules and regulations. The submission of false or misleading documentation in connection with a federal grant may result in employment action and criminal prosecution. Members of the USG community must exercise care in the use of grant funds.

Compliance with the rules and regulations governing athletics is a multi-faceted and challenge 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 and follow laws and regulations. Submission of false or misleading expense reimbursement documents to the community submitting the documents to the risk of both termination of employment or contract and prosecution.

7. Respect the intellectual property rights of others.

USG employees associated with the production of intellectual property have the responsibility to follow institutional policies governing intellectual property. Extensive BOR and institutional policies govern intellectual property. See [BOR Policy 6.3](#) 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 license terms 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 must not violate copyright laws to include publications, recordings and other electronic media. It is important to note that notice is no longer required by law. This means that individuals copying material must take care to ensure that 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 community. However, employees are not to engage in "political" activities that are inconsistent with the roles and responsibilities of USG employees. Employees may not participate in a political campaign which interferes with performance of official duties. Employees may not hold state or federal elective office and must obtain a leave of absence prior to qualifying as a candidate for office in a primary or general election and ending after the general or final election. Appointments to elective office may be held by a USG employee if there is no conflict or interference with the employee's USG duties.

See [BOR Policy 8.2.15.3](#) 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 the health and safety of its employees and the environment in all of its operations. In working to meet this commitment, the Board of Regents

efforts must be made to ensure that sound environmental, health, and safety planning is integrated into System decision making. Additionally, all members of the USG community bear a responsibility for safety and the environment in those areas for which they are responsible. See [BOR Policy 8.2.15](#) 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 procedures and regulations and speak up when they see or suspect misconduct. Members of the USG community who witness possible unethical behavior or noncompliance with Board of Regents policy are encouraged to report such behavior. Use the Ethics and Compliance Hotline. Retaliation against a member of the USG community who reports such behavior is prohibited by federal law, state law and BOR policy.

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

11. Disclose and avoid improper conflicts of interest.

USG employees are expected to devote their primary efforts to the USG's mission. Outside activities that interfere with performance of official duties. Additionally, outside activities may create conflicts of interest that must be properly disclosed and managed. See [BOR Policy 8.2.15](#) for additional information. Members of the USG community who are not USG employees are subject to other conflict of interest provisions and regulations.

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 agree to accept any gift or thing of value inducing the reasonable belief that the giving of the thing will influence his/her performance or official action. The acceptance of a benefit, reward or consideration where the purpose of the gift is to influence the performance of his/her official functions is a felony under state law. See [BOR Policy 8.2.15](#) for a description of the prohibition on receiving gifts.

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

No member of the USG community will use his or her position or authority improperly to advance the interests of a friend or relative. Any benefit granted to an individual will be based on merit and/or written procedure. The creation of 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.