
A Message from the Chancellor

As stewards of the public trust and in order to advance the various missions of The University of Texas System and the System institutions, each of us in the University community recognizes that high ethical standards and compliance with the law are critical to our success.

In order to achieve such standards and compliance, System employees receive a brief practical guide to some of the more common ethics or legal issues. The OGC Ethics website is available to provide greater detail.

In addition, I encourage you to contact your supervisor or the Ethics Officer on your campus if you have questions about matters involving ethics laws or issues. If you have further questions, I ask you to follow up with the U.T. System Ethics Advisor.

It is incumbent upon all of us, in our roles as stewards of the resources that have been entrusted to us by the State of Texas, the U.T. System Board of Regents, and our varied constituencies, to do the best job possible. I am proud of your compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and U.T. System policies, and I am deeply grateful for your continuing commitment to ethical behavior and the common good. Thank you for all that you do for us.

Francisco G. Cigarroa, M.D.

UTHSC-H Ethics Officer

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U.T. System Ethics Advisor

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The University of Texas System
201 West 7th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 499-4462

Texas Ethics Commission

Post Office Box 12070
Austin, Texas 78711-2070
(800) 325-8506
<http://www.ethics.state.tx.us>

Additional Links

UTHSC-H Compliance Hotline
1-888-472-9868

UTHSC-H Compliance Web Reporting Website
<http://www.tnwinc.com/webreport>

State Laws Relating to Ethics
<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/ethics/statelaws.htm>

A Guide to Ethics Laws for State Officers and Employees
<http://www.ethics.state.tx.us/guides/G08o&e.pdf>

ETHICS STANDARDS

A Brief Practical Guide

*Ethical behavior means being honest,
telling the truth, and doing what you
said you were going to do.*

-- Barbara Jordan



THE UNIVERSITY of TEXAS
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON

Ethics Standards

Conflicts of Interest: Officers, faculty, and employees (collectively "employees") of the U.T. System may not have a direct or indirect interest, financial or otherwise, that is in conflict with the proper discharge of their duties. Potential conflicts of interest must be disclosed.

Adherence to the Law: Employees shall adhere to applicable laws, rules, regulations, and policies of governmental and institutional authorities. The failure to do so will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Gifts: No employee shall accept or solicit any gift, favor, service, or loan that might reasonably appear to influence the employee in the discharge of duties.

Note: Making or receiving gifts, including honoraria, may constitute a criminal offense under certain circumstances.

Confidential Information: No employee shall disclose confidential information or use such information for his or her personal benefit.

Self-Dealing: No employee shall transact any business in an official capacity with any business entity of which the employee is an officer, agent, or member, or in which the employee owns a substantial interest.

Personal Investments: No employee shall make personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a conflict between the employee's private interest and the public interest.

Outside Employment: No employee shall accept other outside or dual employment or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair the employee's independence of judgment in the performance of the employee's public duties.

Note: Outside employment is further limited by other policies, laws, and regulations.

Sexual Harassment and Misconduct: Sexual misconduct and sexual harassment are unacceptable behaviors. Such unacceptable behavior includes verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Incidents of sexual misconduct or sexual harassment should be reported to the office charged with reviewing such complaints where the incident occurred.

Use of State Resources

The Law: State officers or employees commit a criminal offense if they intentionally or knowingly misapply any "thing of value" belonging to the government that is in their custody or possession as a result of their state employment in order to obtain a benefit or to harm another person.

Telephones and Electronic Mail: Telephones and e-mail are to be used for institutional purposes. Incidental use for local personal calls or messages not interfering with work responsibility, however, is not a misapplication of state resources. Personal long distance telephone calls should not be charged to the institution and must be reimbursed by the employee if charged inadvertently. U.T. telephone logs and e-mail are public property and may be subject to open information requests.

Equipment and Supplies: State-issued machines, office supplies, and other equipment are to be used for institutional purposes, not for personal or private purposes.

U.T. Vehicles: No U.T. employee shall use any U.T. vehicle for any purpose other than official business of the institution.

Employee Time: Employee work time is a "thing of value" belonging to the state. Employees may not use work time for personal business.

Political Campaigns and Elections: An employee shall not use institutional time, funds, equipment, or other resource to work on a political campaign or to influence the passage or defeat of legislation.

Expense Claims: Vouchers for travel expenses must be accurate and requested only for expenses related to official business.

Liability for Property Loss: When institutional property disappears, whether through theft or other cause, as a result of an employee failing to exercise reasonable care for its safekeeping, such person shall be liable for the loss sustained by the institution.

Institutional Credit Cards: Employees shall not use credit cards issued by the institution for personal expenses unrelated to institutional business.

Internet: Access to the Internet via institutional computers is for institutional purposes. Incidental personal use not interfering with work responsibility, however, is not a misapplication of state resources. Improper or illegal use of the Internet by employees may subject them to disciplinary action.

Software: Software licensed to the state is to be used for institutional purposes, not personal purposes. Only properly licensed software may be loaded on institutional computers.

Consulting Contracts with Previous Employees: No funds shall be used to enter into a consultant contract with any individual who has been previously employed by the institution within the past 12 months.

Purchases from/by Employees: Purchases are not permitted from an employee unless approved by the President, Executive Vice Chancellor, or Chancellor as appropriate. Similarly, no employee may purchase equipment or property from the institution without appropriate approvals.

All topics in this brief guide are discussed in greater detail in the following:

[U.T System Ethics Policies & Guidelines](http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/ethics/homepage.htm)
<http://www.utsystem.edu/ogc/ethics/homepage.htm>

[HOOP Policy 2.01 – General Standards of Conduct](http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/02/2_01.html)
http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/02/2_01.html

[Standards of Conduct Guide](http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/02/Standards_of_Conduct_Guide.htm)
http://legal.uth.tmc.edu/hoop/02/Standards_of_Conduct_Guide.htm