UT Dallas Ethics Policy

Developed by
The University of Texas at Dallas
Office of Administration
Ethical Standards

The University of Texas at Dallas is committed to a culture of integrity and ethical behavior. Ethical behavior is expected of every employee and is much more than simply following the rules; it is doing the right thing.

Management personnel at every level are expected to set an ethical “tone at the top” and to be role models for ethical behavior in their departments.

Every employee has a personal obligation to report any activity that appears to violate such laws, policies, rules and regulations.
Consequences of Unethical Behavior

Personal Consequences:
• Loss of job
• Face lawsuits, fines, or prison

By not reporting unethical behavior, you take part in:
• Stealing
• Lying
• Corruption
• Fraud

Institutional Consequences:
• Loss of funding
• Reputational damage
• Fines, penalties and lawsuits
Think Before You Act

It’s easy to break our ethics policy, especially with things that seem small.

Imagine your actions and decisions as news headlines.

- We work with money and resources from taxpayers, students, parents, and donors. Respect what they have given us. Don’t steal, waste, or misuse supplies or money.
- Your UT Dallas email account is a state account. The emails can be looked at by UT Dallas administrators or anyone using the Texas Open Records laws.
- Always be truthful. Never forge or alter checks, time sheets, logs, invoices, transcripts, etc.
- Never use UT Dallas resources or information for personal gain.
Your job responsibilities are important. Not fulfilling your job responsibilities can often be just as bad as lying and stealing.

If your job requires you to check or verify something, don’t neglect it.

Your shortcut could be what allows someone to get away with a crime.
Disclose Conflicts of Interest

What’s a conflict of interest?
A conflict of interest exists when a financial or fiduciary interest you hold outside of UT Dallas could influence or impair your ability to perform your responsibilities for UT Dallas.

Outside interests are things like:
- Salary or consulting fees
- Serving on a board of directors
- Starting or investing in a company
- Accepting gifts

Good intentions are not enough.
As state employees, we must maintain public trust in our integrity.
Even if you know you’re not doing anything wrong, you must still disclose outside interests related to your work at UT Dallas to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Staff members with questions regarding conflicts of interest should contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance at x2233 or compliance@utdallas.edu.

Faculty and Researchers with questions regarding conflicts of interest should contact the Office of Research Compliance at x4718 or conor@utdallas.edu.
Request Approval for Outside Activities

If you decide to work as a consultant or find employment outside of UT Dallas:

– Always get approval from your Department Head or supervisor before starting the activity.
  
  • Faculty and Researchers can request approval via the Conflict of Interest and Commitment Portal at https://www.utdallas.edu/research/re/coi_disclosures/.
    – Please contact the Office of Research Compliance at x4718 or conor@utdallas.edu with any questions.
  
  • All other employees (excluding Faculty and Researchers) can request approval via the UT System Outside Activity Portal at https://outsideactivity.utsystem.edu/.
    – Please contact the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance at x2233 or compliance@utdallas.edu with any questions.

– You must maintain a clear separation between your responsibilities for UT Dallas and your outside activities so that others understand when you are representing UT Dallas and when you are acting as a consultant or employee of another company or agency.

– Always make sure appropriate agreements are in place before using UT Dallas intellectual property, resources, or equipment in connection with your outside activities.

Case Studies

Please visit the Case Studies page for situational examples that illustrate the kinds of relationships that involve outside activities and interests that require action under UT Dallas policy.
Accept small gifts, but only if you follow the rules.

A gift is okay if it meets ALL of these criteria:

• You did not ask for it. Employees should never ask or hint, even as a joke for a gift.
• It is a non-cash item worth less than $50
• It was not given to you in exchange for anything you do in your job at UT Dallas. Never accept a gift as thanks for a decision made as part of your job. (For example, favorable treatment or a decision.)

If you have any contact with student loan lenders
• You must follow stricter rules. Ask your supervisor about them.
• You must not accept gifts valued at more than $25.
• Always ask your supervisor before accepting any gift.
Gifts: Frequently asked questions

What if someone I deal with in an official capacity (not a UT Dallas employee) offers to buy me lunch?

It’s okay as long as:

- You didn’t ask for it.
- It’s not in consideration of any official action. (It’s not connected to a decision you made as part of your job.)
- It’s valued at $50 (or less) per person. If the value is more than $50 per person, a representative of the organization paying for the meal must be at the restaurant (you must be their guest).

What if someone offers me tickets to a game or a show? Can I accept the tickets?

It’s okay as long as:

- You didn’t ask for it.
- It’s not in consideration of any official action. (It’s not connected to a decision you made as part of your job.)
- It’s valued at $50 (or less) per ticket. If the value is more than $50 per ticket, a representative of the organization paying for the tickets must be at the event (you must be their guest).
Honoraria

What’s an honorarium?
When a person does professional service for an organization, the organization sometimes gives the person a gift as an expression of thanks.

You can accept honoraria, but NOT if:

• Your position at UT Dallas was the reason you were asked for your services, or
• Your services were minimal, routine, or superficial.

In those cases, you can still accept gifts with minimal value (coffee mugs, plaques, etc.).
Speak and Act for Yourself, Not for UT Dallas

– You can’t make contracts/agreements and purchases on behalf of UT Dallas. (Unless your job gives you this authority.)

– If you’re contacted by the news media, please promptly refer them to the Communications Office.

– You can take part in whatever political activities you want, but:
  • Do it on your own time, not using work time.
  • Use your own supplies or money, not those of UT Dallas.
  • Make it clear that you’re speaking for yourself, not for UT Dallas or as a UT Dallas employee.

– Return personal favors or gifts on your own, not with UT Dallas resources.

For example…
If you want to email your congressperson to support a piece of legislation, you should use your personal email account, not your UT Dallas email account.
If you notice a problem or aren’t sure what to do, don’t make excuses:

– You’re too busy.
– It’s someone else’s job.
– You’re afraid of getting someone in trouble.

By avoiding the problem or question, you allow it to get worse.

For general guidelines:

• UT Dallas Code of Ethics
• Standards of Conduct Guide

Ask someone:

• Your supervisor
• UT Dallas Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance
  ▪ Extension 2233
  ▪ compliance@utdallas.edu
• UT System Office of General Counsel. http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/contact.htm
Chain of Command

- Ask your supervisor.
  - This solves most problems, so start here.

- Talk with the next supervisor up.
  - It’s okay to do this, especially when:
    - Your supervisor is the problem.
    - You’ve told your supervisor many times, but the problem is still there.

- Keep going until you see results.
  - Saying something once or twice is not enough. It’s your number one job responsibility to do the right thing.
Ethics and Compliance Hotline

Report Fraud, Theft or Other Unethical Behavior
888-228-7707
The Network's Web Reporting System

You can report anonymously
UT Dallas contracts with an outside service provider, The Network, to receive hotline calls and reports. If you ask to remain anonymous, no attempt will be made to identify you. The information you provide will be treated as confidential and privileged to the extent permitted by law.

You are protected from retaliation
Retaliation against an employee who has called the hotline is strictly prohibited. Accusations of retaliation will be taken very seriously and agitators will face disciplinary action.

Have questions?
Ask the UT Dallas Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance
• compliance@utdallas.edu
• Extension 2233

You are protected if you report non-compliance.
• UT Dallas Protection from Retaliation Policy
• UT System Protection from Retaliation Policy
• Texas Whistleblower Act
For More Information
This list of links is always available on the UT Dallas Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance website

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Outside employment
- Outside Activity for All Employees Excluding Executive Officers and Employees Involved in Procurement Activities or Contract Management
- Outside Activity Policy Executive Officers and Employees Involved in Procurement Activities or Contract Management