



Delaware State University Procedure

Title: Ethical Standards of Professional Behavior	Cabinet Approval Date: 4/19/04
Related Policies and Procedures: Non-discrimination, purchasing	

In order to assist in fostering the desired culture, the employees and students of Delaware State University, together with the local community, have a right to expect the business of Delaware State University to be conducted with efficiency, fairness, impartiality and integrity.

Employment at Delaware State University carries with it an obligation to the public interest. It requires standards of professional behavior from employees that promote and maintain public confidence and trust in the work of Delaware State University. At the same time, people should not be subject to unnecessary restrictions simply because they work for Delaware State University.

Although no one set of rules can answer all ethical questions, this Procedure provides Delaware State University with an ethical framework for the decisions, actions and behavior of its employees. In this regard, it explains the principles covering appropriate conduct in a variety of contexts and outlines the minimum standard of behavior expected of Delaware State University employees.

1) General Principles For All

Faculty and staff should ensure that their decisions and actions are reasonable, fair and appropriate to the circumstances, based on consideration of all the relevant facts, and supported by adequate documentation.

2) Responsibilities To Delaware State University

Employees are to implement the policies, procedures and decisions of Delaware State University in an impartial manner. In particular, employees must comply with any relevant legal and administrative requirements.

3) Guide To Ethical Decision Making

To assist in fostering a climate of ethical awareness, conduct and decision-making in Delaware State University, employees may find it useful to refer to, or consider, either by themselves or in consultation with others such as their peers or supervisor, the following four points:

- Is the behavior or result lawful?
- Is the behavior or result consistent with Delaware State University Policy (or Procedures) and consistent with the University's negotiated agreements?
- Do these outcomes raise a conflict of interest and/or lead to private gain as a result of an

employee's work relationship with Delaware State University?

- ❑ Will the conduct create a perception of unethical behavior?

4) Conflicts Of Interest

Conflicts of interest exist when it is likely that an employee could be influenced, or could be perceived as being influenced, by a personal interest in carrying out their duties of employment. Some related interests that may give rise to a conflict of interest include:

- ❑ The influence of an employee in a University financial matter that benefits that employee or their friend(s)/family
- ❑ Acceptance of gifts that may cause others to perceive that a conflict exists
- ❑ Use of University information for personal benefit
- ❑ Use of University equipment or resources for personal benefit
- ❑ Use of one's position or authority for personal benefit or to the detriment of another

Employees who suspect that there are ethical concerns about their behavior should consult their supervisor and/or Vice President of Human Resources. If employees are uncertain whether a conflict exists, they should discuss the matter with their manager and attempt to resolve any conflicts of interest that may exist.

To resolve any conflicts of interest that occur, or could occur, a range of options is available depending on the significance of the conflict. These options may include but are not limited to the following examples:

- ❑ Make written notes of the details of the disclosure and take no further action (because the potential for conflict is minimal),
- ❑ The employee relinquishing the personal interest, or
- ❑ The employee being removed (if possible) from the task/activity/situation where the conflict could occur.

Disputes over alleged conflicts of interests may be resolved through the Vice President of Human Resources.

5) Acceptance Of Gifts Or Benefits

Employees should not accept a gift or benefit that is intended to, or is likely to, cause them to act in a partial manner in the course of their duties. Token gifts (those with a likely value less than \$30 in total) are acceptable so long as they are not likely to be perceived as impacting their partiality. Employees are encouraged to inform those offering them gifts that we have a policy that restricts acceptance of gratuities.

Senior managers may approve the acceptance of token gifts (those with a likely value less than \$30 in total) or benefits under certain circumstances provided that there is no possibility that the recipient might be, or might appear to be, compromised in the process.

Employees must notify the appropriate Vice President if they believe they have been offered a bribe, or if they have been offered or received a favor or benefit that exceeds the limits described above. Failure to give prompt notice will, in itself, be a violation of this procedure.

Employees dealing with, or having access to, sensitive investigations or commercially sensitive information, should be particularly alert to inappropriate attempts to influence them.

6) Fairness And Equity

Issues or cases being considered by employees should be dealt with consistently, promptly and fairly. This involves dealing with matters in accordance with approved Delaware State University procedures, policies and negotiated agreements.

7) Rights And Responsibilities Of Academic Freedom

Delaware State University recognizes the concept and practice of academic freedom as essential to the proper conduct of teaching, research and scholarship. While academic freedom is a right, it carries with it the duty of employees to use the freedom in a manner consistent with a responsible and honest search for, and dissemination of, knowledge.

Faculty and staff are encouraged to counsel and meet with students outside of class during office hours and other public places on campus. However, personal relationships with current students that go beyond the mentoring role and possibly create a perception of exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students are strongly discouraged. Actual exploitation, harassment, or discrimination would violate the University's harassment and discrimination policies.

8) Public Comment About Delaware State University and/or Its Activities

Each employee is free to express an opinion in a private capacity as an individual member of society on matters clearly of interest to the public. However, no employee may represent him or her self as spokesperson for Delaware State University unless specifically authorized to do so.

9) Protecting Confidential Information

Employees who handle confidential or sensitive personal or commercial information should take special precautions to make sure that the information is not disclosed without clear authority and in accordance with all relevant policies or laws. Official information must only be used for the work-related purpose intended and not for personal benefit.

Unless authorized to do so, employees must make sure that they do not disclose or use any confidential information without official approval. All employees must make sure that confidential information, in any form (e.g. computer files, documentation), cannot be accessed by unauthorized people and that sensitive information is only accessible by people, either within or outside Delaware State University, who are authorized to have access to it.

10) Use Of Official Facilities And Equipment

Employees are expected to be efficient and economical in their use and management of the University's resources, including their own work time. They should be scrupulous in their use of Delaware State University property and services. Short private local telephone calls and limited private use of facsimile or computer equipment that does not disrupt official work (as determined by their supervisor) is acceptable. However, facilities and equipment should only be used for private purposes when similar use is available to members of the public or when official permission has been given.

Managers may approve the use of facilities, such as meeting rooms and equipment, by non-profit professional and community organizations in which employees are volunteers as long as there is no significant cost to Delaware State University.

11) Secondary Employment

You must inform your supervisor (or Dean in the case of faculty) of current or prospective employment outside of Delaware State University. Employees and supervisors must also carefully consider whether the organization offering them secondary employment may adversely affect the performance of their Delaware State University duties and responsibilities or give rise to a conflict of interest. Outside employment that reduces an employee's performance or creates a real or perceived conflict of interest is a violation of this policy.

12) Reporting Corrupt Conduct, Mal-administration And Serious and Substantial Waste Of Delaware State University Resources

Employees are urged to report suspected corrupt conduct, as well as mal-administration and serious and substantial waste of Delaware State University resources to the Vice President of Human Resources.

13) Post Separation Employment

Former employees should not use, or take advantage of, confidential information that may lead to gain or profit obtained in the course of their official duties, until it has become publicly available.

All staff should be careful in their dealings with former employees of Delaware State University and make sure that they do not give them, or appear to give them, favorable treatment or access to privileged information.