



Employee Code of Conduct	
Responsible Official: Chief Operating Officer	Responsible Office: Office of Human Resources

Policy Purpose

This policy specifies the expectations of Employees to conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner during their employment with ETSU.

Policy Statement

ETSU is committed to the core values of people, relationships, diversity, excellence, efficiency, and honesty, as well as to creating a university community committed to integrity, respect for diversity, engagement in the community, and non-violence. Employees are expected to promote the best interests of students and Employees; treat others with respect and civility; conduct themselves with integrity; utilize ETSU resources in a manner that avoids waste, fraud, and abuse; and maintain a culturally rich and diverse environment in which to work and learn. This policy sets forth standards of conduct to support these core values and is designed to protect the reputation, credibility, financial well-being, and legal obligations of ETSU.

The appearance of unethical or irresponsible conduct, whether such conduct has occurred, can be damaging to ETSU. As such, any appearance of unethical or irresponsible conduct may also be a violation of the Code of Conduct and subject to disciplinary action.

This policy applies to all Employees whether employed full-time, part-time, on a temporary basis, and applies to student workers.

I. Code of Conduct.

Employees must conduct themselves fairly, honestly, in good faith, and in accordance with the highest ethical and professional standards, and must comply with state and federal laws, ETSU policies, and contractual obligations. This includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Employees are expected to be committed to creating an environment that promotes academic freedom, diversity, fair treatment, and respect for all faculty, staff, students, and the general public.

- B. Employees shall follow lawful instructions.
- C. Employees must regularly attend work and accurately report work time and attendance.
- D. Employees are expected to maintain the highest levels of integrity and objectivity as they perform their duties. This includes, but is not limited to their personal conduct, their verbal conduct, their social media presence, and their written work product. Employees are expected to take all reasonable precautions and seek appropriate guidance to ensure their outside interests do not place them in conflict with carrying out their duties and responsibilities to ETSU.
- E. Employees must use institutional and grant property, funds, technology, time, and other resources for legitimate ETSU business purposes. Employees may not use ETSU resources for endeavors unrelated to their ETSU employment responsibilities (e.g. for personal gain or to benefit third parties).
- F. Employees shall not commit fraud, waste, or abuse while executing their employment responsibilities. This includes, but is not limited to falsifying documents or misrepresenting academic credentials, requests for funding, or research findings.
- G. Employees must avoid conflicts of interests or commitments and must follow ETSU policies related to conflicts of interests.
- H. Employees must conduct research with the highest integrity and in compliance with federal, state, and local laws and ETSU policies. Employees involved in conducting research must become familiar with applicable laws, regulations, and policies.
- I. Employees are entrusted with a variety of confidential information about students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, research sponsors, licensing partners, and university affiliates. Employees must access, use, protect, disclose, preserve, and dispose of confidential information in compliance with applicable laws and ETSU policies. Employees shall not disclose confidential information obtained during their employment, except as required by law. An Employee shall not use confidential information for their personal gain or benefit.
- J. Employees are expected to be committed to the health and safety of all students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Employees are expected to exercise good health and safety practices and to comply with all health and safety laws, regulations, and policies.
- K. Employees are expected to act professionally and treat all students, faculty, staff, persons doing business with ETSU, and visitors with respect. This includes, but is not limited to Employees complying with the ETSU Consensual Relationship Policy. Employees must conduct themselves in a professional manner when communicating in writing, verbally, or signing. Employees shall not commit or assist another Employee in committing Abusive Conduct.

- L. Employees shall not engage in disorderly conduct, including, but not limited to, Abusive Conduct; fighting, provoking a fight, or attempting bodily harm or injury to another Employee or to any other individual or threatening physical action or injury on university property or during university activities; or other conduct that threatens or endangers the health, safety, or well-being of any person.
- M. Employees are expected to report any actual knowledge or any good-faith concern that a violation of this Policy may have occurred as soon as it is reasonably possible.
- N. Employees must comply with Tennessee laws on mandatory reporting of child abuse and child sexual abuse. Tennessee laws mandate reporting by any person who has knowledge of physical or mental harm to a child if: 1) the nature of the harm reasonably indicates it was caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect; or 2) on the basis of available information, the harm reasonably appears to have been caused by brutality, abuse, or neglect. Tennessee law also mandates reporting by any person who knows or has reasonable cause to suspect that a child has been sexually abused, regardless of whether it appears the child has sustained an injury as a result of the abuse. A report of child abuse or child sexual abuse must be made immediately to one of the following authorities: the Tennessee Department of Children's Services (call the Central Intake Child Abuse Hotline at 1-877-542-2873 or 1-877- 237-0004); the sheriff of the county where the child resides; the chief law enforcement official of the city where the child resides; or a judge having juvenile jurisdiction over the child.

II. Reporting Violations.

Employees who have actual knowledge or a good-faith concern about violations of this policy should report their concerns to the Office of Human Resources. Reporting Employees who wish to remain anonymous may report any concerns via the Office of Internal Audit's [anonymous on-line form](#). The Offices of Human Resources or Internal Audit will forward the complaint to the appropriate department for review and investigation pursuant to the applicable ETSU policies.

III. Retaliatory Actions.

No Employee may retaliate against a Reporting Employee for making a good-faith report pursuant to this or any other ETSU policy. If a Reporting Employee experiences retaliation, the Employee should immediately report it to the Office of Human Resources.

III. Violation of Code of Conduct.

Employees are required to cooperate fully in any investigation related to a violation of this or any other ETSU Policy. Investigations will be conducted by the appropriate authority based on the nature of the alleged violation. Employees who violate this Code of Conduct will be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to ETSU policies and state and federal law.

Authority: T.C.A. § 49-8-203 et seq.

Previous Policy:

Definitions

A defined term has a special meaning within the context of this policy.

Abusive Conduct	Abusive Conduct shall have the same meaning as defined within the Healthy Workplace Act, T.C.A. § 50-1-502, as “any acts or omissions that would cause a reasonable person, based on the severity, nature, and frequency of the conduct, to believe that an Employee was subject to an abusive work environment, such as: (1) Repeated verbal abuse in the workplace, including derogatory remarks, insults, and epithets; (2) Verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a threatening, intimidating, or humiliating nature in the workplace; or (3) the sabotage or undermining of an Employee’s work performance in the workplace.
Employee	Anyone employed by the university in any capacity except for personnel classified as graduate assistant or student worker.
Reporting Employee	Any Employee who reports actual knowledge or a good-faith concern of a violation of this policy.
Retaliation	An adverse action taken because of a person’s participation in a protected activity that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in the protected activity.

Policy History

Effective Date: 10/12/21

Revision Date:

Procedure

Procedure History

Effective Date:

Revision Date:

Related Form(s)

Scope and Applicability

Primary: Human Resources

Secondary: