

The University of Alabama

Code of Ethical Conduct

I. Background

The University of Alabama (“University” or “UA”) is committed to conducting its affairs in ways that promote mutual trust and public confidence. All members of the University community are responsible for sustaining the highest ethical standards of excellence, integrity, honesty, and fairness and for integrating these values into teaching, research, business practices, and other services. Ethical conduct is a fundamental expectation for every University community member.

University community members should exercise good judgment and wise discretion to conduct all activities of the University ethically and in compliance with applicable law; protect the University from unnecessary risks; and preserve and enhance the assets and reputation of the institutions for the education and betterment of current and future generations.

This Code of Ethical Conduct is subject to other relevant laws, regulations, and University policies. This Code is general and aspirational in nature, and not intended as a mere set of detailed rules, regulations, or a checklist.

II. Scope

The University of Alabama consists of multiple legal entities engaging in activities in support of its tri-part teaching, research, and service mission. This Code of Ethical Conduct applies to all members of the UA community, including faculty, staff, students, volunteers, contractors, agents, affiliates, and others providing services to or on behalf of UA (herein after “community members”).

Students or trainees taking courses, attending classes, or enrolled in academic programs are still expected to adhere to UA policies governing academic and non-academic conduct. These student-oriented policies support and reflect the standards of conduct expected of other members of the UA community described in this Code of Ethical Conduct. Residents and fellows are considered to be employees for purposes of the code and are expected to uphold its standards like other faculty and staff.

III. Standards of Conduct

The University of Alabama Code of Ethical Conduct is a shared statement of commitment to uphold the ethical, professional, and legal standards used as the basis for daily and long-term decisions and actions. Adherence to its spirit, as well as its specific provisions, is critical to UA’s continued success. Each member is individually accountable for his or her own actions, and the University of Alabama community is collectively accountable for upholding these standards of behavior and for compliance with applicable laws and policies that guide UA’s work. These standards should be reasonably interpreted and applied in accordance with good judgment and discretion.

Members of the UA community commit to the following eight standards:

a. Provide quality education, research, business interactions, healthcare, and other services

The University is committed to providing outstanding, high-quality services to our students, faculty, staff, families, visitors, patients, business partners, colleagues, affiliates, and the community, whether those services are provided through teaching, research, business interactions, or other services. In performing duties, UA community members are expected to:

- Act with high ethical and professional standards of conduct;
- Be honest in performing one's duties, with no exceptions;
- Ask questions and request assistance when information is needed to properly perform one's duties;
- Be personally accountable for one's actions and admit mistakes when they occur;
- Be aware of the University's obligations towards all stakeholders;
- Conscientiously fulfill obligations towards all stakeholders; and
- Communicate to others ethical standards of conduct and responsibilities under this Code of Ethical Conduct through instruction and example.

UA community members are not to:

- Fabricate information;
- Change or knowingly omit information to misrepresent events, circumstances, results, or outcomes in relevant records; or
- Take credit for another's work or work product as one's own without permission.

With respect to teaching and research, UA community members are expected to:

- Promote academic freedom, including the freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom and to explore all avenues of scholarship, research, and creative expression;
- Propose, conduct, and report research with integrity and honesty;
- Protect people and humanely treat animals involved in teaching or research;
- Undertake human subjects research only in accordance with approved protocols;
- Learn, follow, and demonstrate accountability for meeting requirements of regulatory bodies, sponsors, and partners;
- Faithfully transmit research findings;
- Protect rights to individual, UA, and third-party intellectual property;
- Ensure originality of one's work and provide credit for the ideas of others upon which work is built;
- Be responsible for the accuracy and fairness of information reported and/or published; and
- Fairly assign authorship credit on the basis of significant contributions.

b. Treat individuals with respect

UA is an institution dedicated to tolerance, diversity, and respect for differences. Central to that commitment is the principle of treating each UA community member and those we serve with respect.

UA community members are expected to:

- Be respectful, fair, and civil;
- Value diversity of opinion and contributions of others;
- Avoid engaging in all forms of harassment, illegal discrimination, threats, or violence;
- Provide equal opportunity for access to programs, facilities, and employment; and
- Promote conflict resolution.

c. Comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies

The University recognizes that while legal and ethical behavior overlap, they are also distinct from one another. Accordingly, UA community members are charged with following legal requirements, but always keeping sight of ethical considerations as well. UA is committed to sustaining a culture of trust, ethics, and compliance in which legal requirements are met and individuals are comfortable raising concerns to the appropriate individuals when they have a good faith belief that actions of individuals or an entity within the UA community are not consistent with laws, regulations, policies, or standards. Finally, University leadership is committed to maintaining the community trust by ensuring appropriate actions are taken to resolve non-compliance. UA community members are expected to:

- Learn and follow the rules, laws, regulations, contracts, and UA policies and procedures applicable to one's UA work or activities;
- Be proactive to prevent and detect compliance violations;
- Report suspected compliance violations through standard management channels, beginning with one's immediate supervisor, instructor, or advisor or, if not appropriate because of that individual's involvement, to a higher level of management within one's unit, department, school, or entity, to Human Resources, to a compliance officer, to the appropriate UA System office; and
- Ensure that reports of suspected compliance violations within one's area of responsibility are properly resolved.

d. Use confidential information responsibly

UA community members are creators and custodians of various types of confidential, proprietary, and private information. Each UA community member is required to comply with federal and state laws and regulations, agreements with third parties, and UA policies pertaining to the use, protections, and disclosure of such information. UA community members are expected to:

- Learn and follow all laws, UA policies, and agreements with third parties regarding access, use, protection, disclosure, retention, and disposal of public, private, and confidential information;
- Respect the privacy of all information records, whether student, employee, or patient;
- Follow document retention and disposal policies;
- Maintain information security using appropriate electronic and physical safeguards; and
- Fulfill any applicable requirements when one's relationship to UA is terminated. The obligation to preserve confidential information continues even after one's employment and/or relationship with the University ends.

e. Acknowledge and appropriately manage conflicts of interest

UA community members who are UA faculty and staff owe their primary professional allegiance to UA and its mission to excel in the highest levels of education, research, scholarship, and service. UA community members have an obligation to be objective and impartial in making decisions on behalf of the University. External professional activities, private financial interests, or the receipt of benefit from third parties can cause an actual or perceived conflict between UA's interests and an individual's private interests. UA community members are expected to:

- Accept benefits, awards, and prizes from external entities only in accordance with federal and state laws and UA policies and standards;
- Disclose relationships with third parties, such as consulting, board membership, or professional services, in accordance with UA's policies and processes to ensure objective judgment in purchasing, research, and other UA business and to identify any potential or actual conflicts of interest;
- Adhere to any management plans created to manage conflicts of interest;
- Ensure one's personal relationships do not interfere with objective judgment in decisions affecting UA employment or academic progress of any UA community member;
- Not engage in any other activity that a reasonable person would expect to impair, or that would appear to impair, the independent judgment of the UA community member in the performance of his or her public duties.

f. Safeguard and accurately account for UA resources

UA is dedicated to responsible stewardship. UA resources must be used for UA business purposes and not for personal gain. All University accounts, financial reports, tax returns, expense reimbursements, time sheets, and other documents including those submitted to government agencies must be accurate, clear, and complete. All entries in UA records must accurately reflect each transaction. UA community members are expected to:

- Use University property, equipment, finances, materials, electronic and other systems, and other resources only for University purposes or accepted incidental purposes as explained in other relevant UA policies;
- Prevent waste and abuse;
- Promote efficient operations;
- Follow appropriate protocols for obligating UA entities by contract/agreement;
- Follow sound financial practices, including accurate inventory accounting, financial reporting, responsible fiscal management, and internal controls;
- Engage in appropriate accounting and monitoring; and
- Only destroy or discard documents, records, reports, etc. when authorized to do so.

g. Provide a safe environment

UA community members have a shared responsibility to ensure a safe, secure, and healthy environment for all UA students, faculty, staff, volunteers, and visitors. UA community members are expected to:

- Promote personal safety and follow safe workplace practices, including participating in applicable education sessions, using appropriate personal safety equipment, and reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe situations;
- Promote and protect human health in those areas for which they are responsible;
- Maintain security, including securing University assets;
- Maintain a professional work and educational environment;
- Report suspicious activities or wrongdoing to the appropriate authorities; and
- Protect the environment, including carefully handling hazardous waste and other potentially harmful agents, materials, or conditions.

h. Document, code, bill, and collect in accordance with applicable rules and regulations

As a comprehensive research enterprise, UA must coordinate activities to ensure sponsored projects and University activities and operations are billed appropriately and in compliance with relevant laws, regulations, and contractual obligations. UA community members are expected to:

- Render services within the scope of applicable federal, state, and professional guidelines and UA policies;
- Document and maintain complete and accurate records of goods and services provided and obtained in accordance with applicable federal and state laws and University policies;
- Accurately code and bill for services based on government standards and UA policies; and
- Accurately and appropriately document, maintain, store, and report records and University information in accordance with federal and state laws and UA policies.

IV. Violations of the Code of Ethical Conduct

Adherence to this code requires UA community members to bring suspected violations of applicable laws, regulations, policies, and standards to the attention of the appropriate office. UA treats every notice of suspected compliance violation very seriously and considers reports of suspected noncompliance to be a service to UA. Reporting a compliance concern in good faith will not jeopardize one's employment. No such protection is extended to UA community members reporting in bad faith.

The University prohibits UA community members from retaliating or allowing retaliation against another community member for reporting activities suspected of violating laws, regulations, contractual obligations, or UA policy.

Confirmed violations of this Code of Conduct will result in appropriate consequences for the violators.

APPENDIX A
RELATED UA STUDENT POLICIES

[Academic Honor Pledge](#)

[Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy](#)

[Code of Academic Conduct](#)

[School of Medicine's Student Code of Professional Conduct](#)

[Student Code of Conduct](#)

APPENDIX B
RELATED UA FACULTY AND STAFF POLICIES

[AAUP's Statement on Professional Ethics](#)

[Cellular Telephone Policy](#)

[Faculty Handbook's Academic Freedom provision](#)

[Faculty Handbook's Code of Conduct](#)

[Faculty Handbook's Determination of Rights in Copyrightable Materials Policy \(Appendix H\)](#)

[Faculty Handbook's Faculty Personnel Policy on Employment of Members of the Same Family \(Chapter 2, Section XI\)](#)

[Faculty Handbook's Policy on Conflict of Interest/Financial Disclosure in Research and Other Special Programs \(Appendix E.1\)](#)

[Human Resources' Electronic Media Policy](#)

[Human Resources' Nepotism Policy](#)

[Human Resources' Staff Dispute Resolution Policy](#)

[Office of Procurement Services' Gratuities Policy](#)

[Policy on Academic Misconduct in Scholarly Activities](#)

[Policy and Procedures for Research and Other Sponsored Project Data Ownership and Retention](#)

[Records Management Policy and Procedures](#)

[Staff Handbook's Electronic Media Statement](#)

[Staff Handbook's Policy on Working with Relatives](#)

[Staff Handbook's "Standards of Behavior"](#)

[Travel Policy](#)

APPENDIX C
GENERAL RELEVANT POLICIES

[Alcohol Policy](#)

[AVMA Guidelines for the Euthanasia of Animals: 2013 Edition](#)

[Behavioral Threat Assessment Guidelines](#)

[Chemical Hygiene Plan](#)

[Child Protection Policy](#)

[Compliance and Fraud Hotline](#)

[Confidentiality of Student Records Policy](#)

[Copyright Statement](#)

[Dangerous Weapons & Firearms Policy](#)

[Equal Opportunity Policy](#)

[General Terms and Conditions set forth by Purchasing](#)

[Harassment Policy](#)

[Hazardous Materials Management Policy](#)

[Hazing Policy](#)

[The Use of Non-Pharmaceutical Grade Substances in the UA Animal Care and Use Program](#)

[Research Policy and Procedure: Participant's Privacy and Confidentiality](#)

[OIT Computer and Network Use - General Guidelines](#)

[OIT Use Policy on Terms of Use for Computer Accounts](#)

[Purchasing's Spending Policy](#)

[UAct](#)

[University's Drug-Free Campus and Workplace Policy](#)