



KENTUCKY STATE UNIVERSITY

Policies and Regulations

POLICY TITLE:

Ethical Standards

APPLIES TO:

Regents

Faculty

Staff

Students

Visitors

Volunteers

Agents

ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY:

Office of the President

Office of Human Resources

Office of General Counsel

APPROVED BY:

Kentucky State University Board of Regents

EFFECTIVE DATE:

August 8, 2025

NEXT REVIEW DATE:

August 8, 2028

POLICY STATEMENT:

Kentucky State University (KSU) is entrusted with resources from students, taxpayers, sponsors, alumni, donors, and other stakeholders to aid it in its mission and services. This trust demands a steadfast commitment to ethical standards, thereby ensuring that all activities align with KSU's mission. This policy outlines the core ethical standards that guide the KSU community.

DEFINITIONS:

KSU Community Members

Faculty, staff, administrators, Regents, individuals using KSU resources or facilities, recipients of KSU funds, and agents acting on behalf of KSU.

Whistleblower

A KSU community member who reports, in good faith, an alleged violation of this policy.

PROCESS:

Adherence to Core Values and Ethical Standards

Exemplary ethical conduct is critically important to KSU's mission and its relationship with stakeholders. KSU community members shall use the following core values as a guide for their conduct and behavior:

- Compassion, Communication, Commitment, and Collaboration
- Ethical and Moral Responsibility
- Intentional Actions
- Excellence and Innovation
- Impactful Community Engagement
- Holistic Professional Development

In addition to upholding KSU's core values, KSU community members shall also adhere to the following ethical standards:

- Promote the best interest of KSU
- Foster the vision, mission, and values of KSU
- Preserve the public's respect and confidence in KSU
- Exhibit personal integrity, honesty, and responsibility
- Maintain an environment of mutual respect, impartiality, and collaboration
- Disclose conflicts of interest to ensure KSU's independence from outside influence
- Comply with all policies and regulations of KSU, as well as all applicable state and federal laws and regulations
- Demonstrate stewardship of KSU property and resources

Fulfillment of Responsibilities

As aforementioned, KSU community members must comply with federal and state laws, as well as all KSU policies and regulations, when performing their duties. Moreover, KSU community members bound by professional or occupational codes of ethics (such as attorneys, certified public accountants, and nurses) must also adhere to those standards. In addition to following KSU's core values, ethical standards, and professional codes of ethics, KSU community members must also fulfill the responsibilities set forth below.

Responsible Management:

- Promote transparency and integrity
- Ensure compliance with laws and policies
- Evaluate staff performance fairly
- Provide training on workplace and educational rules and procedures

- Support intellectual and professional growth
- Encourage a productive and responsive work environment
- Avoid unreasonable demands

Resource Stewardship:

- Protect KSU property, data, and assets
- Prevent waste or the misuse of resources
- Follow financial guidelines, including procurement card use and grant conditions
- Practice sound fiscal management and accurate reporting

Compliance:

- Understand and follow applicable laws, regulations, and policies
- Report suspected violations to appropriate officials; supervisors must address these reports responsibly
- Participate in required ethics and compliance training

Academic Freedom and Responsibilities:

- Encourage students' pursuit of knowledge
- Respect students as individuals and evaluate their work fairly
- Protect confidentiality in student relationships
- Support academic freedom in teaching, research, and public engagement
- Contribute to shared governance and public service

Ethical Teaching and Research:

- Conduct and report research with honesty and integrity
- Adhere to disciplinary standards and federal regulations (e.g., IRB)
- Avoid plagiarism and ensure originality, crediting others' contributions as necessary
- Maintain accuracy in published works

Conflict Avoidance:

- Make decisions impartially and ensure they are free from personal or familial conflicts
- Disclose and recuse oneself from decisions involving conflicts of interest

Information Management:

- Follow laws and policies on handling public, private, and confidential information
- Use safeguards to protect data security and integrity
- Adhere to laws and guidelines pertaining to document retention and disposal

Health and Safety:

- Comply with safety laws and KSU policies
- Report accidents, injuries, or suspicious activities

- Handle hazardous materials responsibly

Reporting Violations

KSU community members are to report any violations of which they have knowledge. Violations may be reported to a community member's direct supervisor, the Office of Human Resources (HR), or the KSU Ethics Hotline.

Whistleblower Protection

KSU prohibits any retaliation against good-faith whistleblowers. Retaliation includes harassment, discrimination, or adverse employment actions. Whistleblowers reporting an act of retaliation should contact HR or their supervisor. Whistleblower protection does not extend to personal wrongdoing or bad-faith allegations.

Whistleblowers are not responsible for investigation allegations or determining fault or corrective measures. Such investigations are to be handled only by the appropriate employee or unit, as determined by HR. The confidentiality of the whistleblower and the alleged violator will be maintained to the extent possible under applicable state and federal laws. However, KSU community members are, through this policy, provided notice that the identities of a whistleblower and violator may need to be disclosed to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with law, and to provide accused individuals their legal rights of defense.

Violations

Violations of this policy may lead to discipline, up to and including termination of employment and legal action.

Investigative Process

Persons charged with investigating an alleged violation of this policy shall follow KSU investigative procedures.

REFERENCES AND RELATED MATERIALS:

- Discrimination and Harassment Policy
- Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
- KRS 164.283

CONTACTS:

Subject	Office	Telephone	E-mail
Reports of violations	Human Resources	(502) 597-6667	Human.Resources@kysu.edu
Policy questions	General Counsel	(502) 597-6414	General.Counsel@kysu.edu

HISTORY:
