



**Minnesota State Colleges and Universities**  
**System Procedures**  
**Chapter 1 – System Organization and Administration**

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**Procedure 1C.0.1 Employee Code of Conduct**

**Part 1. Purpose and Scope.** This procedure establishes the code of conduct expected of all employees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities, including administrators, faculty, staff, and student employees, whether full or part-time, temporary or unlimited.

The laws, board policies, system procedures, and standards referenced in this employee code of conduct are subject to change without amendment to this procedure.

In addition to this code of conduct, employees are subject to general standards of conduct for employees and are expected to meet any professional standards of conduct or ethical requirements applicable to their discipline.

**Part 2. General.** In striving to fulfill our system’s [vision](#) and carry out our [mission](#), all employees of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities must meet public expectations for excellence by providing high quality education and related services, demonstrating sound stewardship of resources, acting with integrity, and displaying fair treatment and respect for all, ensuring that employment and education opportunities are inclusive and serve all the state’s diverse communities.

Those acting on behalf of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities System have a general duty to conduct themselves with honesty and trustworthiness, with efficiency and effectiveness, and to demonstrate accountability and compliance with state and federal laws, and Board policies and system procedures.

The summaries included in this employee code of conduct are intended to serve as a quick reference guide to actual statutes, policies or procedures; employees should consult the actual statute, policy or procedure to fully understand their obligations. To the extent a provision in this procedure is determined to be inconsistent with the terms of a statute, policy, procedure or applicable bargaining agreement, the statute, policy, procedure or bargaining agreement governs. If you have questions regarding application of the employee code of conduct, contact your supervisor or the chief human resources officer for your college, university, or system office.

**Part 3. Employee Ethics.** Employee ethics are important in every organization. The [Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch](#) and other state laws require that system employees comply with high ethical standards. If we fail to comply with ethical requirements,

32 we may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and  
33 under certain circumstances, criminal or civil legal action.

34  
35 Under state law, board policies, and system procedures, we must comply with legally established  
36 standards. The Code of Ethics is summarized below, but you should consult the actual language  
37 of the statute to determine your ethical obligations.

38 **Subpart A. Conflicts of interest.** Employees are obligated to avoid situations that  
39 involve a potential conflict of interest with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities. If  
40 you have questions regarding these provisions, contact your supervisor or the chief  
41 human resources officer. A conflict exists when you:

- 42 1. Use your system position to secure an advantage for yourself, your immediate  
43 family or an organization with which you are associated that is not available to the  
44 general public;
- 45 2. Accept employment or a contractual obligation which would affect your  
46 independence of judgment in your system job;
- 47 3. Perform other work subject to direct or indirect control, review or enforcement by  
48 you in your system job;
- 49 4. Use state time, facilities, equipment, supplies, badge, uniform, influence of your  
50 office, or confidential information for personal gain;
- 51 5. Receive payment from non-state sources for work you are expected to do during  
52 your regular employment; or
- 53 6. Compete with the system for services the system provides.

54 **Subpart B. Compensation, benefits or gifts from other sources.** Except as noted  
55 below or otherwise provided by law employees are not allowed to accept payment of  
56 expenses, gifts, compensation, rewards, or other benefits in connection with their  
57 employment from a source other than the state.

- 58 1. Course materials exception. Faculty members may accept free samples of  
59 textbooks and related teaching materials. [Minnesota Statutes](#), section  
60 [15.43](#). Because of the provisions of the Code of Ethics for Employees in the  
61 Executive Branch and pursuant to this procedure, such materials may not be sold  
62 for the personal benefit of the faculty member.
- 63 2. Acceptance of certain gifts is not prohibited. Allowable gifts are:
  - 64 o Gifts of nominal value. Nominal value means an item of little or no  
65 marketable value. Examples are a keychain with a vendor's name on it, a  
66 cup of coffee, or other trinket-type items.
  - 67 o Plaques or similar items recognizing individual services in a field of  
68 specialty or to a charitable cause.
  - 69 o Honoraria or expenses paid for papers, talks, demonstrations or  
70 appearances made by employees on their own time, for which they are not  
71 compensated by the state, and which are not impermissible conflicts of  
72 interest with Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

- 73 3. Travel or meals from another source. An employee may not accept travel or meals  
74 or reimbursement related to the employee's work assignment with the college,  
75 university or system office from a source other than the state, unless it is:  
76 o Approved in advance in writing by the president or chancellor;  
77 o For no more than actual expenses incurred; and  
78 o Not reimbursed by the state.  
79 4. Consulting work by non-administrative university faculty. It is not a violation of  
80 the ethics code for non-administrative university faculty to accept remuneration  
81 and expense reimbursement from an outside source for outside consulting,  
82 employment, or other activities performed on duty days, if such activities are in  
83 accordance with Inter Faculty Organization Master Agreement Article 27, section  
84 C.

85 **Subpart C. Personal advantage.** Employees are not allowed to use their position to  
86 procure personal advantages not available to the general public. Faculty members may  
87 require the use of self-authored classroom textbooks, software and other course materials,  
88 subject to any applicable bargaining agreement provisions and college/university  
89 procedures.

90 **Subpart D. Use of state property.** All system property is also state property. With  
91 limited exceptions, state property is not to be used for personal or private use except as  
92 specifically authorized, (such as limited personal use of computers—see as provided in  
93 System Procedure 5.22.1 and incidental use of system cell phones, as provided in System  
94 Procedure 5.22.2). State long distance service, ~~business cell phones~~, or frequent flyer  
95 miles earned through state-authorized travel for state- related purposes may not be used  
96 for personal or private purposes.

97 **Subpart E. Political influence.** Employees may not use their position or system  
98 resources to advance a political party or candidate.

99 **Subpart F. Purchasing state property.** Employees involved in purchasing or contract  
100 decisions for the college, university, or system office may not have any personal financial  
101 interest in the purchase or contract, and may not accept any gift (other than one of  
102 nominal value) or other thing of value directly or indirectly from a vendor.

103 You can see these statutes at the links below:

- 104 • [Minnesota Statutes, sections 43A.38-39](#) (Code of ethics for employees in the  
105 executive branch)  
106 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 43A.32](#) (Political activities)  
107 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 15.43](#) (Financial interest; textbook exception)

108 **Part 4. Other Policies and Procedures.** As system employees, we must comply with all board  
109 policies and system procedures, and we are each responsible for being familiar with all policies  
110 and procedures that apply to our areas of responsibility. The following policies apply to all  
111 system employees. Hyperlinks in titles are to the applicable policy or procedure.

112 **Subpart A. [Nondiscrimination](#).** Our system strives to provide all members of our  
113 community with a work and educational environment that is collegial and free of illegal  
114 discrimination or harassment based on race, sex color, creed, religion, age, national  
115 origin, disability, marital status, status with regard to public assistance or sexual  
116 orientation, or membership in a local commission as defined by law. The policy and  
117 procedure explain that policy and tell employees, students or others how to seek  
118 assistance or make complaints, as may be appropriate.

119 Employees are not to enter into a romantic or sexual relationship with a student or  
120 another employee over whom the employee has direct supervisory responsibility or other  
121 significant authority, such as a student enrolled in a faculty member's class.

122  
123 See Procedure 1B.1.1 [Report/Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment Investigation](#)  
124 [and Resolution](#)

125 **Subpart B. [Sexual violence prohibited](#).** All of us deserve to work in an atmosphere that  
126 is free from sexual violence. Board policy prohibits sexual violence and the system  
127 procedure describes the process through which individuals alleging sexual violence may  
128 pursue a complaint. It is intended to protect the rights and privacy of both the  
129 complainant and respondent and other involved individuals, as well as to prevent  
130 retaliation and reprisal.

131 See System Procedure 1B.3.1 [Sexual Violence Procedure](#)

132 **Subpart C. [Fraud and other dishonest acts](#).** In order to ensure that we use our  
133 resources as effectively as possible and that we comply with the law, fraudulent and other  
134 dishonest acts are not tolerated. Employees are required to report fraud or other  
135 dishonest acts when they have a reasonable basis to believe such an act has  
136 occurred. Managers and supervisors are responsible for educating employees about  
137 proper conduct, creating an environment that deters dishonesty and maintains internal  
138 controls that provide reasonable assurance of achieving management objectives and  
139 detecting dishonest acts.

140 Examples of fraud or dishonest acts include taking cash or other property; making false  
141 time reports or reimbursement claims; forgery or alteration of documents or reports;  
142 improper handling or reporting of financial transactions or audit information; and  
143 incurring contractual or other obligations that exceed appropriations.

144 **Subpart D. [Intellectual property](#).** As a higher education system we recognize that  
145 research and development of original works and inventions that require intellectual  
146 property protection are a vital part of the academic community. This policy establishes  
147 the intellectual property ownership rights for the employer, employees, and students, and  
148 the procedures for ensuring protection of those rights.

149 **Subpart E. [Nepotism](#).** In an effort to ensure that we avoid any perception that state  
150 employment is based on favoritism and not on individual merit we have a policy on

151 nepotism. Under this policy, we may not participate in the hiring, supervision,  
152 performance reviews, or compensation decisions for any person who is a member of our  
153 family or household. In very limited cases where this is not possible without  
154 discriminating against the family member one or more of these activities may be  
155 permitted under strict procedures adopted by the chancellor.

156 **Subpart F. [Weapons and safety.](#)** To create a safe learning and working environment for  
157 students and employees, Board Policy 5.21, Possession or Carry of Firearms, and  
158 individual institution policies concerning Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence  
159 prohibit the presence of weapons and use of harassment.

160 Under the policy, employees and students generally are prohibited from having firearms  
161 on campus, except in their vehicles in college or university parking areas or for approved  
162 academic purposes. This policy is in accordance with the Minnesota Citizens' Personal  
163 Protection Act of 2003, Minnesota Statutes, section 624.714 and other applicable laws.

164 Zero Tolerance for Workplace Violence policies at each college or university and the  
165 system office promote a workplace that is free from violence, threats of violence  
166 harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. You can obtain copies of this  
167 policy from your human resources office.

168 **Subpart G. [Acceptable use of computers and technology.](#)** Computer and information  
169 technology resources are essential tools in accomplishing the mission of Minnesota State  
170 Colleges and Universities and its individual institutions. As with all public resources, we  
171 are to use these resources responsibly in order to ensure their availability for the  
172 competing demands of teaching, scholarship, administration, and other mission-related  
173 uses. Responsible management includes not sharing passwords, not allowing access by  
174 unauthorized users, and not using the resources for unauthorized purposes. Some types  
175 of limited personal use are allowed in accordance with System Procedure 5.22.1.

176 **Subpart H. [Information security and privacy.](#)** As state employees we are entrusted  
177 with public and private data every day in fulfilling our assigned work. Each of us is  
178 responsible for protecting the privacy, security, retention and disposal of the government  
179 records and data under our control or to which we have access, in accordance with  
180 applicable state and federal laws.

181 *You can see these related topics at the links below:*

182 [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#)

183 [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)

184 **Subpart I. [Alcohol and drug use.](#)** Employees are expected to perform their jobs  
185 efficiently, safely and in a professional business-like manner. An employee's ability to  
186 perform effectively may be hampered by alcohol or other drug use, and under state policy  
187 employees may not report to work under the influence, or operate machinery, vehicles or  
188 equipment while under the influence. Recognizing that alcoholism and other drug  
189 dependencies are a significant societal and personal problem, the state's employee

190 assistance program is available to assist system employees who may have an alcohol or  
191 drug abuse problem. The state's policy on work-related substance abuse is non-  
192 discriminatory in intent and application. However, in accordance with Minnesota Statutes  
193 §363A, disability does not include any condition resulting from alcohol or other drug  
194 abuse which prevents a person from performing essential functions of the job or creates a  
195 direct threat to property or the safety of individuals.

196 **Part 5. Reporting Suspected Fraud or Abuse.** As system employees we are required to report  
197 suspected acts of fraud, abuse, or other dishonest conduct if we have a reasonable basis to  
198 believe that such an act is occurring or has occurred, in accordance with [Board Policy 1C.2](#)  
199 [Fraudulent or Other Dishonest Acts](#). The report should be made to your supervisor or manager,  
200 unless you believe your supervisor or manager participated in or condoned the act. In that case,  
201 you should report the matter to the next highest level of supervision or management or directly to  
202 the college, university, or system office human resources office, or the [Office of Internal](#)  
203 [Auditing](#). You also may report such acts to the [Office of the Legislative Auditor](#).

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## 206 **Related Documents:**

- 207 • [Policy 1B.1](#) - Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education Opportunity
- 208 • [Procedure 1B.1.1](#) - Report/Complaint of Discrimination/Harassment Investigation and  
209 Resolution
- 210 • [Procedure 1B.3.1](#) Sexual Violence Procedure
- 211 • [Policy 1C.2](#) - Fraudulent or Other Dishonest Acts
- 212 • [Policy 3.26](#) - Intellectual Property
- 213 • [Policy 4.10](#) - Nepotism
- 214 • [Policy 5.21](#) - Possession or Carry of Firearms
- 215 • [Policy 5.22](#) - Acceptable Use of Computers and Information Technology Resources
- 216 • [Policy 5.23](#) - Security and Privacy of Information Resources
- 217 • [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about employee ethics issues
- 218 • [Mission and Vision](#) of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities
- 219 • The [Code of Ethics for Employees in the Executive Branch](#)
- 220 • [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#)
- 221 • [Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)
- 222 • [State of Minnesota's Alcohol and Other Drug Use in the Workplace Policy](#)

223 To view the following related statutes, go to the Revisor's website  
224 (<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/>). You can conduct a search from this site by typing in the  
225 statute number.

- 226 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 15.43](#)
- 227 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 43A.38-.39](#) (Code of ethics for employees in the executive  
228 branch)

- 229 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 43A.32](#) (Political activities)  
230 • [Minnesota Statutes, section 15.43](#) (Financial interest; textbook exception)

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## 232 **Procedure History:**

233 Date of Adoption: 05/19/08,  
234 Date of Implementation: 07/01/08,

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236 Date & Subject of Revisions:

237 1/25/12 - The Chancellor amends all current system procedures effective February 15, 2012, to  
238 change the term "Office of the Chancellor" to "system office" or similar term reflecting the  
239 grammatical context of the sentence.

240 There is no additional HISTORY for procedure 1C.0.1.

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