

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ◆ **Questions about Ethics.** If you are unsure about an ethics issue, talk to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unaware of the rules or has questions, he or she should contact the UW Office of General Counsel or campus legal counsel.
- ◆ **Reporting Misuse of University Resources.** If you are aware of a situation involving potential misuse of university resources or other possible ethics violations, you may report this activity to the university's internal audit department. The internal audit department may investigate the matter or refer it to other university authorities as appropriate. Contact information for campus internal audit departments is available online at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/fadmin/direct/intaud.htm>
- ◆ **Public Records Requests.** If a member of the media, or the public, requests access to university records that you manage, please refer the request to the public information officer or the public records custodian at your UW institution. You may also contact the UW Office of General Counsel or campus legal counsel.

## APPLICABLE RULES:

### **Code of Ethics for Classified Employees:**

Chapter ER-MRS 24, Wis. Admin. Code

### **Code of Ethics for Unclassified Employees:**

Chapter UWS 8, Wis. Admin. Code

### **Code of Ethics for Public Officials and Employees:**

Wis. Stat. Section 19.45

### **Electronic Records Management, Standards and Requirements:**

Chapter ADM 12, Wis. Admin. Code



Presented by the Office of General Counsel

1846 Van Hise Hall  
1220 Linden Drive  
Madison, WI 53706  
Phone: (608) 262-2995  
FAX: (608) 263-3487

To download a printable PDF of this brochure, visit:  
<http://www.uwsa.edu/gc-off/>

# Employee Ethics



# Public Records Management



University of Wisconsin System  
Presented by the Office of General Counsel

## EMPLOYEE ETHICS

University of Wisconsin System employees are subject to ethics rules covering use of university resources, conflicts of interest and acceptance of gifts. As a general rule, an employee may not use his or her university position to gain private financial or other benefits for the employee, the employee's immediate family, or an outside organization. Here are some tips for avoiding potential ethics violations:

- ◆ **Use of University Resources.** University resources such as office supplies, cell phones, meeting rooms and work time may be used only for university purposes. You may use your university land-line phone and email for minimal personal use consistent with university policies. It is improper to use university resources, including work-place internet access, email and telephone, for outside activities, including consulting, volunteering and politics.
- ◆ **Outside Consulting.** If you are an unclassified employee and you have an opportunity to do consulting or other work for an outside organization, you should discuss the opportunity with your dean or director to ensure that no conflict of interest is present. Consulting or other work for an outside organization in an area related to your area of expertise at your university must be reported to your dean or director. Chapter UWS 8 contains the applicable standards and procedures.
- ◆ **Personal Relationship with Vendors.** If you have a personal or familial relationship with a vendor who is doing business with your department or area, you should disclose that relationship to your supervisor so that steps can be taken if necessary to minimize or remove any potential conflict of interest.
- ◆ **Vendor-Sponsored Conferences.** If you intend to attend a vendor-sponsored conference and are in a position to approve or influence the university's decision to award contracts for products or services provided by the vendor, you should seek to have the university pay all the necessary transportation, lodging and similar costs associated with attending the conference. Faculty and staff who are not in a position to approve or influence the university's decision to award contracts may attend such conferences as part of an instructional or professional experience unrelated to the selection of a product or service. See Financial Policy Paper (FPP) 30.

- ◆ **Accepting Items of Value.** Don't accept meals, entertainment (e.g., golf outings, tickets to sporting events), or gifts from vendors or prospective vendors, even if intended to aid you in discussing university business. If a meal or event is appropriate, it should be paid for by the university through a Travel Expense Reimbursement (TER) form. This rule also applies to members of your immediate family if they receive items of value because of your university employment.
- ◆ **Items of Minimal Value.** You are not prohibited from accepting items of minimal value (e.g. pens, pencils, cups, etc.) from a vendor or similar organization.
- ◆ **Contract Signature Authority.** Only certain designated individuals have been delegated legal authority to sign contracts on behalf of the university. You should not sign a contract or agreement unless you have been officially delegated by your institution's contracting authority.
- ◆ **Confidential University Information.** You may not use or disclose confidential university information for reasons unrelated to your professional responsibilities or to gain anything of value for yourself or a member of your immediate family.
- ◆ **Nepotism.** If you are an unclassified employee, you may not participate in a decision to hire, retain, promote or determine the salary of a member of your immediate family. If you are a classified employee, you may not hire or promote a member of your immediate family unless that person has been certified from an open or competitive promotional register.

## PROPER MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC RECORDS

*As a university employee, materials that you create or receive in connection with the transaction of public business are public records. Proper management of public records is an important function of your job. In order to assist you, here are resources and guidance for achieving this function:*

- ◆ **Regent Policy: Public Records Management.** The roles and responsibilities of university employees in properly managing public records are set forth in RPD 3-2 University of Wisconsin System Public Records Management Policy. Please review this policy, which is available online at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/>

- ◆ **Public Records Management.** Public records can be destroyed only in accordance with records schedules, which have been approved by the State of Wisconsin Public Records Board and which establish the length of time records must be retained before destruction or transfer to UW Archives for permanent storage. Wisconsin law also requires each UW institution to appoint a records officer, whose job is to submit records schedules to the Public Records Board on behalf of your UW institution, and to provide you with training in records management. In order to find contact information for your records officer and review the records schedules applicable to the UW institution at which you work, please visit the following website: <http://www.uwsa.edu/gc-off/records/>
- ◆ **UW General Records Schedules.** In addition to records schedules for individual UW institutions, there are general records schedules that apply to all UW institutions, for fiscal and accounting; information technology; and transitory and routine correspondence, including email, voicemail, and instant messages. These schedules were developed by the UW Records Officers Council and are available for your review at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/gc-off/records/> Finally, please note that records management training will be available for all UW employees via webcast, which you will be able to view at your desktop anytime during the work day.
- ◆ **Regent Policy: Information Technology Resources.** The use of UW information technology resources by employees is governed by RPD 25-3 Policy on Use of University Information Technology Resources, which is available online at: <http://www.uwsa.edu/bor/policies/rpd/>
- ◆ **Electronic Records.** Electronic and paper records are all public records under the law. Thus, your work-related email, voicemail, and instant messages all comprise public records, which must be properly managed.
- ◆ **Confidentiality Required by Law.** Several state and federal laws require confidentiality for some public records, including health and student records. Ask your supervisor whether any confidentiality requirements impact your management of public records.