

# STANDARDS OF CONDUCT POLICY FOR EMPLOYEES

SLT 3.3

## **Date of Last Update:**

April 30, 2024

## **Approved By:**

- Senior Leadership Team

## **Responsible Office:**

Human Resources

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **A. Policy Statements**

1. As members of an academic community, faculty and staff have a responsibility to abide by ethical principles regarding academic freedom, intellectual integrity, and the fair and respectful treatment of others. The standards contained in this Standards of Conduct for Employees Policy reflect these principles.
2. A violation of this policy occurs when an individual negatively impacts colleagues in the workplace environment by failing to uphold these standards. When an individual's behaviors are out of sync with these standards, the University may address and remediate this behavior through alternative resolution practices and/or other appropriate disciplinary measures up to and including termination of employment.
3. No part of this policy is intended to supersede other university policies or federal, state, or local laws and regulations. Violations of this policy may be addressed in parallel with violations of other policies or laws as applicable.
4. **Standards of Conduct: Guiding Principles.** The following are informed by [the University's mission, vision, and values](#), as well as [GVSU employee core competencies](#). Some of the following language is derived from a similar policy at the University of Connecticut.
  - a. *Knowledge:* Members of the University community value truth, the pursuit of truth, intellectual curiosity, and academic freedom. Our faculty and staff seek to create new knowledge and are committed to sharing ideas, research findings and the products of intellectual and creative pursuits with the broader community.

*b. Honesty:* Members of the University community are truthful and sincere in their words and actions and do not intentionally mislead others or provide inaccurate information.

*c. Integrity:* Members of the University community treat everyone with dignity and respect and take responsibility for their own mistakes. We are driven to be accountable to ourselves and others as a core competency of all employees. This includes following through on words with actions.

*d. Respect:* Members of the University community seek to foster a spirit of civility and collegiality through open and honest communication. The University honors individuality, respects cultural differences, and demonstrates tolerance for the personal beliefs of all individuals. We strive to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all persons. We protect private and confidential information that is related to our faculty, staff, students, and others. We value an environment that is free from incivility, disrespect, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and violence.

*e. Professionalism:* Members of the University community expect that the professional standards and requirements that are applicable to academic and other professions comprising our community will be followed. We are responsible and accountable for our actions and are expected to make reasonable efforts to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local government laws and regulations. As individuals and as an institution, we also strive to follow ethical business practices and to act as good stewards of the resources made available to us.

5. This policy requires a good faith commitment to accuracy and integrity in information shared within our community, particularly when it forms the basis of formal inquiries or actions. Maintaining these standards is essential for the integrity of this policy and procedures and ensuring a cohesive and productive academic and work environment.

## PROCEDURES

### B. Procedures

**1. Consultation.** Employees experiencing a possible conduct issue should consult this and other relevant University policies and procedures. While informal resolution is encouraged, formal processes may be necessary. Employees should attempt to address concerns directly with colleagues or supervisors before initiating formal processes. Human Resources offers examples on different avenues

to explore to resolve concerns

<https://www.gvsu.edu/hro/restorative-based-alternative-dispute-resolution-1174.htm>

See also [SLT 3.3.1](#) (Non-Retaliation Policy for Faculty and Staff). The Standards of Conduct for Employees Policy exists to support colleagues in formally raising, responding to, and resolving grievances when appropriate. Consultation with a supervisor, other colleagues, the Ombuds Office, and the Human Resources Office is appropriate and valued and may be helpful in framing the concern and identifying the facts of the situation. Resolving a formal complaint about a possible Standards of Conduct for Employees Policy violation can be difficult for all those involved, and the University is committed to supporting all participants, including by keeping them informed of progress as appropriate.

**2. Reporting.** Potential violations of the Standards of Conduct for Employees Policy can be reported online at <https://cm.maxient.com/reporting.php?GrandValley> or by contacting the Human Resources Office via email at [complaints@gvsu.edu](mailto:complaints@gvsu.edu).

- a. Reports should include a brief description of the matter and a timeline that includes steps taken toward independent and/or informal resolution. Reports may also include identifying information about the involved parties, supporting documentation, and a desired resolution.
- b. Allegations of student misconduct should be reported to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#).
- c. Allegations of discriminatory harassment, including sexual misconduct, should be reported to the [Office of Civil Rights and Title IX](#).

**3. Intake.** Upon receiving a report, a Human Resources Office designee will schedule an intake meeting within five (5) business days to discuss resolution options. Efforts will be made to hold that meeting within ten (10) business days of receiving the report. The reporting party may decline attendance, understanding that it may limit the University's ability to address the reported behavior.

**4. Options for Resolution.**

- a. Discussion without further action.
- b. Utilizing alternative dispute practices. If this occurs, the responding party will be notified of the report and offered the opportunity to begin an alternative dispute resolution process. All parties must enter this process willingly.
- c. Formal resolution through investigation or appropriate policy mechanisms.

d. In rare cases of significant disruption or danger to the university community at the determination of the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, or designee, formal processes may be initiated without the reporting party's request. If this occurs, the reporting party will be notified that the matter is being pursued before the responding party is notified.

**5. Notification of Appointing Officer.** If options 4c or 4d are pursued, the Appointing Officer will be notified as indicated in the appropriate policy mechanism.

**6. Fact-Finding.** Additional information may be gathered to determine appropriate intervention. In such instances, the Human Resources Office designee will notify the reporting party and responding party that fact-finding is being initiated. The Division of Inclusion and Equity, which coordinates centralized investigations, will appoint a trained investigator to conduct fact-finding. While each investigation is unique, the goal is to resolve this fact-finding within 20 business days from the time the report is assigned to an investigator. Delays will be communicated to both parties.

**7. Draft Report.** Following fact-finding, a Draft Report summarizing relevant information will be shared with both parties, Appointing Officer and Executive Officer of the responding party, and the Human Resources Office. Both parties have five (5) business days to submit a response to the Draft Report, which will then become part of the Final Report.

**8. Decision.** The investigator(s) will create a Final Report and determine, based on a preponderance of evidence standard, whether a violation of the Standards of Conduct for Employees Policy occurred. The Final Report will be shared with both parties, Appointing Officer and Executive Officer of the responding party, and the Human Resources Office.

**9. Action.** If a violation is found, appropriate action will be determined by the responding party's Appointing Officer, in consultation with their Executive Officer and a Human Resources representative. The Appointing Officer will communicate their decision to the responding party within five (5) business days of issuance of the Final Report. At the same time, the Human Resources Office will communicate to the reporting party if action is being taken without disclosing the nature of the action.

**10. Appeals.** Either party may appeal the decision, in writing, within ten (10) business days, citing reasons for appeal.

a, An appeal can only be based on one of the following reasons which must be identified in the initial appeal notice:

i. Whether appropriate procedures were followed.

ii. Whether the decision was supported by evidence.

iii. Whether all relevant information was available at the time of the original investigation.

b. Appeals will be considered by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources, or designee, with the decision being final.

c. If the Associate Vice President for Human Resources is involved in decision-making at any stage of this process, the Vice President & Chief of Staff to the President, or designee, will handle the appeal.

d. Filing an appeal does not preclude an employee from utilizing the grievance process under a collective bargaining agreement.

e. Written appeals must be sent to [complaints@gvsu.edu](mailto:complaints@gvsu.edu).

**11. Retaliation.** Retaliation against anyone who reports ethical misconduct, assists someone filing a report, and/or who serves as a witness during fact-finding is prohibited by the University's Non-Retaliation Policy for Faculty and Staff. Individuals who may have experienced retaliation may contact the Human Resources Office. For more information, see the university's Non-Retaliation Policy for Faculty and Staff.

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