Scope:

These Standards of Conduct ("SOC") apply to all employees at The University of Texas at Dallas ("UTD" "UT Dallas" or the "University").

Purpose:

UT Dallas acknowledges the ethical responsibilities inherent in its academic and research operations. The Standards of Conduct serve as a supplementary and clarifying resource for existing University policies, procedures, and rules. Importantly, they do not replace, limit, or alter any existing policies. While this SOC does not cover every scenario, it focuses on essential and recurring activities involving UTD employees in our day-to-day business and workplace operations, providing answers to common questions and scenarios.

All employees are expected to familiarize themselves with this information. To ensure the comprehensiveness of the Institutional Compliance Program, new employees will acknowledge that they have read, understood, and will adhere to the terms of the Institutional Compliance Program and Standards of Conduct. This confirmation will be part of the New Employee Orientation. Additionally, the SOC will be distributed to all employees annually and anytime significant, substantive changes occur.

The success and culture of the University hinge on everyone’s integrity, professionalism, understanding of responsibilities, and commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards in executing UTD’s mission of excellence. UTD expects each employee will conduct all activities in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations, demonstrating the highest level of ethical integrity.

Ethical Conduct Principles:

Section 1. Excellence and Integrity

At UT Dallas, we uphold a commitment to excellence and integrity in all our operations, services, and conduct. Every member of the UTD community is expected to always adhere to ethical and professional standards. Additionally, the University complies with federal, state, and local laws, fulfills agreements, and honors relevant policies. Together, we share the responsibility of fostering a positive and productive environment for the entire UTD community.
PROPERTY LOSS. As stewards of UTD’s resources, all employees bear a responsibility to exercise reasonable care in the safekeeping of such property. This duty extends to preventing loss due to theft or other causes. If any loss occurs due to negligence, the responsible individual will be liable for the resulting damage.

CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS. Only individuals expressly authorized, in writing, by the President may enter into contracts or agreements on behalf of UTD, whether orally or in writing.

PURCHASES FOR ITEMS, GOODS, OR SERVICES. University employees may not expend University funds for any purchase unless the person is authorized to do so, and the purchase is made in accordance with all institutional purchasing procedures. Additionally, University employees should actively contribute to achieving the current Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) purchasing goals.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND COMMITMENT. University employees are prohibited from having a direct or indirect interest, financial or otherwise, in a corporation or business that could substantially conflict with or reasonably influence the discharge of the employee's official duties at the University. All employees are expected to annually disclose any financial arrangements with external companies or entities that might create a potential conflict of interest and commitment.

FRAUD, WASTE, AND ABUSE. Every employee has the responsibility to prevent fraud, waste, and abuse. The University of Texas System Dishonest or Fraudulent Activities Policy specifies individual responsibilities and actions regarding fraud/dishonest acts.

- **Fraud**: Knowingly and willfully attempting to receive financial gain by making false statements or developing a scheme to receive anything of value.

- **Abuse**: Engaging in activities that result in excessive or unreasonable costs to the University, or other state or federal agencies.

Employees discovered engaging in fraud or abuse will face disciplinary action, including termination and possible prosecution, as applicable.

GIFTS AND GRATUITIES. Employees are prohibited from accepting or soliciting any gift, favor, or service that could potentially influence the discharge of their official duties or compromise their impartiality.
HONORARIUM. Employees should not accept or agree to receive an honorarium unless it aligns with their official responsibilities.

KICKBACKS. Kickbacks are undisclosed payments, gifts, or services offered in return for something of value, increased business, or business referral. It is a criminal offense to receive or solicit any remuneration, including a gift, cash, bribe, rebate, or discount in return for referring an individual or patient to the University or for any service offered by UTD. It is also a crime to receive or solicit remuneration in return for purchasing, ordering, or arranging for or recommending purchasing, leasing, or ordering any good or service. Violators may face disciplinary action, including termination and legal consequences, if applicable.

DUAL EMPLOYMENT. When considering dual employment, transparency is key. Employees must seek approval from their home department and Human Resources before taking on additional roles within the University or with external entities (i.e. State of Texas agency, or with any vendor who provides services to the University). All payments to employees are subject to withholding and employment taxes.

OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT. Our faculty and staff are dedicated to UTD’s mission. Outside employment should enhance – not hinder their contributions. We encourage open communication with department leadership and Human Resources to navigate any potential conflicts. There are numerous regulations governing outside employment. Generally, these regulations prohibit employees from outside employment that would cause a conflict of interest or conflict of commitment. Full-time employees must receive permission from the University before accepting employment or independent contractor status of any type from another State of Texas agency or any vendor who provides services to the University.

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL OF RECORDS. The University is required to maintain an active and continuing records management program. This program identifies vital and confidential records and ensures the appropriate retention and disposition of records. Employees must adhere to this policy and refrain from tampering with or destroying records except as permitted by applicable laws and the approved Records Retention Schedule.

TIME KEEPING. All eligible employees who earn vacation and sick leave must accurately report their leave in accordance with University procedures. It is essential to maintain complete records of hours worked, specific leave taken, to include vacation, sick and personal leave, compensatory, and equivalent time balances.

REPORTING. Employees are expected to promptly report any good-faith concerns related to known or suspected violations of laws, rules, policies, or regulations, or improper activities. Reporting channels include contacting immediate supervisors, the next level of supervision, the Chief Compliance Officer, or the Office of Institutional Compliance (“IC”).
Anonymous reporting is available through the Ethics and Compliance Hotline (1-888-228-7707). Additionally, employees can report sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and stalking directly to the Title IX Coordinator or follow other reporting channels outlined in the Sexual Misconduct Policy. Any disciplinary or retaliatory action against individuals who report suspected wrongdoing in good faith, reporting, or causing to be reported, or for assisting in an authorized investigation is subject to consequences, including dismissal from the University.

**Responsible Employee.** Responsible Employees are required to report all acts reasonably believed to be any type of Sexual Misconduct. This requirement applies to all employees, except confidential employees, which are defined as counselors in the Counseling Center and health care providers in the Student Health Center.

**Section 2. Research and Innovation**

As a major comprehensive research and teaching institution, UT Dallas serves as a center for learning, scholarship, and innovation. Our mission is to provide excellent and innovative education and research to the State of Texas and the nation. Members of the University community are responsible for conducting their work with the utmost integrity, adhering to federal and state laws, as well as university policies.

**Research Integrity.** One of the University’s key objectives is to create a scientific community that upholds high ethical standards during research endeavors while also encouraging creativity in scientists and academicians. To achieve this, the University emphasizes integrity in research projects, where investigators maintain permanent, auditable records of experimental protocols, data, and findings. Research misconduct will not be tolerated. Faculty and employees engaged in any type of research must adhere to all applicable laws and regulations. When requesting reimbursement, individuals should submit accurate and allowable costs directly related to each specific research grant or contract. Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that costs charged comply with applicable costing regulations and grant conditions.

**Intellectual Property.** Intellectual property encompasses inventions, discoveries, trade secrets, technologies, creations, scientific or technological developments, computer software, or other expressions of ideas rising from the activities of University personnel, including employees or candidates for master’s or doctoral degrees. The University of Texas System Board of Regents asserts ownership over the intellectual property created by its students and employees under specific conditions:

- Created by an employee within the scope of employment
- Created by an employee using university facilities or state financial support
- Commissioned by UTD or The University of Texas System pursuant to a signed contract
• Falls within one of the nine categories of works considered ‘works for hire’ under copyright law
• Results from research supported by federal funds or third-party sponsorship.

University employees must promptly disclose to UTD any intellectual property they create before submitting it for publication, making public disclosures, or sharing it with commercial entities.

**PHOTOCOPYING OF COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL.** Most works should be presumed to be copyright protected unless further information from the copyright holder or express notice reveals that the copyright holder intends the work to be in the public domain. In accordance with our policy, permission must be obtained from the copyright owner to copy copyrighted materials when: copying extends beyond the boundaries outlined in our copyrighted materials policy; advice from The University of Texas System’s Office of General Counsel has not been sought; the copying does not fall under the fair use provisions.

**CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.** Confidential information about the University’s students, employees, strategies, and operations holds significant value. While employees may use confidential information to perform their duties, sharing such information – whether inside or outside of the University - must be done judiciously. Disclosure should align with applicable laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

Confidential information should only be shared with individuals who have a legitimate need to know. This ensures that sensitive data remains protected. Types of Confidential Information include personnel data, student records, research findings, financial data, strategic plans, marketing strategies, employee lists, supplier details, subcontractor information, and proprietary software. When collecting information from individuals (such as students and patients), the University must clearly disclose their rights under federal regulations. The University strictly adheres to federal and state privacy laws, including the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of students, employees, and patients.

**Section 3. Service and Community Partnerships**

*In fostering a thriving UTD community, all members play a vital role in promoting the institution’s overall wellbeing and the welfare of its students, colleagues, and other constituents. Additionally, employees actively contribute to advancing the interests of the State of Texas through research, teaching, and the preservation and dissemination of knowledge through its state and federally funded research centers, academic programs, arts facilities, and public programs.*
USE OF STATE-OWNED PROPERTY. As responsible stewards of the University's assets, employees are entrusted with preserving resources such as time, materials, supplies, equipment, and information. Institutional assets must be exclusively for state purposes. While incidental use of items like e-mail, the Internet, and telephones is permissible, it must comply with all applicable policies and should not result in additional costs to the University. Personal financial gain through university resources is strictly prohibited. Additionally, telephone logs and e-mail records are considered public property and may be subject to open records requests.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. An employee may participate in political activities provided such activities:

- are not conducted during work hours.
- are compliant with the constitution and laws of the State of Texas.
- do not interfere with the discharge and performance of the employee's duties and responsibilities.
- do not involve the use of equipment, supplies, or services of the University.
- do not involve coercion of students, faculty, or staff to participate in or support political activities.
- do not involve the University in partisan politics.

In addition, employees are not allowed to support or oppose legislation (in writing or orally) while representing UTD.

POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS. Political contributions from any source of university funds are prohibited.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH ELECTED OFFICIALS. The Office of Government and Community Relations is responsible for engaging with elected officials at the local, state, and federal levels. Their purpose is to advocate for UTD's legislative funding and policy priorities, both current and future. State law and University policy strictly prohibit employees from representing the University while expressing personal opinions for or against any legislative action. This applies to official University business and the use of University resources, including stationery, e-mails, telephones, and other communication tools.

CONTACTS WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND OUTSIDE INVESTIGATORS. The University recognizes the importance of cooperating with government investigations. When faced with reasonable demands from any governmental agency investigating UTD or a University employee, our cooperation is essential. However, we also prioritize protecting the legal rights of both the University and its employees. If an employee receives a subpoena, inquiry, or other legal documents related to university business – whether at home or in the workplace - immediately notify the Office of Legal Affairs. Prompt communication ensures that our legal rights are safeguarded. While we don't prohibit employees from speaking to government investigators or agents, we recommend a cautious approach. If an investigator, agent, or attorney contacts an
employee at home regarding UTD business, politely request they contact you during business hours and use your official University phone number or email. This helps protect both you and the University.

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA. The Office of Communications serves as the University’s official spokesperson. If a member of the media requests information or is present on the University campus, employees should promptly contact the Office of Communications. Similarly, if any member of the media reaches out to an employee, kindly direct them to the Office of Communications. After hours, a representative from the Office of Communications is available to assist with media inquiries.

Section 4. Safety, Security, and Sustainability

At UTD, we prioritize health, safety, and security while promoting sustainability. Our commitment enhances the quality of the campus experience. This commitment is a shared responsibility where each employee has a critical role in protecting individual and collective institutional wellness.

COMPUTER INFORMATION SECURITY. Computer passwords are highly confidential and should be treated as sensitive information. It is essential to never disclose your computer passwords to anyone, whether colleagues, friends, or family members. Remember that disclosing passwords violates the Texas Penal Code, and penalties can range from a Class B misdemeanor to a felony, depending on the associated monetary damage. Protecting passwords is not only good practice but also a legal requirement.

Additionally, avoid writing down passwords or documenting them in easily accessible places. Commit them to memory or use secure password management tools. Our collective efforts contribute to a safer digital environment for everyone.

COMPUTER SOFTWARE. Employees using software licensed to the University must adhere to applicable software license agreements. Copying licensed software is only permissible as outlined by the license terms. Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted software is a violation of federal copyright law. Additionally, installing licensed software on more than one computer is illegal unless the license explicitly allows multiple installations. Employees should direct questions about applicable software license agreements to their supervisor or call (972) 883-2911.

DRUG -FREE WORKPLACE. UTD is committed to maintaining a drug-free environment. Faculty and staff must not report to work under the influence of illegal, controlled substances or alcohol. Additionally, any unlawful manufacture, sale, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of a controlled substance is strictly prohibited on University controlled property. The use of alcoholic beverages is prohibited within university facilities. However, the President may waive this prohibition
for events sponsored by the University. Faculty and staff are required to promptly notify the Chief Human Resources Officer within five (5) calendar days of any conviction related to a controlled substance offense occurring on university premises. If you suspect anyone of possessing, using, or selling alcohol or illegal drugs, please report it to UT Dallas Police at 2911.

**CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK REQUIREMENTS FOR EMPLOYEES.** A criminal background check will be conducted on:

- Current employees who are finalists for externally posted positions.
- Interns, volunteers, and students participating in programs with assignments involving contact with minors.
- A current employee when the President, or their designee, determines it is necessary to advance the institutions objectives.

**Self-Reporting:** UTD employees must promptly report any criminal complaint, indictment, no contest plea, guilty plea, or criminal convictions (including whether registered as a sex offender or required to register as one), excluding misdemeanor offenses punishable by fine, to the Chief Human Resources Officer within five (5) business days. Failure to report is a policy violation and subject to disciplinary action, as applicable.

For more information, see the *Handbook of Operating Procedures, UTDBP3000*, "Criminal Background Checks"

**ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS.** UT Dallas is committed to compliance with all environmental laws and regulations relevant to its operations. Each of our facilities operates with the necessary permits, approvals, and controls. We actively prioritize the preservation of natural resources to the extent reasonably possible. UTD adheres to appropriate procedures for handling and disposing of hazardous waste, including but not limited to medical waste. The University makes reasonable efforts to minimize waste resulting from university activities. Appropriate receptacles must be used for the disposal of sharps, glass, waste, and other materials. While the University is not subject to Federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) guidelines; we diligently follow state laws and regulations, specifically the *Texas Hazard Communication Act*.

**WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY.** University employees must carry out their duties in compliance with institutional policies, federal, state, and local laws, and standards related to environment protection and worker health and safety. It is essential for employees to understand how these regulations apply to their specific job responsibilities. Employees should seek advice from their supervisor or the Office of Institutional Risk and Safety Programs, as needed. Each employee is responsible for promptly notifying their supervisor or the Office of Institutional Risk and Safety Programs.
of any serious workplace injury or situations that pose a danger of injury. Supervisors play a crucial role by reporting unsafe practices or conditions to the Office of Institutional Risk and Safety Programs.

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.** Ensuring a safe working environment for employees is a priority. Violence in the workplace is not tolerated at UTD. Such behavior is not only unprofessional but may be illegal. Employees involved in violent actions against others or making verbal or written threats will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment. Employees who witness or experience harassment, discrimination, or any form of workplace violence should promptly report it to their supervisor, the Office of Institutional Compliance, department leadership, or the Ethics and Compliance Hotline (1-888-228-7707). Incidences of violence should be reported immediately to UT Dallas Police at 911.

**Section 5. Workplace Protections**

**ACCESS TO FACILITIES AND SERVICES.** UTD is committed to complying with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The University provides equal employment opportunities and equal access to all university facilities and services for individuals with disabilities.

**EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY.** The University is an Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. Equal employment and educational opportunities are provided without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, national origin, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. Our commitment means that no person will be excluded from participation, denied benefits, or subjected to discrimination under any university sponsored program or activity. The University takes affirmative steps to ensure equal treatment in recruitment, retention, promotion, compensation, benefits, and training.

**FAIR LABOR STANDARDS ACT.** The Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) mandates accurate time and leave records for all non-exempt employees at the University. Non-exempt employees are compensated for hours worked beyond forty (40) hours in a single week. Prior approval is necessary for overtime, compensatory, and equivalent time. For detailed information on overtime, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

**FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT.** Eligible employees may request and receive unpaid leave of absence for up to twelve (12) weeks per year under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). This leave covers specific family and medical reasons. For eligibility criteria, please contact the Office of Human Resources.

**SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT.** The University is committed to maintaining a professional and respectful working environment. Inappropriate sexual conduct, including sexual harassment and sexual misconduct are
illegal and strictly prohibited. Employees who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

## Section 6. Results Oriented Conduct

*UTD seeks to maintain a climate that enables employees to engage in learning, research, and service. All employees are accountable for fulfilling their responsibilities with ethical integrity, and good faith. Sound judgment and serving the best interests of the institution and the community are expected from everyone.*

**ACCURACY OF RECORDS.** All records, whether data, operational, or financial, must adhere to applicable laws and policies. Altering or falsifying information on any record or document is strictly prohibited. Examples of critical records include billings to third-party payors (government and private) and federally sponsored research.

**AUDIT NOTIFICATION.** The Office of Audit and Consulting Services coordinates all audit activities at the University. Proper access to relevant records and information is their responsibility. Whenever an external agency plans an audit, timely notification to the Office of Audit and Consulting Services is essential.

## History

Revised: August 1, 2024