



**TEXAS WOMAN'S**  
UNIVERSITY

2020 Ethics Training

# Introduction

TWU's ethical culture is built and maintained by our employees and leaders, every day. Your decisions and actions, as well as those of our coworkers, really make a difference because they define who we are and what our work environment and reputation will be.

# Purpose

- To introduce employees to the laws of ethics governing conduct of state employees.
- Employees must receive training:
  - Within first 30 days of employment
  - Supplemental training required yearly
- For further information, access the Ethics Policy on the TWU web pages at [URP: V.15.b Ethics Policy for Employees](#)

# Reporting Options

- Talk to your supervisor
- Office of Human Resources
- Public Safety
- Higher-level management
- Ethics Hotline

All concerns will be taken seriously and no retaliation will be allowed against anyone who makes a good faith complaint or participates in an investigation.

# Ethical Laws for State Employees

- Personal and Conflict of Interest
- Benefits and Gifts
- Abuse of Office
- Political Activities
- Travel
- Credit Cards
- Dual Employment
- Fraud

# Ethical Conduct

- Ethical conduct is a personal responsibility
- Each employee will be held accountable for his/her conduct
- Failure to follow ethical policy guidelines may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination

# Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest

A state employee should not:

- Accept or solicit any gift, favor, or service that might reasonably tend to influence official duties;
- Accept other employment or engage in a business that would involve the disclosure of confidential information;
- Accept other employment that could impair independence of judgment;

# Standards of Conduct and Conflict of Interest

A state employee should not:

- Make personal investments that could create a conflict with public interest; or
- Intentionally or knowingly solicit, accept, or agree to accept any benefit for exercising official powers or duties.



# Acceptance of Benefits

- Bribery
- Honoraria (a payment given for professional services that are rendered nominally without charge).
- Prohibitions on Gifts
- Exceptions to Gift Prohibitions
- Gifts Prohibited by the Lobby Statute
- Gifts to State Agencies
- Donation of Gifts to Charities

# Acceptance of Benefits

A “benefit” is anything reasonably regarded as  
\*pecuniary gain or \*pecuniary advantage.

\*of or relating to money

# Bribery

A state employee commits bribery if he/she solicits, offers, or accepts a “benefit” in exchange for a decision, opinion, recommendation, vote, or other exercise of his/her official discretion.

# Honoraria

Payment for professional services for which custom forbids a price to be set

- Prohibited: Accepting an honorarium where services are requested because of the employee's official position or duties.
- Permitted: Food, transportation and lodging in connection with a speaking engagement if the participation by the employee is more than merely perfunctory.

# Prohibitions on Gifts

The following gifts are examples of benefits:

- \$50 clock
- Hotel room
- Football tickets
- \$160 rifle
- \$60 restaurant meal

# Prohibitions on Gifts

Example:

In a state agency, an employee may not accept a benefit from someone the employee knows to be subject to the regulation, inspection, or investigation by the employee or the agency.

# Prohibitions on Gifts

Example:

A state employee who works with contracts, purchases, payments, claims, or other pecuniary transactions, may not accept a benefit from someone the employee knows to be interested or likely to become interested in such a transaction.

# Exceptions to Gifts Prohibitions

State employees can accept:

- Non-cash items less than \$50. State employees may never accept cash.
- Food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment if accepted as a “guest.” (donor must be present)
- Gifts from friends, relatives, or business associates with whom you have a relationship independent of official status.



# Exceptions to Gifts Prohibitions

State employees can accept:

- Payment for legitimate consideration
- Certain gifts, awards and mementos from persons required to register as lobbyists.

# Gifts to State Agencies

A gift may be accepted on behalf of the agency only if:

- The agency has express statutory authority to accept gift:
- The gift can be used in carrying out the agency's powers and duties; and
- All provisions of Govt. Code Chapter 575 have been met.

# Donation of Gifts to Charity

A state employee who receives an unsolicited benefit that he/she cannot accept, may donate the benefit to a governmental entity that has the authority to accept the gift or to a recognized tax-exempt charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes.

# Abuse of Office

- Misuse of government property, service, personnel or any other thing of value
- Political campaigns
- Misuse of official information

# Misuse of Government Property, Services and Personnel

A state employee commits an offense if, with the intent to obtain a benefit or harm or defraud another, he/she misuses government property, services, personnel, or any other thing of value belonging to the government that has come into the state employee's custody or possession by virtue of his/her employment.

# Misuse of Government Property, Services and Personnel

State employees should not:

- Use TWU vehicles for personal use
- Use TWU equipment for personal use
- Use TWU funds for personal use
- Make long distance calls that result in a cost to TWU

# Misuse of Official Information

- Use official information to acquire or assist someone else to acquire a pecuniary interest in any property, transaction, or enterprise
- Speculate or aid another to speculate on the basis of official information
- Disclose or use the information to obtain a benefit or harm another
- Use state time or state equipment to work on a person's political campaign
- Use appropriated funds to influence legislation

# Political Activities

State employees may:

- Take sufficient time off to vote in public elections with no deduction from pay or accrued leave time
- Run for election and serve as members of governing bodies of school districts, cities, towns, or local government districts but, if elected, may not receive a salary for serving as a member



# State Travel

Follow TWU and State of Texas travel regulations regarding transportation, meals and lodging requirements.

Travel regulations are found on the University [Procurement Services web pages](#).

# Travel Reimbursement

- To qualify for reimbursement, the purpose of the trip must be for “state business” or “official business” of TWU  
“State” or “official” business means business that accomplishes a government function directly entrusted to TWU
- If travel expenses are reimbursed by non-TWU funds, do not submit a claim for reimbursement from TWU
- Immediately refund any overpaid travel expenses received
- Employees traveling under contracts or grants are reimbursed for travel expenses on the same basis as other TWU employees unless specifically stated in the contract or grant

# Frequent Flyer Miles

Frequent Flyer Miles are not considered things of value belonging to the government under the Penal Code.

At TWU you are not required to use them for business purposes

# Dual Employment Within Two or More State Agencies

- Notify both agencies before accepting dual employment
- An employee's TWU position is his/her primary responsibility.
  - The additional job may not interfere with the regular work of the employee
  - The amount of time taken for outside employment and related activities is reasonable.

# Fraud & Fraudulent Activities

Fraud encompasses an array of irregularities and illegal acts characterized by intentional deception. These include (but are not limited to) theft, embezzlement, bribery, misappropriation, kickbacks, destruction or removal of property, conflicts of interest, and cyber crimes.

# Reporting Fraud

- TWU employees are to report incidents of fraud or suspected fraud in accordance with procedures outlined in the TWU [Policy URP: I.15.a Fraud and Fraudulent Activities](#)
- You can report fraud or suspected fraud to the [Office of Audit Services](#) at (940) 898-3260.

# State Issued Credit Cards

- Do not use State credit cards for personal expenses
- Not all official business purchases are fully reimbursable under state and/or TWU guidelines. [Procurement Services](#) as guidelines on what items are reimbursable.
- Payment of charges on individual cards is the responsibility of the employee. TWU will not be responsible for the charges, regardless of the type of charge.

# Please Read

To receive credit for this training you must complete your information and questions located on the link below:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/ZFN8MDH>

If you have any other questions, please direct them to the Office of Human Resources at 940-898-3555.