

Code of Ethical Conduct

System Policy: 07.01

Approved: February 27, 1995

Most Recent Revision: November 12, 2020

Next Scheduled Review: November 12, 2025

Responsible University Offices:

A&M System Ethics and Compliance Office

Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

The Texas A&M University System has established a code of ethics to ensure that ensure all employees of the A&M System are held to the highest ethical standards. System Policy [07.01](#), *Ethics*, describes principles of conduct that highlight the essential elements of an ethical and responsible learning, teaching, and scholarly environment: (a) honesty, accountability, transparency, respect, and trust; (b) integrity of the highest caliber; (c) conduct that is indisputable and beyond reproach; (d) openness and fairness; and (e) commitment to compliance. These principles guide minimal behavior expected of all university employees. Faculty members are expected to uphold these principles by incorporating them into their daily activities as members of the university community. Failure to uphold the ethical principles and code of ethical conduct outlined in System Policy 07.01 may result in disciplinary action up to, and including, dismissal.

In addition, the [American Association of University Professors Statement on Professional Ethics](#) (AAUP, 1966, revised 1987, 2009) frames ethical conduct for faculty members. Faculty members have responsibilities as scholars in their academic disciplines, as teachers, as colleagues, as members of an academic institution, and as members of their community. The following summarizes key points in the AAUP statement.

1. Professors are "guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge." Their "primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it" by devoting "their energies to developing and improving their scholarly competence;" by exercising "critical self-discipline and judgment in using, extending, and transmitting knowledge;" and by practicing "intellectual honesty."
2. As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning, modeling for their students "the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline." They demonstrate respect for their students as individuals, maintain professional roles as "intellectual guides and counselors ... avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students....and acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance" they receive from students.
3. As colleagues, professors share common membership in a community of scholars that brings with it obligations. They avoid harassment or discriminatory treatment toward colleagues. They respect and defend colleagues' free inquiry,

acknowledge academic debt, and strive for objectivity in their professional judgment of colleagues. In addition they "accept their share of faculty responsibilities for the governance of their institution."

4. Above all, professors seek to be effective teachers and scholars. They observe the stated regulations of their institution while maintaining "their right to criticize and seek revision." When determining the amount and character of outside work they do they "give due regard to their paramount responsibilities within their institution." When considering interrupting or terminating their service to the university they "recognize the effect of their decision upon the program of the institution and give due notice of their intentions."

5. Professors have the rights and obligations of other citizens. When speaking or acting as private persons in their communities they "avoid creating the impression of speaking or acting for their college or university." Finally, they recognize their obligation to "promote conditions of free inquiry and to further public understanding of academic freedom."

See Sections III and VI of this handbook for policies and procedures that further describe specific expectations for professional ethical conduct of faculty members at Texas A&M University-Commerce.