

Our Commitment

NorthWest Arkansas Community College is an organization with strong values of responsibility and integrity. NWACC is committed to conducting its affairs ethically and in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, as well as college policy. The College strives to create an environment where open, honest communications are the expectation, not the exception.

We want you to feel comfortable in approaching your supervisor or management in instances where you believe violations of policies or standards have occurred. In situations where you do not feel comfortable making an internal report, you may choose to use the College's confidential, third party reporting provider, EthicsPoint. You are also encouraged to submit reports as well as asking for guidance related to policies and procedure and providing positive suggestions and stories.

The information you provide will be sent to us by EthicsPoint for our Ethics Committee to review. You can remain anonymous if you choose. You have our guarantee that your comments will be heard.

See the [EthicsPoint FAQs](#) for more information.

Ethics Complaints Procedures

Introduction:

NorthWest Arkansas Community College provides the opportunity for employees and others to formally file complaints that allege ethical misconduct by employees and/or trustees. Written complaints can be filed directly with the Human Resources Director, who will forward the complaint to the Ethics Review Committee. Alternatively, individuals may file a complaint anonymously and confidentially through the NWACC EthicsPoint secure online portal.

These procedures are intended to address complaints that allege ethical misconduct. Due to the seriousness of allegations concerning ethical misconduct, all complaints should be filed within two months of discovery of the misconduct and should provide sufficient detail to substantiate the allegations. For example, when possible, the complaint should include the following:

- Nature of the alleged ethical misconduct
- Description of the alleged facts and date(s) of incident(s)
- Description of any steps already taken to address the misconduct
- Name of the person thought to be responsible for the alleged events
- Name(s) of any corroborating witnesses
- Other facts considered to be pertinent to the case

General Process:

1. When a complaint is received from a "Reporter" (person making the complaint), the person receiving the complaint will formally acknowledge receipt where possible and forward that complaint to the Ethics Review Committee.
2. If the Reporter has filed a complaint lacking sufficient detail, the Ethics Review Committee will notify the Reporter. The Reporter will be given an opportunity to substantiate the claim with factual information and/or documentation. This additional detail should be provided to the Ethics Review Committee within seven (7) business days of the notification of insufficient data to conduct a fair review. If the Reporter is unable to provide additional factual information substantiating the claim, the case may be closed and the Reporter will be notified in writing of this assessment.
3. If the Reporter has filed a complaint with sufficient detail to allow for a fair investigation, the Ethics Review Committee, or their designees, will review the case and work together to take the following steps, if such steps are appropriate:
 - a. Review the complaint to determine whether the complaint has been previously addressed in another forum (and if so, close the matter);
 - b. Promptly notify and meet with the employee against whom misconduct is alleged and inform them of their right to defend;
 - c. Promptly notify the Director of Human Resources to determine whether similar allegations have been made previously against the same employee regarding misconduct and to assess whether Human Resources' involvement in the matter is warranted;
 - d. Identify "need to know" individuals associated with the case; and
 - e. Determine whether an investigation is necessary and, if so, assign to an Ethics Investigator, and prepare an investigation plan that outlines the scope of the investigation, the individuals that will be interviewed, and the timetable for the investigation.
4. The Ethics Investigator will conduct the investigation. The employee and/or department against whom the allegation of misconduct was made shall be kept apprised of the status of the investigation and the timetable for completion. Such employee shall have prompt notice of and an opportunity to review and respond to documents provided to the investigator(s)
5. The Ethics Investigator, or his/her designees, will work collaboratively to obtain a resolution of the complaint within a reasonable time of the original receipt of the complaint from the Reporter. The Ethics Investigator may prepare a written report of the investigation and the decision on the complaint.
6. The investigation notes and report will be provided to the Ethics Review Committee. The Ethics Review Committee will review the findings of the investigation and provide a result of the outcome to the employee against whom the misconduct is alleged. If corrective or disciplinary action is required, the Ethics Review Committee will work with the Human Resource Office, departmental supervisors and/or Academic Dean to recommend appropriate corrective or disciplinary action. The Human Resources Office will retain any disciplinary actions on file for

individual employees. The Reporter will be kept apprised as to the status of the report and investigation, however, certain classified information and/or personnel information or actions taken may not be disclosed to the reporter.

7. Actions taken may include, but are not limited to, cancellation of a credit card, suspension of signature authority related to cost centers, removal of NWACC property or rights to NWACC property, or other similar preventative action and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or removal from office.

Communicating Resolution of Complaints to the Audit Committee

The Ethics Investigator shall be responsible for timely informing the Ethics Review Committee of the resolution of all complaints addressed through these procedures.

Duty of Good Faith

NWACC prohibits any member of the NWACC community from knowingly or recklessly bringing a false complaint of institutionally sanctionable conduct against another member of the NWACC community. Any such action can lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from office.

Confidentiality

Every reasonable effort will be made to protect the privacy and confidences of all parties, consistent with and subject to NWACC's need to investigate the complaint and/or implement any disciplinary action. Any feedback given to anonymous reporters through the Ethics Point or similar systems will be made in such a way as not to disclose any confidential information. There is no absolute obligation for NWACC to respond to an anonymous reporter.

Conflicts of Interest

No individual who has participated in or witnessed the alleged wrongdoing shall serve as an investigator or decision maker on the Ethics Review Committee.

Protection Against Retaliation

NWACC will not allow any form of retaliation against individuals for reporting or inquiring in good faith about potential violations of NWACC's ethics policies, for seeking guidance with respect to suspected ethical violations or cooperating in the investigation of reports or ethical violations in accordance with this policy. Anyone found to be engaging in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment or removal from office.