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About the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal

What is the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal?

The Portal is a confidential channel through which you can ask questions and raise concerns about ethics, compliance or Washington University's Code of Conduct.

What is our stance on retaliation?

Washington University does not tolerate retaliation. We consider acts of retaliation to be misconduct. We seek to provide a safe, healthy and productive workplace for our employees and our business partners who assist us in our business operations. Every report of retaliation is thoroughly investigated.

Who administers the portal?

The portal is administered by an independent company (NAVEX Global), is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and can accommodate calls in more than 75 languages.

Why do we need a system like this?

- We believe that our employees are our most important asset. By creating open channels of communication, we can promote a positive work environment and maximize productivity.
- Publicly traded companies are required by law to have an anonymous reporting vehicle to address accounting and auditing fraud directly to the audit committee.
- An effective reporting system will augment our other efforts to foster a culture of integrity and ethical decision-making.

Reporting – General

May I report using either the Internet or the telephone?

Yes. With the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal, you have the ability to file a confidential, anonymous report via either the telephone or the Internet.

What type of situations should I report?

The WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal is designed for employees to report any violation of our stated Code of Conduct, or other concern you may have.

If I see a violation, shouldn't I just report it to my manager, security, or human resources and let them deal with it?

When you observe some behavior that you believe violates our code of conduct, we expect you to report it. Ideally, you should bring any concerns forward to your direct manager, or other member of our management team. We recognize, however, that there may be circumstances when you are not comfortable reporting the issue in this manner. It is for such circumstances that we have partnered with NAVEX Global. We would rather you report anonymously than keep the information to yourself.

Why should I report what I know? What's in it for me?

We all have the right to work in a positive environment and with that right comes the responsibility of acting in an ethical manner and letting the appropriate people know if someone is not acting appropriately. By working together, we can maintain a healthy and productive environment.

Does management really want me to report?

We certainly do. In fact, we *need* you to report. You know what is going on in our university - both good and bad. You may have initial knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. Your reporting can minimize the potential negative impact on the university and our people. Also, offering positive input may help identify issues that can improve university culture and performance.

Where do these reports go? Who can access them?

Reports are entered directly on the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal, housed on the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. EthicsPoint makes these reports available only to specific individuals within the university who are charged with evaluating the report, based on the type of violation and location of the incident. Each of these report recipients has had training in keeping these reports in the utmost confidence.

Isn't this system just an example of someone watching over me?

The WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal concentrates on being a positive aspect of our overall philosophy, and allows us to assure a safe, secure, and ethical workplace. You are encouraged to seek guidance on ethical dilemmas, provide positive suggestions, or communicate a concern. Effective communication is critical in today's workplace and this is a great tool to enhance that communication.

We have carefully chosen the best reporting tool to meet our compliance obligations while maintaining a positive reporting environment.

Reporting Security & Confidentiality

It is my understanding that any report I send from a university computer generates a server log that shows every web-site that my PC connects with, and won't this log identify me as a report originator?

The WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your PC to this portal is available. In fact, this portal is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

If you feel uncomfortable making a report on your work PC, you have the option of using a PC outside our work environment (such as one located at an Internet café, at a friend's house, etc.) through this secure website. Many people choose this option, as data shows that fewer than 12% of reports are generated during business hours.

Can I file a report from home and still remain anonymous?

A report from home, a neighbor's computer, or any Internet portal will remain secure and anonymous. An Internet portal never identifies a visitor by screen name and the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is totally maintained. Plus, EthicsPoint, which administers the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal, is contractually committed not to pursue a reporter's identity.

I am concerned that the information I provide EthicsPoint will ultimately reveal my identity. How can you assure me that will not happen?

The EthicsPoint system is designed to protect your anonymity. However, if you wish to remain anonymous, you - as a reporting party - need to ensure that the body of the report does not reveal your identity by accident. For example, "From my cube next to Jan Smith..." or "In my 33 years...".

Is the telephone toll-free hot line confidential and anonymous too?

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information that you would provide in an Internet-based report and an interviewer will type your responses into the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal. These reports have the same security and confidentiality measures applied to them during delivery.

What if I want to be identified with my report?

There is a section in the report for identifying yourself, if you wish.

Tips & Best Practices

I am aware of some individuals involved with unethical conduct, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?

Our university chooses to promote ethical behavior. All unethical conduct, at any level, ultimately hurts the university and all employees, including you. You only have to consider what happened in recent university scandals to see the disastrous effects that a seemingly harmless lapse in ethics can have on an otherwise healthy university. So if you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, consider it your duty to yourself and your coworkers to report it.

I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a violation of university policy, or involves unethical conduct, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?

File a report. The WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal can help you prepare and file your report so it can be properly understood. We'd rather you report a situation that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

What if my boss or other managers are involved in a violation? Won't they get the report and start a cover-up?

The WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal and report distribution are designed so that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports in which they have been named.

What if I remember something important about the incident after I file the report? Or what if the university has further questions for me concerning my report?

When you file a report at the website or through the EthicsPoint Call Center, you receive a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the WashU Confidential Concern Reporting Portal again either by Internet or telephone and access the original report to add more detail or answer questions posed by a university representative and add further information that will help resolve open issues. We strongly suggest that you return to the site in the time specified to answer university questions. You and the university now have entered into an "anonymous dialogue," where situations are not only identified, but can also be resolved, no matter how complex.

Are these follow-ups on reports as secure as the first one?

All correspondences are held in the same strict confidence as the initial report, continuing under the umbrella of anonymity.

Can I still file a report if I don't have access to the Internet?

You can file a report from any computer that can access the Internet. You can file from home. Many public locations, including the public library, have Internet computers. If you don't have access to or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call the EthicsPoint toll-free hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.