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About EthicsPoint

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and private reporting tool created by NAVEX that enables USC administration and our University community to work together to address fraud, abuse, and other misconduct in the academic and workplace while cultivating a positive environment for all.

Why do we need a system like EthicsPoint?

- By living our Unifying Values and creating open channels of communication, we promote a positive work and learning environment and maximize productivity.
- An effective reporting system augments 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. EthicsPoint enables you to file a private, anonymous report either by telephone or online.

What types of situations should I report?

The EthicsPoint system allows employees to report any violation of University policies, our Code of Integrity and Accountability, or other concern you may have.

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

When you observe behavior that you believe violates University policies, our Code of Integrity and Accountability, or other concern, we expect you to report it. Ideally, you should bring any concerns forward to your direct supervisor, dean or department chair, or HR partner. 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. 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, learn, live and thrive 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 the University really want me to report?

We certainly do. In fact, we *need* you to report. 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 climate.

Further, many USC faculty and staff have reporting responsibilities, such as [Mandated Reporters](#) in certain instances involving minors or elder abuse, or Clery [Campus Security Authorities](#) (CSA) for crimes outlined in the University's Clery policy, or as [Designated Employees](#) under the university's [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#). *Designated Employees* include faculty, academic advisors, staff, and student employees in supervisory positions (e.g., teaching, research, and residential assistants) who must report any knowledge of sex or gender-based harassment and violence. The EthicsPoint system offers you a platform option to exercise and document these reporting obligations.

Where do these reports go? Who can access them?

Reports are entered directly on the EthicsPoint secure server. NAVEX 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. The Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) acts as a clearinghouse for concerns and will be notified when a report is filed through EthicsPoint, anonymously or otherwise. The OPE team will triage each report and determine the appropriate University office to review and initiate a resolution.

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

No. EthicsPoint is a positive aspect of our overall philosophy that allows us to ensure a safe, secure and ethical University community. You are encouraged to seek guidance on ethical dilemmas, provide positive suggestions, or communicate a concern. We have carefully chosen the best reporting tool to meet our compliance obligations while maintaining a positive reporting environment.

Reporting Security & Privacy

It is my understanding that any report I send from a USC computer generates a server log that shows every website that my device connects with. Won't this log identify me as the report originator?

NAVEX does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking a USC computer to EthicsPoint is available. However, please note, there are times when reports made anonymously may limit the University's ability to fully investigate concerns. The University will make every effort to maintain the privacy, where possible, of those who come forward.

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

A report from home, a neighbor's computer, or any other personal device connected to the Internet will remain secure and anonymous. An Internet portal never identifies a visitor by screen name and the EthicsPoint system strips away Internet addresses so that anonymity is totally maintained.

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 protects 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 hotline private and anonymous too?

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information that you would provide in an online-based report and an interviewer will type your responses into the EthicsPoint system. These reports have the same security and privacy measures applied to them during delivery.

What if I want to be identified with my report?

There is a section in the report to identify yourself, if you wish. You may also change your mind after making a report and identify yourself at a later time by logging back into EthicsPoint to provide that update. Reports made anonymously may limit the University's ability to fully investigate concerns. The University will make every effort to maintain the privacy, where possible, of those who come forward.

Tips & Best Practices

I am aware of some individuals acting unethically, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?

All unethical conduct, at any level, ultimately hurts the University community, including you. If you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, consider it your duty to yourself and our community to report it.

Further, many USC faculty and staff have reporting responsibilities, such as [Mandated Reporters](#) in certain instances involving minors and elder abuse, or Clery [Campus Security Authorities](#) (CSA) for crimes outlined in the University's Clery policy, or as [Designated Employees](#) under the university's [Policy on Prohibited Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation](#). *Designated Employees* include faculty, academic advisors, staff, and student employees in supervisory positions (e.g., teaching, research, and residential assistants) who must report any knowledge of sex or gender-based harassment and violence. The EthicsPoint system offers you a platform option to exercise and document these reporting obligations.

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. NAVEX 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.

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

The EthicsPoint system and report distribution ensure that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports in which they have been named. The Office of Professionalism and Ethics (OPE) is the sole office that receives reports and who makes the determination which University office or officials may need to review further.

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 EthicsPoint website or through the EthicsPoint Call Center, you receive a unique, randomized number called a "Report Key" and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system again either by Internet or telephone and access the original report to add more detail or answer questions posed by a University representative. We strongly suggest that you return to the EthicsPoint website periodically within the first few days of making a report to respond to any questions or directions provided

by the University. This applies to reports made anonymously and those where you provide your identity.

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

All subsequent EthicsPoint correspondences are maintained with the same care and privacy as the initial report.

What if I lose my Report Key or forget the Password I created?

To ensure that security and privacy is maintained, if you lose your report key or password, you will need to file a new report. Mention in the new report that it is related to a report or question you previously submitted.

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

You can file an EthicsPoint report from any computer or personal device that can access the Internet. You can file from home. Many public locations, including the public library, have Internet access. 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.