APPLICABLE RULES:

Code of Ethics for University Staff Employees:
Section III of Regent Policy Document (RPD) 20-22

Code of Ethics for Faculty, Academic Staff and Limited Appointees: Chapter UWS 8, Wis. Admin. Code

Code of Ethics for Public Officials and Employees:
Wis. Stat. Section 19.45

To download a printable PDF of this brochure, visit UWRF Human Resources:
https://www-auth.uwrf.edu/HumanResources/Employee-Ethics.cfm

“Relativity applies to physics, not ethics” – Albert Einstein
EMPLOYEE ETHICS

University of Wisconsin System employees are subject to ethics rules covering use of university resources, conflicts of interest, and acceptance of gifts. As a general rule, an employee may not use his or her university position to gain private financial or other benefits for the employee, the employee’s immediate family, or an outside organization. Here are some tips for avoiding potential ethics violations:

• Use of University Resources. University resources such as office supplies, cell phones, meeting rooms and work time may be used only for university purposes. You may use your university land-line phone and email for minimal personal use consistent with university policies. It is improper to use university resources, including work-place internet access, email and telephone, for outside activities, including consulting, volunteering and politics.

• Outside Consulting. If you are a faculty, academic staff, or a limited appointee and you have the opportunity to do consulting or other work for an outside organization, you should discuss the opportunity with your dean or director to ensure that no conflict of interest is present. Consulting or other work for an outside organization in an area related to your area of expertise at your university must be reported to your dean or director. Chapter UWS 8 contains the applicable standards and procedures.

• Personal Relationship with Vendors. If you have a personal or a familial relationship with a vendor who is doing business with your department or area, you should disclose that relationship to your supervisor so that steps can be taken to ensure that no conflict of interest is present. Consulting or other work for an outside organization in an area related to your area of expertise at your university must be reported to your dean or director. Chapter UWS 8 contains the applicable standards and procedures.

• Vendor-Sponsored Conferences. If you plan to attend a vendor-sponsored conference and are in a position to approve or influence the university’s decision to award contracts for products or services provided by the vendor, you should seek to have the university pay all the necessary transportation, lodging and similar costs associated with attending the conferences. Faculty and staff who are not in a position to approve or influence the university’s decision to award contracts may attend such conferences as part of an instructional or professional experience unrelated to the selection of a product or service. See UW System Financial Policy Paper (FPP) 30.

• Accepting Items of Value. Don’t accept meals, entertainment (e.g., golf outings, tickets to sporting events), or gifts from vendors or prospective vendors, even if intended to aid you in discussing university business. If a meal or event is appropriate, it should be paid for by the university through a Travel Expense Reimbursement (TER) form. This rule also applies to members of your immediate family if they receive items of value because of your university employment.

• Items of Minimal Value. You are not prohibited from accepting items of minimal value (e.g., pens, pencils, cups, etc.) from a vendor or similar organization.

• Contract Signature Authority. Only certain designated individuals have been delegated legal authority to sign contracts on behalf of the university. You should not sign a contract or agreement unless you have been officially delegated by your institution’s contracting authority.

• Confidential University Information. You may not use or disclose confidential university information for reasons unrelated to your professional responsibilities or to gain anything of value for yourself or a member of your immediate family.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

• Questions about Ethics. If you are unsure about an ethics issue, talk to your supervisor. If your supervisor is unsure of the rules or has questions, he or she should contact Human Resources at 715-425-3518 or UW Office of General Counsel.

• Reporting Misuse of University Resources. If you are aware of a situation involving potential misuse of university resources or other possible ethics violations, you may report this activity to your Dean or Director or the UWRF Office of Business & Finance at 715-425-4092 or the Hotline at https://uwrf.hodr.wisc.edu/report.php or 800-827-4950. All inquiries will be treated confidentially.

• Nepotism. No staff member may participate, formally or informally, in the decision to hire, retain, promote or determine the salary of a member of his or her immediate family.