

Ethics and Professional Standards Policy

DRAFT 10 March 2026 Considered by JAGS / Forwarded to Faculty Senate

1. Introduction and Purpose

The faculty members of Montana State University maintain an academic environment which embraces high standards of ethical and professional conduct. This policy establishes expectations for the manner in which faculty members carry out their professional duties and obligations as outlined in the [Faculty Responsibilities Policy](#).

The essential attributes of professional academic life at Montana State University include adhering to official policies and professional codes; exhibiting honesty, fairness, and accountability in professional work; avoiding harm to the reputation and well-being of colleagues and students; and respecting the privacy and personal dignity of others.

2. Ethical and Professional Standards

In carrying out their teaching, scholarship, service and public engagement responsibilities, faculty members at Montana State University are expected to:

- a) Act with honesty, fairness and impartiality.
- b) Treat students, colleagues, staff, and campus community members with dignity, civility and respect, being mindful of the power imbalances inherent in faculty-student and faculty-staff interactions, and maintaining professional boundaries that support students' learning, personal growth, and academic achievement.
- c) Foster an environment free from harassment, bullying, and intimidation, and seek to de-escalate interpersonal conflicts.
- d) Fulfill responsibilities conscientiously, reliably, and within the scope of their expertise.
- e) Avoid bias or favoritism in their professional roles, properly disclose and manage potential conflicts of interest, and otherwise anticipate and mitigate circumstances that could lead to the perception of bias or favoritism.
- f) Respect the confidentiality of student records, personnel matters, search committee deliberations, peer review, and other sensitive information. Such information shall only be accessed for bona fide purposes in the faculty member's

professional capacity, not stored or transmitted in a non-confidential manner, and never disclosed except through approved procedures. This includes adherence to applicable privacy laws, university policies, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- g) Exercise academic freedom responsibly and in such a way that does not undermine student learning or the University's education and research mission.
- h) Responsibly steward University resources, grants, contracts, and public funds.
- i) Ensure a safe working environment by following safety regulations, establishing safety procedures and conducting training within their scope of authority.
- j) Be informed of and follow the letter and spirit of university policies as well as federal and state requirements applicable to their work.

3. Alleged violations

Faculty members are obliged to address any breach of these standards according to the university's [Reporting Violations Policy](#). Individuals subjected to an allegation are entitled to dispute resolution through the University's applicable procedures.