

## COMPLIANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### What is the Code of Ethical Conduct?

The Code of Ethical Conduct is intended to document expectations of responsibility and integrity. Exemplary ethical conduct is critically important in our relationships with colleagues, trustees, students, volunteers, contractors, and the public.

### How do I view our Code of Ethical Conduct?

Go to [usm.policystat.com](http://usm.policystat.com). Type “ethical” in the search and click the search policies button. It will be the first policy listed in the results.

### How can I report violations of our Code of Ethical Conduct?

There are several ways you can report ethical or compliance violations:

- You can speak to your manager or supervisor if you are comfortable doing so.
- You can contact the University Compliance Officer – Paul Walters. You can reach Paul by phone at (601) 266-4466; via email at [compliance@usm.edu](mailto:compliance@usm.edu) or you can visit the Compliance and Ethics office which is located on the 5th floor of the International Center (IC) in 501. The web address for Compliance and Ethics is [www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics](http://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics).
- If you prefer to make a report anonymously, you can utilize our third-party reporting hotline provider EthicsPoint. This hotline is available for use 24/7. You can make a report via telephone toll-free at 877-310-0425 or report online by clicking [here](#). Please note that this is NOT a 911 or emergency service. If you need to report an emergency, please call 911 or contact University Police at (601) 266-4986.

### Why do we have a Compliance and Ethics office?

One of our core values at USM is integrity. We expect all members of our University to perform their work in accordance with our Code of Ethical Conduct and to use the code as a guide for their decisions. The Compliance and Ethics office was created to promote ethical and compliant conduct university-wide and to provide support, collaboration and assistance to all compliance partners in order to ensure that University personnel are aware of, and complying with, internal and external laws, regulations, policies, and procedures.

### What should be reported to the compliance officer and/or through the Compliance Helpline?

Any behavior that is in violation of our Code of Ethical Conduct should be reported. Also, behavior that violates federal or state law, University policies or procedures or any waste, fraud, abuse or misuse of university resources should be reported. Any compliance or ethical concern you have may be reported through the helpline.

Our Code of Ethical Conduct states – **"The University of Southern Mississippi expects all employees, students, contractors, vendors and volunteers to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct."**

We are relying on all University members to ask questions and notify the Compliance Officer and/or report via the Compliance and Ethics Helpline if you have any concerns. If you are in doubt about making

## COMPLIANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

a report, please go ahead and report the issue. We would rather you report the information than keep it to yourself.

You can view the list of categories and issues related to reportable conduct on the [Compliance and Ethics Hotline site](#).

### **Can I be punished for making a report to the Compliance Helpline or to the Compliance Officer?**

No. The University will not tolerate any retaliation against a University member who makes a good-faith report of a violation. If you feel you are experiencing retaliation due to a report you have made, please contact the Compliance Officer or make a report to the helpline.

### **If I want to make an anonymous report, will the Compliance Hotline log my IP address, telephone number or identify me in any other way to the University?**

No, the hotline is through a third-party vendor – EthicsPoint. Reports made to EthicsPoint are entered into their secure server and the information transmitted is not retained in USM's files. EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses so there is NO information linking your computer to EthicsPoint. The telephone reporting is handled directly by EthicsPoint via trained employees and USM does not have access to caller id or any identifiable information. You do not have to make a report from your University computer or telephone. You may make the report from any computer or telephone where you feel comfortable.

### **Does USM really want me to report issues?**

Yes! We need you to report. Your report can minimize the potential negative impact on the University and its members. We have carefully chosen the best reporting tool to meet our ethical and compliance goals while maintaining a positive reporting environment.

### **What happens to the reports after they are made?**

The reports are entered directly onto the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent a security breach. The Internal Auditor is the administrator of the Compliance Hotline and is the individual who receives the report. Report information is made available only to specific individuals within the University who have the responsibility of investigating the reports.

The report will be investigated promptly and thoroughly and the disposition of the report will be recorded in the system.

The EthicsPoint system and report distribution are designed in such a way that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports in which they have been named.

### **Can I follow up on my report?**

Yes. EthicsPoint does provide a way to follow up on the status of your report. When you file your report either online or over the phone, you receive a unique username and you choose a password. You can return to the EthicsPoint system at any time either online or by phone and access the original report to:

- Check on the status of your report.

## COMPLIANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Add more detail to your report.
- Answer questions posed by the university.

If you add more detail to your report or answer questions regarding the incident from the University, your anonymity will be still be maintained, even if there is a dialogue between you and the University personnel.

If needed, the Ethics and Compliance Hotline also allows the reporting party to participate in an anonymous chat with the Internal Auditor (who administers the hotline).

**\*\*Please take care to retain your unique user name and password created at the time of your report. EthicsPoint does not retain your password and will be unable to provide it to you if lost.**

**The hotline is also available at (877) 310-0425.**

*\*Please note this hotline is NOT a 911 or emergency service*

### **What is a public records request?**

A public records request is a written request by an individual requesting copies of a public entities records or requesting that they be allowed to inspect public records.

Public records include books, records, papers, accounts, letters, maps, photographs, films, card, tapes, recordings or reproductions of recordings possessed by the public entity and used in conducting public business.

### **What law provides access to public records in Mississippi?**

The Mississippi Public Records Act (Miss. Code Ann. § 25-61-1) provides that all public records are public property, subject to certain exceptions and any individual has the right to inspect or obtain a copy of the record subject to certain procedures concerning costs, time, place and method of access.

### **How are public records requests made?**

To make a public records request, submit your request via email to [publicrecords@usm.edu](mailto:publicrecords@usm.edu)

### **Is there a cost to making a public records request?**

Costs for satisfying public records request are the actual costs determined on a case-by-case basis for searching, reviewing, and redaction of records by an actual staff member in addition to the costs for photocopies as set forth in IHL Policy 301.0804.

## COMPLIANCE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Are there certain compliance training courses that a student or faculty member needs to take?**

Yes, there are several courses that an individual needs to complete: the course list is available on the following webpage- <https://www.usm.edu/compliance-ethics/training.php>.

Among the courses are the Title IX course, Preventing Harassment and Discrimination and the Alcohol and Drugs course.

The University may add additional courses as needed.

### **Who authorizes USM to offer distance learning?**

USM is a member institution of The National Council of State Authorization Reciprocity Agreements (NC-SARA) which allows us to offer distance learning in 49 states and in Guam and Puerto Rico.

### **Why do we disclose professional licensure information to students?**

34 CFR 668.43 requires that institutions advise students if professional programs that typically lead to licensure do not lead to licensure or if a determination has not been made. This information can be found by clicking on Professional Licensure Disclosures on the bottom of any usm.edu webpage.

### **What is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?**

GDPR is a law that provides to those in the European Economic Area (EEA) certain rights that they can exercise relative to their personal data (i.e. name, birthdate, address, etc.).

### **Who can exercise rights under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)?**

Any individual who was in the EEA at the time that their data was collected or stored.

### **Where is USM's GDPR Privacy Notice?**

Click on Privacy & Legal link at the very bottom of every usm.edu webpage.

### **What is the GDPR Privacy Notice?**

The GDPR Privacy Notice explains how USM processes personal data and how we apply data protection principles