

**Association for the Assessment
of Learning in Higher Education**



PROMOTING ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Code of Ethics

CODE OF ETHICS

This Code of Ethics (the “Code”) applies to all board members, staff members, and volunteers of the Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education (AALHE). The Code is a statement of goals and expectations for board members, staff members, and volunteers’ behavior. Board members, staff members, and volunteers are urged to inquire if any aspect of the Code needs clarification.

All board members, staff members, and volunteers of AALHE are expected to read the Code, understand it, and comply with its letter and spirit. Together with other applicable guidelines or policies of AALHE, compliance with this Code will help protect AALHE’s reputation for honesty and integrity.

The Code cannot address every applicable law or provide answers to all questions that might arise. Board members, staff members, and volunteers must ultimately rely on their good sense of what is right, including a sense of when it is proper to seek guidance from others on the appropriate course of conduct. It should be noted that other documents, such as AALHE’s Bylaws and governing board policies, affect conduct, as employee manuals and employment contracts affect the conduct of staff. Because AALHE’s success depends upon maintaining its reputation, in many instances this Code goes beyond the requirements of law or of those other documents.

This Code is not an express or implied contract of employment or agency, and it does not create any rights of any kind— such as contract rights, indemnification rights, or intellectual property rights—between AALHE and its board members, staff members, and volunteers.

A. Compliance with Laws

Obedying the law, both in letter and spirit, is one of the foundations on which AALHE’s ethical standards are built. All board members, staff members, and volunteers must respect and obey the laws of the jurisdictions in which AALHE operates. Although not all board members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to know the details of these laws, it is important to know enough to determine when to seek advice from counsel or others.

B. Diversity and Inclusion

AALHE maintains a commitment to the promotion of diversity, inclusion, and equity in the interest of improving the ability and opportunity of all individuals and groups to take part in the opportunities afford by AALHE. For the purpose of this Code, diversity is defined as the promotion and presence of a heterogeneous environment in which individuals of all identities participate. Inclusion is defined as promoting an environment in which individuals of all identities are welcomed and valued as their whole selves.

Finally, for the purposes of this Code, equity is defined as the process and behaviors by which AALHE provides various levels of support and assistance to reach diversity and inclusivity in the organization.

General Principles

All board members, staff members, and volunteers must refuse to engage in or tolerate any discrimination based on an individual's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, pregnancy status, veteran status, national origin, age, or disability.

Code of Conduct

In all interactions, AALHE expects respectful and cordial communications and behavior, including those interactions between board members, staff members, and volunteers, with AALHE's members, and with the public. Any manner of interaction, including verbal and written communication, is subject to this code of conduct. Board members, staff members, and volunteers must communicate and behave with respect while representing AALHE.

C. Conflicts of Interest

Personal or business activities, relationships, or other interests of board members, staff members, and volunteers must not conflict or appear to conflict with the interests of AALHE. Disclosure of other interests is crucial to maintaining a bias-free governance process by AALHE for the benefit of its members or other constituents. The Code does not specifically address the details of conflicts avoidance, so board members, staff members, and volunteers should act in good conscience and use common sense. When questions arise, they should seek guidance.

General Principles

- Board members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to disclose other interests according to AALHE's policies and procedures that may affect their ability to make decisions in the best interest of AALHE.
- Board members, staff members, and volunteers are expected to cooperate in resolving any conflicts or potential conflicts as recommended by the governing board or its designated representatives.

D. Accounts and Record Keeping

Every AALHE financial record and report should be accurate, timely, and in accordance with any applicable law or accounting rules or principles. AALHE's books must reflect all components of transactions, as well as AALHE's high standard of insisting upon an honest and forthright presentation. These records are the basis for the board members, staff members, and volunteers' managing AALHE and for fulfilling their obligations to members, the public, and government authorities.

General Principles

- Never falsify any document or distort the true nature of any transaction.
- All transactions must be supported by accurate documentation.
- All reports made to government authorities must be full, fair, accurate, timely, and understandable.
- Board members, staff members, and volunteers must cooperate with audits of financial records.
- To the extent estimates and accruals are necessary in AALHE reports and records, they must be supported by appropriate documentation and be based on good faith judgment.

E. Use of AALHE Assets

AALHE assets are to be used to support the mission and vision of AALHE, not for personal uses. Assets include the time at work, as well as AALHE's equipment, computers, and software. Common sense should prevail. The point is to recognize that theft or deliberate misuse of AALHE assets is a violation of the Code.

General Principles

- The use of AALHE assets for the personal benefit of board members, staff members, and volunteers, or the benefit of anyone other than AALHE, is permitted only with proper approval or authority.
- Board members, staff members, and volunteers may not take away from AALHE any opportunity for financial gain that arises or is discovered because of the board members, staff members, and volunteers' positions in AALHE or through the use of AALHE property or information.
- Misuse of AALHE assets may be considered theft and result in disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.
- Before accepting payment for speeches or presentations related to AALHE, board members, staff members, and volunteers should always obtain proper approval or authority as established by AALHE policy.
- AALHE computer systems and equipment are meant for AALHE use only. For example, they should never be used for outside businesses, illegal activities, gambling, or pornography.

F. Working with Outside Parties and Business Gifts

Consistent with the obligation they have to act with integrity and honesty at all times, board members, staff members, and volunteers should deal fairly and in good faith with all persons with whom AALHE has transactions, business, or ventures. Board members, staff members, and volunteers of AALHE may be offered gifts, hospitality, or entertainment from persons or entities with which AALHE has relationships, such as vendors, corporate partners, sponsors, advertisers, exhibitors, joint ventures, hospitality or transportation industry sales representatives, or others. It is crucial to maintain an appropriate, professional relationship. Avoid accepting excessive or lavish

gifts that may give the appearance of undue influence; acceptance of anything of more than trivial value should first have proper approval or authority. Every board member, staff member, and volunteer should avoid personal financial transactions with persons or entities that may influence the ability to perform objectively.

General Principles

- The Code prohibits board members, staff members, and volunteers from accepting any nontrivial gifts or entertainment in the context of AALHE work. This is an area in which judgment is critical. For instance, modest holiday gifts may be accepted but an expensive trip would not be. If the acceptability of a gift is uncertain, prior approval or authority should be sought.
- Modest gifts or entertainment from persons or entities with which AALHE has relationships must support the legitimate interests of AALHE and should be reasonable and appropriate under the circumstances.

G. Protecting AALHE's Nonpublic Information

It is our obligation to safeguard AALHE's nonpublic information. Board members, staff members, and volunteers should not share confidential information with anyone outside AALHE unless it is necessary as part of work responsibilities and then only pursuant to a nondisclosure agreement.

Nonpublic information is any information that has not been disclosed or made available to the membership, the general public, or government agencies.

Nonpublic information includes items such as financial data, plans for acquisitions or divestitures, evaluations of joint ventures or other endeavors, personal information about board members, staff members, volunteers or members, material contracts, finance arrangements, real estate opportunities, major management changes, and other AALHE developments.

H. Administration of the Code Distribution

All AALHE officers, directors, and volunteers will receive a copy of this Code at the time they assume their role with AALHE and will receive any periodic updates.

I. Monitoring Compliance

Board members, staff members, and volunteers should take all responsible steps to prevent Code violations. Board members, staff members, and volunteers must report suspected Code violations.

AALHE does not permit retaliation of any kind against board members, staff members, volunteers, members, or others for good faith reports of potential violations of the Code. Anyone who retaliates against another for reporting known or suspected violations of the Code will be in violation of the Code.

Retaliation may also be a violation of law; as such, it could subject both the individual offender and AALHE to legal liability.

J. Investigations and Disciplinary Actions

AALHE will investigate any matter that is reported and may take appropriate corrective and disciplinary actions, which may include, alone or in combination, a warning, letter of reprimand, expulsion from AALHE's volunteer status or member status, revocation of board or committee assignment, suspension without pay, termination of employment, or other action determined appropriate by the AALHE Board.

K. Amendments and Modifications

AALHE reserves the rights to amend, alter, or terminate this Code at any time and for any reason.