



American Academy of Nursing Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct

Effective: November 30, 2022

Guiding Principles:

- Academy Fellows are individuals who have been admitted into Fellowship based on their outstanding contributions to nursing and/or health care and their significant potential for continuing contributions to nursing, health care, and the Academy. [Bylaws III, 1a]
- As recognized leaders of the nursing profession, Fellows shall maintain a commitment to ethical conduct as outlined in the Academy's Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct. [Bylaws III, 1b.]
- A Fellow in good standing is one who:
 - Meets the qualifications specified in Section 1 of this Article [Bylaws III, 1a];
 - Has been inducted into Fellowship;
 - Has affirmed a commitment to abide by the Academy's Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct; and
 - Is current on all dues, if required to pay dues. [Bylaws III, 7a, (i-iv)]
- The membership of a Fellow may be terminated by a majority vote of the Executive Committee provided the Fellow is given:
 - Prior written notice of the termination, and the reasons for it; and
 - An opportunity to be heard by the Executive Committee, orally or in writing, before the effective date of the termination. [Bylaws III, 11a(i,ii)]
- Holding dual membership in the American Academy of Nursing (Academy) and the American Nurses Association (ANA) or other national nurses' association within the International Council of Nurses (ICN), if eligible, Fellows adhere to the ANA Code of Ethics with Interpretive Statements (2015) or the ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses (2021).
- Academy Fellows uphold the organization's [Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity](#) statement as well as the [Principles of Engagement](#), which outlines expected conduct and behaviors.
- Academy Fellows uphold the organizations values of equity, diversity, inclusivity, inquiry, integrity, and courage.

Purpose. The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidance and direction in response to a reported potential ethical infraction of a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing as well as outline the Code of Conduct.

Fellows are committed to observing and promoting the highest standards of ethical conduct in the performance of their responsibilities. All Fellows will agree to abide by the Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct as part of the annual dues renewal process.

Fellows adhere to the ANA Code of Ethics (or ICN Code of Ethics), EDI Statement, Principles of Engagement, and accept this code as a minimum guideline for ethical conduct and shall have:

Accountability - Faithfully abide by the articles of incorporation, bylaws, and policies of the organization.

Professional excellence (integrity) - Maintain a professional level of courtesy, respect, and objectivity in all matters and activities.

Personal gain (self-dealing) - Exercise the powers invested for the good of all members of the organization rather than for personal benefit.

Equity, diversity, and inclusivity - Uphold the EDI statement and Principles of Engagement

Confidential information - Respect the confidentiality of sensitive information in discussion during Academy Board, Committees, Taskforces, Expert Panels, or ad hoc group meetings.

Collaboration and cooperation

- Respect the diversity of opinions as expressed.
- Promote collaboration, cooperation, and partnership among Academy members.

Ethical issues. Ethical issues reviewed by the Academy include, but are not limited to:

Abuse of power - Those in a position of power must respect the autonomy of others.

Personal misconduct - Personal conduct should be consistent with legal and social mores.

Conflict of interests - Fellows have a duty to maintain transparency in relation to any competing interests.

Practice misconduct - Fellows have a duty to maintain honesty and integrity in all areas of research, scholarship, policy, and practice.

Fraudulent behavior - Fellows have a duty to be honest and maintain integrity in all personal and professional behavior.

The Academy also includes as an ethical infraction evidence of egregious behavior including such that results in **loss of professional nursing license**.

Review of ethical infractions. Ethical infractions are assessed by an ad hoc committee of the Board or one designated by the President. The ultimate decision on an ethics violation reported to the Academy is made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The ad hoc committee is charged with exploring allegations of infractions by Fellows who are believed to be in good standing, including reviewing evidence of the infraction and the response from the named Fellow; and making a report to the Academy President regarding the infraction. The Board of Directors is not to serve as the investigative body; the designated ad hoc committee reviews materials regarding complaints already investigated and acted upon by another body (e.g., board of nursing, journal, institution, funding agency, court of law).

Confidentiality and notification. Any complaints of reported infractions will be held in strict confidence by all those involved in the process of review until a final decision has been made by the Executive Committee. If an Academy Fellow is found to have committed an ethics infraction, the Academy

President shall inform the American Nurses Association but the Academy has no reporting obligation to other entities.

Sanctions. Sanctions may include loss of membership for a designated period of time or lifetime revocation of Fellowship in the Academy.

Timeline. Timely action should be taken when a complaint is received.

Process.

1. Ethical infraction notifications are sent in writing to the Academy President of the Board of Directors.
2. The Academy President sends the written notification of a potential ethical infraction to the Board of Directors within two weeks of receipt.
3. An ad hoc committee of the Board or one designated by the President will review the evidence in relation to the alleged infraction, including written documents that support the ethical violation or infraction and any written response from the named Fellow accused of an ethical violation. The review is completed and the ad hoc committee's written report is submitted to the Academy President within six weeks of receipt of the complaint.
4. The Executive Committee of the Academy Board of Directors will review all written materials. The Academy's Executive Committee makes the final decision on whether the reported ethical violation violates the Academy's Ethics Policy and Code of Conduct, within two weeks.
5. The Academy President communicates to the named Fellow in writing the Board's decision within two weeks of the Executive Committee's decision and any ramifications.

References:

American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of Ethics for Nurses: With Interpretive Statements. Silver Spring, Maryland.

International Council of Nurses (2021). The ICN Code of Ethics for Nurses. Geneva, Switzerland.

American Academy of Nursing (2021, September). Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity Statement.

American Academy of Nursing (2021, September). Fellow Values, Principles of Engagement & Expected Conduct.

American Academy of Nursing (2021). Strategic Plan. Values.

Academy Policy on Code of Ethics for Board and Committee Members (April 26, 2012).

Academy Whistleblower Policy (June 28, 2013).

American Academy of Nursing (2014). Ethics Policy-Maintaining High Standards. Nursing Outlook (62)5, 374-375.

Revised and approved by the Academy Board of Directors on November 30, 2022;

Prior Version: Policy on Ethical Conduct of Fellows: Approved by the Academy Board of Directors October 15, 2013; Revisions May 28, 2014; April 29, 2015.