

Academy of Human Resource Development

Standards on Ethics and Integrity

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These Standards were developed by:

**Academy of Human Resource Development
Standing Committee on Ethics and Integrity**

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ACADEMY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Standards on Ethics and Integrity

PREFACE ¹

Human Resource Development (HRD) as a profession is an interdisciplinary field. It is focused on systematic training and development, career development, and organization development to improve processes and enhance the learning and performance of individuals, organizations, communities, and society.

An HRD professional is an individual engaged in HRD-related practice, research, consulting, and instruction/facilitation/teaching. As HRD professionals, members of the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) strive to create a body of research-based knowledge. They apply that knowledge to human resource development in various organizational, community, and societal settings while functioning as professors, researchers, consultants, administrators, analysts, trainers, performance improvement technicians, and other practitioners.

A central goal of AHRD professionals practicing in the arenas of training and development, organizational development, and career development is to broaden understanding of the complex activities involved in assisting individuals or organizations to improve their ability to develop themselves.

The statements in this document are guiding principles, or values, that can be used as a basis for the professional and ethical conduct of HRD activities. They are standards which, taken together, define ethical behavior in a wide variety of situations.

¹ Ethical statements and/or standards from several organizations were reviewed during the development of these Standards on Ethics and Integrity for the Academy of Human Resource Development. These organizations are the American Educational Research Association, American Evaluation Association, American Management Association, American Psychological Association, Society of Human Resource Management, and the Organization and Human Systems Development (OD-HSD) group.

PURPOSE

These Standards on Ethics and Integrity for the Academy of Human Resource Development provide guidance for HRD professionals engaged in practice, research, consulting, and instruction/facilitation/teaching. Although these principles are aspirational in nature, they provide standards of conduct and set forth a common set of values for HRD professionals. Adherence to these standards builds ethical, professional, and research accomplishments for HRD professionals and adds to the further definition and clarification of HRD as a profession. The primary goal of these standards is to define more clearly a holistic balance among individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and societies whenever conflicting needs arise.

To ensure this balance, these Standards identify a common set of values upon which HRD professionals build their professional and research work. In addition, the Standards clarify both the general principles and the decision rules that cover most situations encountered by HRD professionals. The Standards have as their primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals, groups, and organizations with whom HRD professionals work.

Adherence to a dynamic set of Standards for a professional's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to the lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisors, employees, and colleagues as appropriate; and to consult with others, as needed, concerning ethical problems. It is the individual responsibility of each professional to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct. Such professionals respect and protect human and civil rights and do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

In providing both the universal principles and limited decision rules to cover many situations encountered by HRD professionals, this document is intended to be generic and is not intended to be a comprehensive, problem-solving, or procedural document. Specific statements and solutions for special HRD-related situations will emerge from the development of case studies appended to this Standard. Each professional's personal experience as well as his or her individual and cultural values should be used to interpret, apply, and supplement the principles and rules set forth in these pages.

This document has been prepared primarily as an educational vehicle. It serves to articulate the values to which HRD professionals aspire in their work. Other documents will follow which further elaborate these principles.

Making ethical decisions can be difficult because long-range social responsibility considerations may conflict with immediate needs. Or, ethical principles may seem even to be in conflict with one another. Finally, at times we are forced to choose among bad options. When placed in these kinds of situations, HRD professionals aspire to weighing their options and making the best (ethical) decision they feel they can, based upon an attempt to be socially responsible.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

COMPETENCE

HRD professionals strive to maintain high standards of competence in their work. They recognize the boundaries of their particular competencies and the limitations of their expertise. They provide only those services and use only those techniques for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience.

Professionals realize that the competencies required when working with various groups and organizations differ. In those areas in which recognized professional standards do not yet exist, HRD professionals exercise careful judgment and take appropriate precautions to protect the welfare of those with whom they work. They maintain knowledge of relevant research and professional information related to the services they render, and they recognize the need for ongoing education. They use appropriate research and professional, technical, and administrative resources.

INTEGRITY

HRD professionals seek to promote integrity in their research, teaching, and practice. They are honest, fair, and respectful of others. In describing or reporting their qualifications, services, products, fees, research, or teaching, they do not make statements that are false, misleading, or deceptive. They strive to be aware of their own belief systems, values, needs, and limitations and the effect of these on their work. To the extent feasible, they attempt to clarify for relevant parties the roles they are performing and to function appropriately in accordance with those roles. They avoid potentially conflicting relationships.

PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

HRD professionals uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and adapt their methods to the needs of different populations. They consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of their clients.

Their moral standards and conduct are personal matters to the same degree as is true for any other person, except as their conduct may compromise their professional responsibilities or reduce the public's trust in their profession. They are concerned about the ethical compliance of the professional conduct and research of their colleagues. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

RESPECT FOR PEOPLE'S RIGHTS AND DIGNITY

HRD professionals accord appropriate respect to the fundamental rights, dignity, and worth of all people. They respect the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, self-determination, and autonomy, mindful that legal and other obligations may lead to inconsistency and conflict with the exercise of these rights. They are aware of cultural, individual, and role differences, including those due to age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status. They try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on those factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone unfair discriminatory practices.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CONCERN FOR OTHERS' WELFARE

HRD professionals seek to contribute to the welfare of those with whom they interact professionally. In their professional actions, they weigh the welfare and rights of their clients. When conflicts occur among professionals' obligations or concerns, they attempt to resolve these conflicts and to perform their roles in a responsible fashion that avoids or minimizes harm. They are sensitive to real and ascribed differences in power between themselves and others, and they do not exploit or mislead other people during or following their professional relationships.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

HRD professionals are aware of their professional responsibilities to the community, the society, in which they work and live, and the planet. They work to minimize adverse affects on individuals, groups, organizations, societies, and the environment. They understand that a healthy economy, healthy organizations, and a healthy ecosystem are intricately interconnected. They apply and make public their knowledge of learning and performance in order to contribute to human welfare. They are concerned about and work to mitigate the causes of human suffering.

When undertaking research, they strive to advance human welfare, human development, and a sustainable future. They try to avoid misuse of their work. They comply with the law and encourage the development of laws and social policy that serve the interests of their clients, the public, society, and the environment. They are encouraged to contribute a portion of their professional time to enhance societal, organizational, human, and environmental development for little or no personal gain or advantage.

STANDARDS

GENERAL STANDARDS

These General Standards apply to the professional and research activities of HRD professionals.

Boundaries of Competence

- a. HRD professionals provide services, teach, and conduct research only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience.
- b. HRD professionals provide services, teach, or conduct research involving new areas or new techniques only after first undertaking appropriate study, training, supervision, and/or consultation with persons who are competent in those areas or techniques.
- c. In those emerging areas in which generally recognized standards for preparatory training do not yet exist, HRD professionals nevertheless take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect clients, students, research participants, and others from harm.

Maintenance of Expertise

HRD professionals maintain a reasonable level of awareness of current research and professional information in their fields of activity and undertake ongoing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use.

Basis for Research and Professional Judgments

HRD professionals rely on research and professionally derived knowledge when making research or professional judgments or when engaging in scholarly or professional endeavors.

Description of HRD Professionals' Work

- a. When HRD professionals provide services to an individual, a group, or an organization, they make available appropriate information beforehand about the nature of such services and, later, appropriate information on results and conclusions.
- b. If HRD professionals will be precluded by law or by organizational roles from providing such information to particular individuals or groups, they so inform those individuals or groups at the outset of the service.

Respecting Others

- a. Where differences of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status significantly affect the work of HRD professionals as related to particular individuals or groups, HRD professionals obtain the training, experience, consultation, or supervision necessary to ensure the competence of their services, or they make appropriate referrals.
- b. In their work-related activities, HRD professionals respect the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own.

STANDARDS

GENERAL STANDARDS

Nondiscrimination

In their work-related activities, HRD professionals do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.

Exploitative Relationships

- a. HRD professionals do not exploit persons over whom they have supervisory, evaluative, or other authority such as students, supervisees, employees, research participants, and clients.
- b. HRD professionals do not engage in sexual relationships with students or supervisees in training over whom the HRD professional has evaluative or direct authority, because such relationships are too likely to impair judgment or to be exploitative.
- c. HRD professionals do not engage in sexual harassment
- d. HRD professionals accord sexual-harassment complainants and respondents' dignity and respect.
- e. HRD professionals do not knowingly engage in behavior that, based on factors such as a person's age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status, is harassing or demeaning to the persons with whom they interact in their work.

Misuse of HRD Professionals' Work

If HRD professionals learn of misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they take reasonable steps to correct or minimize the misuse or misrepresentation.

Multiple Relationships

- a. In many communities and situations, it may not be reasonable or feasible for HRD professionals to avoid social or other nonprofessional contacts with persons such as clients, students, supervisees, or research participants. They must always be sensitive to the potential harmful effects of such contacts on their work and on those persons with whom they deal. An HRD professional refrains from entering into or promising a personal, research, professional, financial, or other relationship with such persons in the following situations: (1) when the relationship might impair the HRD professional's objectivity; (2) when it might interfere with the effective performance of his or her function; or (3) when it might harm or exploit the other party.
- b. Likewise, whenever feasible, an HRD professional refrains from taking on professional or research obligations when preexisting relationships would create a risk of such harm.

Consultations and Referrals

- a. With appropriate consent and subject to other relevant considerations, including applicable law and contractual obligations, HRD professionals arrange for appropriate consultations and referrals based principally on the best interests of their clients.

STANDARDS

GENERAL STANDARDS

Consultations and Referrals (contd)

- b. When appropriate, HRD professionals cooperate with other professionals in order to serve their clients effectively and appropriately.
- c. The referral practices of HRD professionals are consistent with the law.

Third Party Request for Services

- a. When agreeing to provide services to a person or entity at the request of a third party, the HRD professional, at the outset of the service, clarifies to the extent feasible the nature of the relationship with each party. This clarification includes the professional's role (such as organizational consultant, trainer, or evaluator), the probable uses of the services provided or the information obtained, and the fact that there may be limits to confidentiality.
- b. If there is a foreseeable risk of being called upon to perform conflicting roles because of the involvement of a third party, the HRD professional clarifies the nature and direction of his or her responsibilities, keeps all parties appropriately informed as matters develop, and resolves the situation in accordance with these Standards.

Delegation to and Supervision of Subordinates

- a. HRD professionals delegate to their employees, supervisors, and research assistants only those responsibilities that such persons can reasonably be expected to perform competently on the basis of their education, training, or experience, either independently or with appropriately provided supervision.
- b. HRD professionals provide proper training and supervision to their employees or supervisees and take reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services responsibly, competently, and ethically.
- c. If institutional policies, procedures, or practices prevent fulfillment of this obligation, HRD professionals attempt to modify their role or to correct the situation to the extent feasible.

Documentation of Professional and Research Work

- a. HRD professionals appropriately document their professional and research work in order to facilitate the provision of services later by them or by other professionals, to ensure accountability, and to meet other requirements of institutions or the law.
- b. When HRD professionals have reason to believe that records of their professional services will be used in legal proceedings involving recipients of or participants in their work, they have a responsibility to create and maintain documentation in the kind of detail and quality that would be consistent with reasonable scrutiny in an adjudicative forum.

STANDARDS

GENERAL STANDARDS

Records and Data

HRD professionals create, maintain, disseminate, store, retain, and dispose of records and data relating to their research, practice, and other work in accordance with the law and in a manner that permits compliance with the requirements of these Standards.

Fees and Financial Arrangements

- a. As early as is feasible in a professional or research relationship, the HRD professional and the client reach an agreement specifying the compensation and the billing arrangements.
- b. HRD professionals do not exploit recipients of services or payers with respect to fees.
- c. HRD professionals' fee practices are consistent with the law.
- d. HRD professionals do not misrepresent their fees.

Accuracy in Reports to Payers and Funding Sources

In their reports to payers for services or to sources of research funding, HRD professionals accurately state the nature of the research or service provided, the fees or charges, and, where applicable, the identity of the provider and the findings.

Referrals and Fees

When an HRD professional pays, receives payment from, or divides fees with another professional other than in an employer-employee relationship, the payment to each is based on the services (consultative, administrative, or other) provided.

Research and Evaluation in a Professional Context

- a. HRD professionals warrant their research and evaluation conclusions adequately in a way consistent with the standards of their own theoretical and methodological perspectives.
- b. HRD professionals' reports and statements are based on information and techniques that are sufficient to provide appropriate substantiation for their findings.
- c. HRD professional's design, conduct, and report research and evaluation in accordance with recognized standards of research competence and ethics. They keep themselves well informed in both their own and competing paradigms, where those paradigms are relevant to their research, and they continually evaluate the criteria of adequacy by which research is judged.
- d. HRD professionals plan their research to minimize the possibility of misleading results.
- e. HRD professionals consult with institutional review boards and use committees, peer consultations, and other avenues to consider the ethical acceptability of their research.
- f. HRD professionals take reasonable steps to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects and other persons affected by the research.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Data Collection

- a. HRD professionals who develop and conduct research with tests and other assessment techniques use research procedures and current professional knowledge for test and research design, standardization, validation, reduction or elimination of bias, and recommendations for use.
- b. HRD professionals attempt to identify situations in which particular assessment techniques or norms may be applicable or may require adjustment in administration or interpretation because of factors such as individuals' gender, age, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, or socioeconomic status.
- c. HRD professionals are careful to interfere with the participants or milieu from which data are collected only in a manner that is warranted by an appropriate research design and that is consistent with research investigation.

Responsibility

- a. HRD professionals conduct research competently and with due concern for the dignity and welfare of the participants.
- b. Researchers and assistants are permitted to perform only those tasks for which they are trained and prepared.
- c. HRD professionals consult those with expertise concerning any diverse population under investigation or that is most likely to be affected.

Compliance with Law and Standards

HRD professionals plan and conduct research in a manner consistent with federal and state laws and regulations, as well as with professional standards governing the conduct of research, particularly those standards governing research with human subjects.

Institutional Approval

HRD professionals obtain from host institutions or organizations appropriate approval prior to conducting research, and they provide accurate information about their research proposals. They conduct the research in accordance with the approved research protocol.

Informed Consent

- a. When obtaining research participants' informed consent, HRD professionals use language that is reasonably understandable to the participants, and professionals then document the informed consent.
- b. HRD professionals inform participants of the nature of the research; they inform participants that they are free to participate or to decline to participate or to withdraw from research; they explain the foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing; they inform participants of significant factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate (such as risks, discomfort, adverse effects, or limitations on confidentiality).

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

**Informed Consent
(contd)**

- c. When HRD professionals conduct research with students or subordinates, they take special care to protect the prospective participants from adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation.
- d. When research participation is an educational course requirement or an opportunity for extra credit, the prospective participant is given the choice of equitable alternative activities.
- e. HRD professionals obtain informed consent from research participants prior to filming or recording them in any form, unless the research involves simply naturalistic observations in public places and it is not anticipated that the recording will be used in a manner that could cause personal identification or harm.
- f. HRD professionals inform research participants of any anticipated sharing or further use of personally identifiable research data and of the possibility of unanticipated future uses.
- g. HRD professionals provide a prompt opportunity for participants to obtain information about the nature, results, and conclusions of the research and attempt to correct any misconceptions that participants may have.
- h. HRD professionals take reasonable measures to honor all commitments they have made to research participants.

**Incentives to
Participants**

- a. When offering professional services as an inducement to obtain research participants, HRD professionals make clear the nature of the services as well as the risks, obligations, and limitations.
- b. HRD professionals do not coerce participation in research projects by offering excessive or inappropriate inducements.

**Deception in
Research**

- a. HRD professionals do not conduct a study involving deceptions unless they have determined that the use of deceptive techniques is justified by the study's prospective research, educational or applied value and that equally effective alternative procedures (without deception) are not feasible.
- b. HRD professionals never deceive research participants about significant aspects that would affect their willingness to participate, such as unpleasant emotional experiences, discomfort, or physical risk.
- c. Any other deception that is an integral feature of the design and conduct of an experiment must be explained to participants as early as feasible, preferably at the conclusion of their participation, but no later than the conclusion of the research.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Interpretation and Explanation of Research and Evaluation Results

- a. When interpreting research and evaluation results, including computer-generated results, HRD professionals take into account the factors that reduce the accuracy of interpretations. They indicate any significant reservations they have about the accuracy or limitation of their interpretations.
- b. Unless the nature of the relationship is clearly explained in advance to the person being assessed and precludes an explanation of results (as in some organizational consulting or pre-employment screening), HRD professionals ensure that an explanation of the results is provided in language that is reasonably understandable to the person assessed. Regardless of whether the scoring and interpretation are done by the professional, by assistants, or by automated or other outside services, professionals take reasonable steps to ensure that an appropriate explanation of results is given.
- c. HRD professionals retain responsibility for the appropriate application, interpretation, and use of instruments, whether they score and interpret such tests themselves or use automated or other services.
- d. HRD professionals do not make recommendations based on data that is outdated or obsolete for the current purpose.

ADVERTISING AND OTHER PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Definition of Public Statements

HRD professionals comply with these Standards in public statements relating to their professional services, products, or publications or to the field of human resource development. Public statements include, but are not limited to, paid or unpaid advertising, brochures, printed matter, directory listings, personal resumes or curricula vitae, interviews or comments for use in media, communications via computer technology, statements in legal proceedings, lectures and public oral presentations, and published materials.

Statements by Others

- a. An HRD professional who engages others to create or place public statements that promote his or her professional practice, products, or services retains professional responsibility for such statements.
- b. In addition, HRD professionals make reasonable efforts to prevent others whom they do not control (such as publishers, sponsors, organizational clients, and representatives of the print or broadcast media) from making deceptive statements concerning human resource development practice or professional activities.
- c. If HRD professionals learn that others have made deceptive statements about their work, HRD professionals make reasonable efforts to correct such statements
- d. HRD professionals do not compensate employees of press, radio, television, or other communication media in return for publicity in a news item.
- e. A paid advertisement related to the HRD professional's activities must be identified as such, unless that is already apparent from the context.

Avoidance of False or Deceptive Statements

HRD professionals claim as credentials for their work only those degrees that were earned from an accredited educational institution.

Media Presentations

When HRD professionals provide advice or comment by means of public lectures, demonstrations, radio or television programs, prerecorded tapes, printed articles, mailed material, or other media, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that (1) the statements are based on appropriate human resource development literature and practice, (2) the statements are otherwise consistent with these Standards, and (3) the recipients of the information are not encouraged to infer that a relationship has been established with them personally.

PUBLICATION OF WORK

Reporting of Research and Evaluation Results

- a. HRD professionals do not fabricate data or falsify results in their publications.
- b. If HRD professionals discover significant errors in their published data, they take reasonable steps to correct such errors with a correction, retraction, erratum, or other appropriate publication means.

Plagiarism

- c. HRD professionals do not present substantial portions or elements of another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally.

Publication Credit

- a. HRD professionals take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have contributed.
- b. Principal authorship and other publication credits accurately reflect the relative professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their relative status. For example, mere possession of an institutional position, such as department chair, does not necessarily justify authorship credit. Minor contributions to research or to writings for publication are appropriately acknowledged in footnotes, for instance, or in an introductory statement.
- c. A student is usually listed as the principal author on any multiple-authored article that is substantially based on the student's dissertation or thesis.

Duplicate Publication of Data

HRD professionals do not publish as original work those articles that have been previously published. This does not preclude republishing work accompanied by proper acknowledgment.

Release of Data

After research or evaluation results are published, HRD professionals do not withhold the data on which their conclusions are based from other competent professionals who seek to verify the substantive claims through re-analysis and who intend to use such data only for that purpose, provided that the confidentiality of the participants can be protected and that no legal rights concerning proprietary data preclude such release.

Professional Reviewers

When reviewing material submitted for publication, provided for grants, or included in other research and evaluation proposals, HRD professionals who recognize the author(s) of that work respect the confidentiality of these author(s) and their proprietary rights.

Ownership of Intellectual Property

While ideas and other intellectual products may, under suitable circumstances, be viewed as commodities, any arrangements made concerning the production or distribution of ideas or other intellectual products must be consistent with academic freedom and the appropriate availability of intellectual products to scholars, students, and the public. Moreover, when a conflict between the academic and scholarly purposes of intellectual production and the profit from such production arise, preference should be given to the academic and scholarly purposes.

PUBLICATION OF WORK

Ownership of Intellectual Property (contd)

Ownership of intellectual products should be based upon the following guidelines:

- a. Individuals are entitled to profit from the sale or disposition of those intellectual products they create. They may, therefore, enter into contracts or other arrangements for the publication or disposition of intellectual products and may profit financially from the arrangements.
- b. Arrangements for the publication or disposition of intellectual products should be consistent with appropriate public availability and with academic freedom. Such arrangements should emphasize the academic functions of publication over the maximization of profit.
- c. Individuals or groups who fund or otherwise provide resources for the development of intellectual products are entitled to assert claims to a fair share of the royalties or other profits from the sale or disposition of those products. Because such claims are likely to be contentious, funding institutions and authors should agree on policies for the disposition of profits at the outset of the research or development project.
- d. Authors should not use positions of authority over other individuals to compel them to purchase an intellectual product from which the authors benefit. This standard is not meant to prohibit use of an author's own textbook in a class, but copies should be made available on library reserve or otherwise available so that students are not forced to purchase the book.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Discussions of the Limits of Confidentiality

- a. Permission for electronic recording of interviews is secured from clients.
- b. HRD professionals discuss with persons and organizations with whom they establish a professional relationship (1) the relevant limitations on confidentiality, including limitations, where applicable, in organizational consulting, and (2) the foreseeable uses of the information generated through their services.
- c. Unless it is not feasible or is contra-indicated, the discussion of confidentiality occurs at the outset of the relationship and thereafter as new circumstances may warrant.

Protection of Confidentiality

- a. HRD professionals have a primary obligation and take reasonable precautions to respect the confidentiality rights of those with whom they work or consult, recognizing that confidentiality may be established by law, institutional rules, or professional relationships.
- b. In order to minimize intrusions on privacy, HRD professionals include in written and oral reports, consultations, and the like only that information germane to the purpose for which the communication is made.
- c. HRD professionals discuss confidential information obtained in consulting relationships or evaluative data concerning clients or students only for appropriate professional purposes and only with persons clearly concerned with such matters.

Maintenance and Ownership of Records

- a. HRD professionals maintain appropriate confidentiality in creating, storing, accessing, transferring, and disposing of records under their control, whether these are written, automated, or in any other medium. They maintain and dispose of records in accordance with law and in a manner that permits compliance with the requirements of these Standards.
- b. HRD professionals make plans in advance so that confidentiality of records and of data considered confidential is protected in the event of an HRD professional's death, incapacity, or withdrawal from the position or consulting practice.
- c. Recognizing that ownership of records and data is governed by legal principles, HRD professionals take reasonable and lawful steps so that records and data remain available to the extent needed to serve the best interests of individual and organizational clients, students, or appropriate others

Disclosures

- a. HRD professionals disclose confidential information without the consent of the individual or organization only as mandated by law or where permitted by law for a valid purpose, such as (1) to obtain appropriate professional consultations, (2) to protect the individual or organization from harm, or (3) to obtain payment for services, in which instance disclosure is limited to the minimum that is necessary to achieve the purpose.

PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Disclosures (contd)

- b. HRD professionals also may disclose confidential information with the appropriate consent of the individual or organizational client (or of another legally authorized person on behalf of the client).

Consultations

When consulting with colleagues, (1) HRD professionals do not share confidential information that reasonably could lead to the identification of a client, student, or other person or organization with whom they have a confidential relationship, unless they have obtained the prior consent of the person or organization or they cannot avoid the disclosure, and (2) they share information only to the extent necessary to achieve the purposes of the consultation.

Confidential Information in Databases

- a. If confidential information concerning recipients of the HRD professional's services is to be entered into databases or systems of records available to persons whose access has not been consented to by the recipient, then HRD professionals use coding or other techniques to avoid the inclusion of personal identifiers.
- b. If a research protocol approved by an institutional review board or similar body requires the inclusion of personal identifiers, such identifiers are deleted before the information is made accessible to persons other than those of whom the research subject was advised.
- c. If such deletion is not feasible, then before HRD professionals transfer such data to others or review such data collected by others, they take reasonable steps to determine that appropriate consent of personally identifiable individuals has been obtained.

Use of Confidential Information for Didactic or Other Purposes

- a. HRD professionals do not disclose in their writings, lectures, or other public media any confidential, personally identifiable information that concerns their individual or organizational clients or other recipients of their services and that was obtained during the course of their work, unless the person or organization has consented in writing or unless there is other ethical or legal authorization to do so.
- b. Ordinarily, in such professional presentations, HRD professionals disguise confidential information concerning such persons or organizations so that they are not individually identifiable to others and so that discussions do not cause harm to subjects who might identify themselves in a different or later context.

TEACHING AND FACILITATING

Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation of Programs

Descriptions of Programs

HRD professionals must seek to ensure that their programs, or those in which they participate, are competently designed and developed, provide proper exchanges and experiences during implementation, meet the requirements of the objectives made by the program, and are accurately evaluated.

- a. HRD professionals responsible for such programs seek to ensure that there is a current and accurate description of the program content, goals, and objectives and that the requirements for completion or implementation are clearly specified. This information must be made readily available to all interested parties.
- b. HRD professionals seek to ensure that statements concerning their course outlines or program objectives are accurate and not misleading, particularly regarding subject matter to be covered or final outcomes to be achieved. Also, the basis for evaluation of progress, successful completion, or successful implementation is clearly identified to avoid false or deceptive statements.
- c. To the degree to which they exercise control, HRD professionals responsible for announcements, catalogs, brochures, advertisements, agendas, or proposed interventions that describe workshops, seminars, non-degree-granting programs, degree-granting programs, or proposed deliverables accurately describe the audience and the intended influence or effect on that audience. All fees involved also must be disclosed.

Accuracy, Objectivity, and Professionalism in Programs

- a. No data, information, or knowledge presented in a learning environment is distorted, manipulated, or misused.
- b. When teaching or training, HRD professionals recognize the power they hold over students, supervisees, and consultees. Therefore, they make reasonable efforts to avoid engaging in conduct that is personally demeaning or harassing, and they do not engage in conduct that demonstrates a lack of respect for others.

Limitation on Training and Instruction

HRD professionals do not train or instruct individuals in the use of techniques or procedures that require certification, licensure, or expertise if those individuals lack the required prerequisite preparation.

Assessment of Performance

- a. HRD professionals establish proper processes to provide feedback about individual performance to students, supervisees, or consultees.
- b. HRD professionals base the evaluation of students, supervisees, or consultees on each individual's actual performance relevant to the expected requirements.

RESOLUTION OF ETHICAL ISSUES AND VIOLATIONS

Familiarity with Ethics

HRD professionals have an obligation to be familiar with this document, other applicable standards, and the application of ethics to their profession. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not itself an excuse for unethical conduct.

Informal Resolution of Ethical Violations

If informal resolution appears appropriate and if the intervention does not violate any human rights, attempts to resolve such violations should be made by bringing the issue to the attention of the individual involved.

Conflicting Pressure with Organizational Demands

If a conflict arises between these Standards and organizational demands, the HRD professional should consult with a group of peers who will clarify the nature of the conflict, make known their commitment to these Standards, and, to the extent feasible, seek to resolve the conflict in a way that permits the fullest adherence to these Standards.

Improper Complaints

HRD professionals do not file or encourage others to file complaints that are frivolous and/or are intended to harm the person(s) involved rather than protect the public and the profession.

Resolution of Ethical Issues

When an HRD professional is uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate this document, he or she should consult with other professionals knowledgeable about ethical issues, with the AHRD Ethics Committee, or with other appropriate authorities in order to choose a proper course of action. The AHRD Ethics Committee operates as an advisory group only.

Cooperation with Ethics Committees

HRD professionals cooperate in ethics investigations, proceedings, and the resulting activities of any professional organization involved with performance improvement, training, instruction, or learning. In so doing, they make reasonable efforts to help resolve any issue in a violation of ethics. Failure to cooperate is itself an ethics violation.

About the Authors

Darlene Russ-Eft, Ph.D., Chair Darlene Russ-Eft is Director of Research Services at AchieveGlobal, Inc. Dr. Russ-Eft received the 1996 Editor of the Year Award from Times Mirror for her research work and is currently Associate Editor of *Human Resource Development Quarterly*. She is the past Chair of the Research Committee of the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD), a member of the Board of the American Evaluation Association, and a member of the Research Committee of the Instructional Systems Association. Dr. Russ-Eft has published over 50 research articles, as well as four books on training and development and adult education research. She is a frequent speaker at conferences worldwide.

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About the Authors

Timothy G. Hatcher, Ph.D Tim Hatcher has spent 20 years working in business and industry in HRD, performance improvement, and quality management. He has held faculty positions with University of Tennessee, Indiana State University, and University of Arkansas and is currently Associate Professor and Doctoral Program Director in Department of Occupational Training and Development, University of Louisville. Dr. Hatcher's research interests focus on enhancing the social impact of organizations through human resource development and the corporate social responsibility of HRD and performance improvement.

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Fred L. Otte, Ph.D. Fred L. Otte retired as a professor of Human Resource Development from Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia, in 1995. During his 25 years of teaching at GSU he won several national awards for his writing and leadership in the area of career development. Fred was active in the founding of the Academy.

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Previous Committee Members The Committee gratefully acknowledges the contribution of the discussants at the Foodn'Thought session from the 1997 conference. In addition to the above committee members, a number of individuals served on the Committee on Ethics and Integrity in previous years. Their work was important in laying the foundation for these Standards. The previous members were:

Laurie J. Bassi
Neal Chalofsky
Victoria J. Marsick
Michael Leimbach

Karen E. Watkins
Steve Rives
Ronald L. Jacobs