



# Code of Ethics

## American Educational Research Association

### Approved by the AERA Council

### February 2011

#### PREAMBLE

#### BACKGROUND

#### PRINCIPLES

- Principle A: Professional Competence
- Principle B: Integrity
- Principle C: Professional, Scientific, and Scholarly Responsibility
- Principle D: Respect for People's Rights, Dignity, and Diversity
- Principle E: Social Responsibility

#### ETHICAL STANDARDS

1. Scientific, Scholarly, and Professional Standards
2. Competence
3. Use and Misuse of Expertise
4. Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism
5. Avoiding Harm
6. Nondiscrimination
7. Nonexploitation
8. Harassment
9. Employment Decisions
  - 9.01 *Fair Employment Practices*
  - 9.02 *Responsibilities of Employees*
10. Conflicts of Interest
  - 10.01 *Adherence to Professional Standards*
  - 10.02 *Disclosure*
  - 10.03 *Avoidance of Personal Gain*
  - 10.04 *Decision making in the Workplace*
  - 10.05 *Decision making Outside of the Workplace*
11. Public Communications
  - 11.01 *Researcher Communications*
  - 11.02 *Statements by Others*
12. Confidentiality
  - 12.01 *Maintaining Confidentiality*
  - 12.02 *Limits of Confidentiality*
  - 12.03 *Discussing Confidentiality and Its Limits*
  - 12.04 *Anticipation of Possible Uses of Information*
  - 12.05 *Electronic Transmission and Storage of Confidential Information*
  - 12.06 *Anonymity of Sources*
  - 12.07 *Minimizing Intrusions on Privacy*
  - 12.08 *Preservation of Confidential Information*
13. Informed Consent
  - 13.01 *Scope of Informed Consent*
  - 13.02 *Informed Consent Process*
  - 13.03 *Informed Consent of Students and Subordinates*
  - 13.04 *Informed Consent With Children*
  - 13.05 *Use of Deception in Research*
  - 13.06 *Use of Recording Technology*
14. Research Planning, Implementation, and Dissemination
  - 14.01 *Planning and Implementation*
  - 14.02 *Dual Relationships*
  - 14.03 *Unanticipated Research Opportunities*
  - 14.04 *Offering Inducements for Research Participants*
  - 14.05 *Reporting on Research*
  - 14.06 *Data Sharing*
15. Authorship Credit
16. Publication Process
  - 16.01 *Submission of Manuscripts for Publication*
  - 16.02 *Duplicate Publication of Data*
  - 16.03 *Responsibilities of Editors*
17. Responsibilities of Reviewers
18. Teaching, Training, and Administering Education Programs
  - 18.01 *Teaching and Training*
  - 18.02 *Administering Education Programs*
19. Mentoring
20. Supervision
21. Contractual and Consulting Services
22. Adherence to the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association
  - 22.01 *Familiarity With the Code of Ethics*
  - 22.02 *Confronting Ethical Issues*
  - 22.03 *Fair Treatment of Parties in Ethical Disputes*
  - 22.04 *Reporting Ethical Violations of Others*
  - 22.05 *Improper Complaints*
  - 22.06 *Cooperating With Ethics Committees*

## PREAMBLE

The Code of Ethics of the American Educational Research Association (AERA) articulates a common set of values upon which education researchers build their professional and scientific work. The Code is intended to provide both the principles and the rules to cover professional situations encountered by education researchers. It has as its primary goal the welfare and protection of the individuals and groups with whom education researchers work. It also serves to educate education researchers, their students, and others who would benefit from understanding the ethical principles and standards that guide education researchers in their professional work. It is the individual responsibility of each education researcher to aspire to the highest possible standards of conduct in research, teaching, practice, and service.

Adhering to a set of ethical standards for an education researcher's work-related conduct requires a personal commitment to a lifelong effort to act ethically; to encourage ethical behavior by students, supervisors, supervisees, employers, employees, and colleagues; and to consult with others as needed concerning ethical problems. Each education researcher supplements, but does not violate, the values and rules specified in the ethical standards based on guidance drawn from personal values, culture, and experience.

## BACKGROUND

The AERA Code of Ethics sets forth the principles and ethical standards that underlie education researchers' professional responsibilities and conduct. These principles and standards should be used as guidelines when examining everyday professional activities. They constitute normative statements of ethical behavior for education researchers and provide guidance on issues that education researchers may encounter in their professional work. Accordingly, from time to time, the Association reviews its Code of Ethics to ensure that the Code continues to educate and guide the field as new issues or dilemmas present themselves.

AERA's Code of Ethics consists of five Principles and specific Ethical Standards. This Code is accompanied by the Policies and Procedures of the AERA Ethics Committee, which describe the procedures for handling complaints of unethical conduct on matters pertaining to the activities and programs of AERA.

The *Principles* of the Code set forth for education researchers the highest ideals of professional conduct. Education researchers sometimes need to weigh competing or conflicting principles in specific situations, and they have a responsibility to engage in careful consideration of all relevant principles.

The *Ethical Standards* set forth rules for ethical conduct by education researchers. Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly in order to apply to education researchers in varied roles, and the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the context. Although the Ethical Standards aim to cover most situations encountered by education researchers, they are not exhaustive. Any conduct that is not specifically addressed by this Code of Ethics is not necessarily ethical or unethical.

AERA's Code of Ethics embodies principles and standards of conduct expected of education researchers in their professional roles. Standards of conduct may also be specified by laws and

regulations, but it is the responsibility of AERA to specify the standards of ethical conduct expected of education researchers.

Membership in AERA commits members to adhere to the AERA Code of Ethics and to follow the Policies and Procedures of the AERA Ethics Committee. Members are advised of this obligation upon joining the Association and are advised that violations of the Code may lead to the imposition of sanctions, including termination of membership.

AERA may review complaints of ethical misconduct related to the activities or programs of AERA. Other bodies may choose to invoke these Ethical Standards in considering the professional conduct of education researchers. Private or personal activities having no connection to or effect on education researchers' performance of their professional roles are not covered by the guidance provided in the Code of Ethics.

## PRINCIPLES

The following Principles serve as a guide for education researchers in determining ethical courses of action in various contexts. Each is essential, and together they exemplify the highest ideals of professional conduct.

### Principle A: Professional Competence

Education researchers strive to maintain the highest levels of competence in their work; they recognize the limitations of their expertise; and they undertake only those tasks for which they are qualified by education, training, or experience. They recognize the need for ongoing education in order to remain professionally competent; and they utilize the appropriate scientific, scholarly, professional, technical, and administrative resources needed to ensure competence in their professional activities. They consult with other professionals when necessary for the benefit of their students, research participants, and clients.

### Principle B: Integrity

Education researchers are honest, fair, and respectful of others in their professional activities—in research, teaching, practice, and service. Education researchers do not knowingly act in ways that jeopardize the welfare of others. Education researchers conduct their professional activities in ways that are worthy of trust and confidence.

### Principle C: Professional, Scientific, and Scholarly Responsibility

Education researchers adhere to the highest scientific and professional standards and accept responsibility for their work. Education researchers value the public trust in research and are concerned about their ethical behavior and the behavior of other education researchers that might compromise that trust. Education researchers understand that they form a community and show respect for other education researchers even when they disagree on theoretical, methodological, or personal approaches to professional activities. While endeavoring always to be collegial, education researchers must never let the desire to be collegial outweigh their shared responsibility for ethical behavior. When appropriate, they consult with colleagues in order to prevent or avoid unethical conduct.

## **Principle D: Respect for People's Rights, Dignity, and Diversity**

Education researchers respect the rights, dignity, and worth of all people and take care to do no harm in the conduct of their work. In their research, they have a special obligation to protect the rights, welfare, and dignity of research participants. They are sensitive to cultural, individual, and role differences in teaching, studying, and providing service to groups of people with distinctive characteristics. They strive to eliminate bias in their professional activities, and they do not tolerate any forms of discrimination based on race; ethnicity; culture; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; religion; language; disability; health conditions; socioeconomic status; or marital, domestic, or parental status.

In all of their work-related activities, education researchers acknowledge the rights of others to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that differ from their own, and they treat others with dignity and respect.

## **Principle E: Social Responsibility**

Education researchers are aware of their professional and scientific responsibility to the communities and societies in which they live and work. They apply and make public their knowledge in order to contribute to the public good. When undertaking research, they strive to advance scientific and scholarly knowledge and to serve the public good.

## **ETHICAL STANDARDS**

### **1. Scientific, Scholarly, and Professional Standards**

Education researchers adhere to the highest possible standards that are reasonable and responsible in their research, teaching, practice, and service activities. They rely on scientifically, scholarly, and professionally derived knowledge and act with honesty and integrity.

### **2. Competence**

- (a) Education researchers conduct research, teach, practice, and provide service only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience.
- (b) Education researchers conduct research, teach, practice, and provide service in new areas or involving new techniques only after they have taken reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work in these areas.
- (c) Education researchers who engage in research, teaching, practice, or service maintain awareness of current scientific, scholarly, and professional information in their fields of activity and undertake continuing efforts to maintain competence in the skills they use.

### **3. Use and Misuse of Expertise**

- (a) In research, teaching, practice, service, or other activities where education researchers render professional judgments or present their expertise, they accurately and fairly represent their areas and degrees of expertise.
- (b) Education researchers do not accept grants, contracts, consultation, or work assignments from individual or

organizational clients or sponsors that appear likely to compromise their ability to adhere to the standards in this Code of Ethics. Education researchers dissociate themselves from such activities when they discover a violation and are unable to achieve its correction.

- (c) Education researchers' scientific, scholarly, and professional judgments and actions may affect the lives of others; therefore, education researchers are alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their knowledge, expertise, or influence.
- (d) If education researchers learn of misuse or misrepresentation of their work, they take reasonable steps to correct the misuse or misrepresentation.

### **4. Fabrication, Falsification, and Plagiarism**

Education researchers do not engage in fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results.

- (a) Education researchers do not falsify or fabricate data, data sources, findings, claims, or credentials.
- (b) In their publications, presentations, teaching, practice, and service, education researchers explicitly identify, credit, and reference the author(s) when they take data or material verbatim from another person's work, whether it is published, unpublished, or electronically available.
- (c) In their publications, presentations, teaching, practice, and service, education researchers provide acknowledgment of and reference to the use of others' work, even if the work is not quoted verbatim or paraphrased, and they do not present others' work as their own whether it is published, unpublished, or electronically available.

### **5. Avoiding Harm**

Education researchers take reasonable steps to avoid harm to others in the conduct of their professional work. When unanticipated negative consequences occur, education researchers take immediate steps to minimize harm, including, if necessary, terminating the work.

### **6. Nondiscrimination**

Education researchers do not engage in discrimination in their work based on race; ethnicity; culture; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; religion; language; disability; health conditions; socioeconomic status; marital, domestic, or parental status; or any other applicable basis proscribed by law.

### **7. Nonexploitation**

- (a) Whether for personal, economic, or professional advantage, education researchers do not exploit persons over whom they have direct or indirect supervisory, evaluative, or other authority, such as students, supervisees, employees, or research participants.
- (b) Education researchers do not directly supervise or exercise evaluative authority over any person with whom they have a romantic, sexual, or familial relationship, including students, supervisees, employees, or research participants.

## 8. Harassment

Education researchers do not engage in harassment of any person, including students, supervisees, employees, or research participants based on factors such as race; ethnicity; culture; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; religion; language; disability; health conditions; socioeconomic status; or marital, domestic, or parental status. Harassment consists of a single intense and severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts which are demeaning, abusive, offensive, or create a hostile professional, workplace, or educational environment. Harassment may include unnecessary, exaggerated, or unwarranted attention or attack, whether verbal or nonverbal. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature.

## 9. Employment Decisions

Education researchers have an obligation to adhere to the highest ethical standards when seeking employment, when participating in employment-related decisions, or when planning to resign from a position.

### 9.01 Fair Employment Practices

- (a) When participating in employment-related decisions, education researchers make every effort to ensure equal opportunity and fair treatment to all employees and prospective employees. They do not discriminate in hiring, promotion, salary, treatment, or any other conditions of employment or career development on the basis of race; ethnicity; culture; national origin; gender; sexual orientation; gender identity; age; religion; language; disability; health conditions; socioeconomic status; marital, domestic, or parental status; or any other applicable basis proscribed by law.
- (b) When participating in employment-related decisions, education researchers specify the requirements for hiring, promotion, tenure, and termination and communicate these requirements thoroughly and as early as possible in the process to full- and part-time employees and prospective employees.
- (c) When participating in employment-related decisions, education researchers have the responsibility to inform themselves of fair employment codes, to communicate this information to employees, and to help create an atmosphere upholding fair employment practices for employees.
- (d) When participating in employment-related decisions, education researchers inform employees of any constraints on research and publication and negotiate clear understandings about any conditions that may limit research and scholarly activity.

### 9.02 Responsibilities of Employees

- (a) When seeking employment, education researchers present their professional qualifications and experiences honestly and accurately.
- (b) When leaving a position, permanently or temporarily, education researchers provide their employers with appropriate notice and take reasonable steps to reduce negative effects of leaving.

## 10. Conflicts of Interest

Education researchers avoid where possible or otherwise disclose and manage conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest arise when education researchers' personal, professional, or financial interests prevent them from performing their professional work in an unbiased manner. In research, teaching, practice, and service, education researchers are alert to situations that might cause a conflict of interest and take appropriate action to prevent conflict or otherwise disclose and manage it.

### 10.01 Adherence to Professional Standards

Irrespective of their personal or financial interests or those of their employers or clients, education researchers adhere to scientific, scholarly, and professional standards in (1) the collection, analysis, or interpretation of data; (2) the reporting of research; (3) the teaching, professional presentation, or public dissemination of education research knowledge; and (4) the identification or implementation of appropriate contractual, consulting, or service activities.

### 10.02 Disclosure

Education researchers disclose relevant sources of financial support and relevant personal or professional relationships that may have the appearance of or potential for a conflict of interest to an employer or client, to the sponsors of their professional work, and to the public in written and verbal reports.

### 10.03 Avoidance of Personal Gain

- (a) Education researchers do not use or otherwise seek to gain from information or material received in a confidential context (e.g., knowledge obtained from reviewing a manuscript or serving on a proposal review panel), unless they have authorization to do so or until that information is otherwise made publicly available.
- (b) Education researchers do not seek to gain from confidential or proprietary information or material in an employment or client relationship without permission of the employer or client.

### 10.04 Decision Making in the Workplace

In their workplace, education researchers take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts and carefully scrutinize potentially biasing affiliations or relationships. In research, teaching, practice, or service, such potentially biasing affiliations or relationships include, but are not limited to, situations involving family, business, or close personal friendships or people with whom education researchers have had strong conflict or disagreement.

### 10.05 Decision Making Outside of the Workplace

In professional activities outside of their workplace, education researchers who have biasing affiliations or relationships abstain from engaging in deliberations and decisions that allocate or withhold benefits or rewards from individuals or institutions. These biasing affiliations or relationships are: (1) current or prospective employment at an organization or institution that could



be construed as benefiting from the decision; (2) current service as an officer or board member of an organization or institution that could be construed as benefiting from the decision; (3) current or prospective employment at the same organization or institution where an individual could benefit from the decision; (4) having a spouse, domestic partner, or known relative who as an individual could benefit from the decision; or (5) having a current business or professional partner, research collaborator, employee, supervisee, or student who as an individual could benefit from the decision.

## 11. Public Communications

Education researchers adhere to the highest professional standards in public communications about their professional services, credentials, expertise, work products, or publications, whether these communications are from themselves or from others on their behalf.

### 11.01 Researcher Communications

- (a) Education researchers take steps to ensure the accuracy of all public communications. Such public communications include, but are not limited to, directory listings; personal resumes or curriculum vitae; advertising; brochures or printed matter; interviews or comments to the media; statements in legal proceedings; lectures and public oral presentations; or other published materials.
- (b) Education researchers do not make public statements that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent, either because of what they state, convey, or suggest or because of what they omit. Such activities include, but are not limited to, false or deceptive statements concerning their own or others' (1) training, experience, or competence; (2) academic degrees; (3) credentials; (4) institutional or association affiliations; (5) services; (6) fees; or (7) publications or research findings. Education researchers do not make false or deceptive statements concerning the scientific or scholarly basis for any professional services they may provide.
- (c) When education researchers provide professional advice, comment, or testimony to the public, the media, government, or other institutions, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that (1) the statements are based on appropriate research, literature, and practice; and (2) the statements are otherwise consistent with the Code of Ethics.
- (d) In working with the press, radio, television, online media or other communications media or in advertising in the media, education researchers are cognizant of potential conflicts of interest or appearances of such conflicts (e.g., providing compensation to employees of the media), and they adhere to the highest standards of professional honesty.

### 11.02 Statements by Others

- (a) Education researchers who engage or employ others to create or place public statements that promote their work products, professional services, or other activities retain responsibility for such statements.
- (b) Education researchers make reasonable efforts to prevent others whom they do not directly engage or employ (such

as employers, publishers, sponsors, organizational clients, and members of the media) from making deceptive statements concerning their professional research, teaching, or practice activities.

## 12. Confidentiality

Education researchers ensure that confidential information is protected. They do so to ensure the integrity of research and the open communication with research participants and to protect sensitive information obtained in research, teaching, practice, and service. When gathering confidential information, education researchers take into account the long-term uses of the information, including its potential placement in public archives or the examination of the information by other researchers or practitioners.

### 12.01 Maintaining Confidentiality

- (a) Confidentiality agreements are made known to or established between education researchers and others at the outset of a scientific, scholarly, or professional relationship and are reviewed periodically as conditions require. See also 12.03(b).
- (b) Education researchers take reasonable precautions to protect the confidentiality of information related to research participants, students, employees, clients, and others when confidentiality has been provided or there is a reasonable expectation of confidentiality.
- (c) Confidential information provided by research participants, students, employees, clients, or others is treated as such by education researchers even if there is no legal protection or privilege requiring them to do so. Education researchers protect confidential information and do not allow information gained in confidence to be used in ways that would unfairly compromise research participants, students, employees, clients, or others.
- (d) Information provided under an understanding of confidentiality is treated as such even after the death of those providing that information.
- (e) Education researchers maintain the integrity of confidential deliberations, activities, or roles, including, where applicable, that of professional committees, review panels, or advisory groups.
- (f) Education researchers protect the confidentiality of student records, performance data, and personal information, whether verbal or written, given in the context of academic consultation, supervision, or advising.
- (g) Members of research or training teams and collaborating organizations with access to confidential information maintain confidentiality. To ensure that access to confidential information is restricted, principal investigators, other researchers, and administrators take steps necessary to protect confidentiality through appropriate data protection methods and plans.
- (h) When using private information about individuals collected by other persons, organizations, or institutions, education researchers protect the confidentiality of individually identifiable information. Information is private when an individual can reasonably expect that the information will

not be made public with personal identifiers (e.g., student, medical, or employment records).

- (i) Education researchers inform themselves fully about and use methods, procedures, and steps that can enhance confidentiality protections, including awareness of legal provisions.

#### *12.02 Limits of Confidentiality*

- (a) Education researchers inform themselves fully about all laws, rules, or circumstances that may limit guarantees of confidentiality. They determine their ability to guarantee absolute confidentiality and, as appropriate, inform research participants, students, employees, clients, or others of any limitations to this guarantee at the outset, consistent with ethical standards set forth in 12.02(b).
- (b) Education researchers may confront unanticipated circumstances in which they become aware of information that is clearly health- or life-threatening to research participants, students, employees, clients, or others. In these cases, education researchers balance the importance of guarantees of confidentiality with other principles in this Code of Ethics, standards of conduct, and applicable law.
- (c) Confidentiality is not required with respect to observations in public places, activities conducted in public, or other settings where no rules of privacy are provided by law or custom. Similarly, confidentiality is not required in the case of information from publicly available records.

#### *12.03 Discussing Confidentiality and Its Limits*

- (a) When education researchers establish a scientific, scholarly, or professional relationship with persons, they discuss (1) the relevant limitations on confidentiality, and (2) the foreseeable uses of the information generated through their professional work.
- (b) Unless it is not feasible or is counterproductive, the discussion of confidentiality occurs both at the outset of the relationship and thereafter as new circumstances may warrant.

#### *12.04 Anticipation of Possible Uses of Information*

- (a) When research requires maintaining personal identifiers in databases or systems of records, education researchers remove such identifiers before the information is made publicly available.
- (b) When removal or masking of personal identifiers is not feasible, education researchers take reasonable steps to determine that appropriate consent of personally identifiable individuals has been obtained before they transfer such data to others or review such data collected by others. When it is not feasible to obtain consent for subsequent use, education researchers take steps to ensure that access to such data occurs only under restricted conditions where users agree to honor confidentiality agreements or protections in place.
- (c) When confidential information concerning research participants, clients, or other recipients of service is entered into databases or systems of records available to persons

without the prior consent of the relevant parties, education researchers protect the privacy of others by not including personal identifiers or by employing other techniques that mask or control disclosure of individual identities.

#### *12.05 Electronic Transmission and Storage of Confidential Information*

Education researchers protect confidential data, information, or communication in their storage, delivery, or transfer over computer networks or other electronic means. Education researchers are attentive to the problems of maintaining confidentiality and control over sensitive material and data when use of technology, such as computer networks, may open their professional, scientific, and scholarly communication to unauthorized persons or inadvertent disclosure.

#### *12.06 Anonymity of Sources*

- (a) Education researchers do not disclose in their writings, lectures, websites, or other public media confidential, personally identifiable information concerning their research participants, students, individual or organizational clients, or other recipients of their service which is obtained during the course of their work, unless consent from individuals or their legally authorized representatives has been obtained.
- (b) When confidential information is used in scientific, scholarly, and professional presentations, education researchers disguise the identity of research participants, students, individual or organizational clients, or other recipients of their service.

#### *12.07 Minimizing Intrusions on Privacy*

- (a) To minimize intrusions on privacy, education researchers include in written and oral reports, consultations, and public communications only information germane to the purpose for which the communication is made.
- (b) Education researchers discuss confidential information or evaluative data concerning research participants, students, supervisees, employees, and individual or organizational clients only for appropriate scientific, scholarly, or professional purposes and only with persons authorized to discuss such matters.

#### *12.08 Preservation of Confidential Information*

- (a) Education researchers take reasonable steps to ensure that records, data, or information are preserved in a confidential manner consistent with the requirements of this Code of Ethics, recognizing that ownership of records, data, or information may also be governed by law or institutional principles.
- (b) Education researchers plan so that confidentiality of records, data, or information is protected in the event of the education researcher's death, incapacity, or withdrawal from the position or practice.
- (c) When education researchers transfer confidential records, data, or information to other persons or organizations, they obtain assurances that the recipients of the records,

data, or information will employ measures to protect confidentiality at least equal to those originally pledged.

- (d) Education researchers take reasonable steps to ensure that they protect the identity of research participants in disseminating their research findings to the extent provided under assurances of confidentiality.

### 13. Informed Consent

Informed consent is a basic ethical tenet of scientific research on human populations. Education researchers do not involve a human being as a participant in research without the informed consent of the participant or the participant's legally authorized representative, except as otherwise specified in this Code (see, e.g., 13.01[b] and [c]). Education researchers recognize the possibility of undue influence or subtle pressures on research participants that may derive from researchers' expertise or authority, and they take this into account in designing informed consent procedures.

#### 13.01 Scope of Informed Consent

- (a) Education researchers conducting research obtain and document written or oral consent from research participants or their legally authorized representatives (1) when data are collected from research participants through any form of communication, interaction, or intervention; or (2) when behavior of research participants occurs in a private context where an individual can reasonably expect that no observation or reporting is taking place. Education researchers obtain consent in a manner that is understandable and appropriate to research participants.
- (b) Education researchers may seek waivers of consent when (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk for research participants, and (2) the research could not practicably be carried out were informed consent to be required. Education researchers recognize that waivers of consent require approval from institutional review boards or, in the absence of such boards, guidance from another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research. Under such circumstances, the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information must be maintained unless otherwise set forth in 12.02(b).
- (c) Education researchers may conduct research in public places or use publicly available information about individuals (e.g., naturalistic observations in public places, analysis of public records, or archival research) without obtaining consent. If, under such circumstances, education researchers have any doubt whatsoever about the need for informed consent, they consult with institutional review boards or, in the absence of such boards, with another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research before proceeding with such research.
- (d) In undertaking research with vulnerable populations (e.g., children, youth, special needs students, recent immigrant populations), education researchers take special care to ensure that the voluntary nature of the research is understood and that consent or assent is not coerced. In all other respects, education researchers adhere to the standards set forth in 13.01(a)–(c).

- (e) Education researchers are conversant with and conform to applicable state and federal regulations and, where applicable, institutional review board requirements for obtaining informed consent for research.

#### 13.02 Informed Consent Process

- (a) When informed consent is required, education researchers enter into an agreement with research participants or their legally authorized representatives that clarifies the nature of the research and the responsibilities of the investigator prior to conducting the research.
- (b) When informed consent is required, education researchers use written or oral language that is understandable to and respectful of research participants or their legally authorized representatives.
- (c) When informed consent is required, education researchers provide research participants or their legally authorized representatives with the opportunity to ask questions about any aspect of the research, at any time during or after their participation in the research.
- (d) When informed consent is required, education researchers inform research participants or their legally authorized representatives of the nature of the research; they indicate to participants that their participation or continued participation is voluntary; they inform participants of significant factors that may be expected to influence their willingness to participate (e.g., possible risks and benefits of their participation); and they explain other aspects of the research and respond to questions from prospective participants. Also, if relevant, education researchers explain that refusal to participate or withdrawal from participation in the research involves no penalty, and they explain any foreseeable consequences of declining or withdrawing. Education researchers explicitly discuss confidentiality and, if applicable, the extent to which confidentiality may be limited as set forth in 12.02(b).
- (e) When informed consent is required, education researchers keep records regarding said consent. They recognize that consent is a process that involves oral and/or written consent.
- (f) Education researchers honor all commitments they have made to research participants as part of the informed consent process except where unanticipated circumstances demand otherwise as set forth in 12.02(b).

#### 13.03 Informed Consent of Students and Subordinates

When undertaking research at their own institutions or organizations with research participants who are students or subordinates, education researchers take special care to protect the prospective participants from adverse consequences of declining or withdrawing from participation. See also 7(a) and 14.02.

#### 13.04 Informed Consent With Children

- (a) In undertaking research with children, education researchers obtain the consent of a parent or a legally authorized guardian. Education researchers may seek waivers of parental or guardian consent when (1) the research involves no more than minimal risk for the research

participants, and (2) the research could not practicably be carried out were consent to be required, or (3) the consent of a parent or guardian is not a reasonable requirement to protect the child (e.g., in the case of neglected or abused children).

- (b) In undertaking research with children, education researchers obtain the assent (that is, the agreement) of children to participate, to the extent that the children are capable of providing such assent, except under circumstances where assent may not be required consistent with the waiver condition as set forth in 13.01(b).
- (c) Education researchers recognize that waivers of consent from a child and a parent or guardian require approval from institutional review boards or, in the absence of such boards, from another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research. Under such circumstances, the confidentiality of any personally identifiable information must be maintained unless otherwise set forth in 12.02(b).

#### *13.05 Use of Deception in Research*

- (a) Education researchers do not use deceptive techniques (1) unless they have determined that their use poses no more than minimal risk to research participants; that their use is justified by the study's prospective scientific, scholarly, educational, or applied value; and that equally effective alternative procedures that do not use deception are not feasible; and (2) unless they have obtained the approval of institutional review boards or, in the absence of such boards, of another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research.
- (b) Education researchers never deceive research participants about significant aspects of the research that would affect their willingness to participate, such as physical risks, discomfort, or unpleasant emotional experiences.
- (c) When deception is an integral feature of the design and conduct of research, education researchers attempt to correct any misconception that research participants may have no later than at the conclusion of the research.
- (d) On rare occasions, education researchers may need to conceal their identities in order to undertake research that could not practicably be carried out were they to be known as researchers. Under such circumstances, education researchers undertake the research only if it involves no more than minimal risk for the research participants and if they have obtained approval to proceed in this manner from an institutional review board or, in the absence of such boards, from another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research. Under such circumstances, confidentiality must be maintained unless otherwise set forth in 12.02(b).

#### *13.06 Use of Recording Technology*

Education researchers obtain informed consent from research participants, students, employees, clients, or others prior to photographing, videotaping, filming, or recording them in any form, unless these activities involve 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.

## **14. Research Planning, Implementation, and Dissemination**

Education researchers have an obligation to promote the integrity of research and to ensure that they comply with the ethical tenets of research in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of research. They do so in order to advance knowledge, to minimize the possibility that results will be misleading, and to protect the rights of research participants.

### *14.01 Planning and Implementation*

- (a) In planning and implementing research, education researchers minimize the possibility that results will be misleading.
- (b) Education researchers take steps to implement protections for the rights and welfare of research participants and other persons affected by the research.
- (c) In their research, education researchers do not encourage activities or behave in ways that are health- or life-threatening to research participants or others.
- (d) In planning and implementing research, education researchers consult those with expertise concerning any specific population under investigation or likely to be affected.
- (e) In planning research, education researchers anticipate legal requirements or circumstances that might make it difficult to guarantee confidentiality to research participants. (See 12.02[a].) Education researchers take steps necessary and appropriate to minimize risk through secure data protection plans and in the dissemination of results. (See also, e.g., 12.01[g] and 12.08[d].)
- (f) In planning and implementing research, education researchers consider its ethical acceptability as set forth in this Code of Ethics. If the best ethical practice is unclear, education researchers consult with institutional review boards or, in the absence of such review boards, with another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research.
- (g) Education researchers are responsible for the ethical conduct of research conducted by them or by others under their supervision or authority. Those working under the supervision or authority of others remain responsible for their own ethical conduct.

### *14.02 Dual Relationships*

In planning research, education researchers select research participants with whom they have no other relationship (e.g., teacher, supervisor, mentor, or employer). If research opportunities or circumstances require selection of research participants with whom education researchers have another such relationship, researchers take particular care to ensure that consent to participate is voluntary and free of coercion. Education researchers also take particular care that information used, gathered, or reported as part of the research is handled in such a manner to ensure that risk of harm to the research participants is minimized and does not exceed what otherwise would be anticipated for research participants in similar circumstances where there is no such dual relationship. See also 7(a) and 13.03.



### 14.03 Unanticipated Research Opportunities

If during the course of nonresearch activities (e.g., teaching, practice, service, or nonprofessional activities), education researchers determine that they wish to undertake research that was not previously anticipated, they make known their intentions to the potential research participants and take steps to ensure that the research is undertaken consonant with ethical principles, especially those relating to confidentiality and informed consent. Under such circumstances, education researchers seek the approval of institutional review boards or, in the absence of such review boards, of another authoritative body with expertise on the ethics of research.

### 14.04 Offering Inducements for Research Participants

Education researchers do not offer excessive or inappropriate financial or other inducements to obtain the participation of research participants, particularly when it might unduly influence the decision to participate. Education researchers may provide incentives to the extent that resources are available and appropriate.

### 14.05 Reporting on Research

- (a) Education researchers are responsible for making known their research findings except where unanticipated circumstances beyond their control or proprietary agreements with employers, contractors, or clients preclude such dissemination.
- (b) In presenting their work, education researchers report their findings fully and do not omit relevant data. They report results whether they support or contradict the expected outcomes.
- (c) Education researchers take particular care to state all relevant qualifications on the findings and interpretation of their research. Education researchers also disclose underlying assumptions, theories, methods, measures, and research designs that might bear upon findings and interpretations of their work.
- (d) In reporting on research, education researchers present their findings consonant with any consent agreements with research participants and any other agreements with respect to gaining access to research sites or data.
- (e) Consistent with the spirit of full disclosure of methods and analyses, once findings are publicly disseminated, education researchers permit the open assessment of data and other relevant materials and verification of findings by other responsible researchers with appropriate confidentiality safeguards, where applicable, to protect the identity of research participants.
- (f) In reporting on research that uses data under limited access or licensing arrangements, education researchers provide sufficiently detailed information so that others can verify or further analyze these data if they gain access to the data under similar circumstances.
- (g) If education researchers discover significant errors in their publication or presentation of data, they take reasonable steps to address such errors in a correction, a retraction, published erratum, or other public forum as appropriate.
- (h) In reporting on research, education researchers address any potential conflicts of interest that may have influenced or

have the appearance of influencing the research, along with a statement of how these were managed in the conduct of the research.

- (i) Education researchers report sources of financial support in their written papers and note any special relations to any sponsor. In special circumstances, education researchers may withhold the names of specific sponsors if they provide an adequate and full description of the nature and interest of the sponsor.
- (j) Education researchers take special care to report accurately the results of others' scholarship by using correct information and citations when presenting the work of others in publications, teaching, practice, and service settings.

### 14.06 Data Sharing

- (a) Education researchers share data and pertinent documentation as a regular practice. Education researchers make their data available after completion of the project or its major publications for verification or other analyses by other researchers, except where proprietary agreements with employers, contractors, or clients preclude such accessibility or when it is impossible to share data in any useful form.
- (b) In sharing data, education researchers take appropriate steps to protect the confidentiality of the data and the identity of research participants. When appropriate future use necessitates access to identifiable data, researchers take steps to ensure that the data are accessible under appropriate restrictions where the confidentiality of research participants can be secured. See also 12.04(b) and 12.08(c).
- (c) Education researchers anticipate data sharing as an integral part of a research plan whenever data sharing is feasible.
- (d) Education researchers share data in a form that is consonant with research participants' interests and protect the confidentiality of the information they have been given. They maintain the confidentiality of data, whether legally required or not; remove personal identifiers before data are shared; and, if necessary, use other disclosure-avoidance techniques. When data are shared with personally identifiable information, education researchers take steps to ensure that access is provided only under restricted conditions where users agree to protect the confidentiality of the data consonant with prior commitments.
- (e) Education researchers who do not otherwise place data in public archives keep data available and retain documentation relating to the research for a reasonable period of time after publication or dissemination of results and share data consonant with 14.06(a).
- (f) Education researchers who use data from others for further analyses explicitly acknowledge the contribution of the initial researchers.

## 15. Authorship Credit

- (a) Education researchers ensure that all who have made a substantive contribution to an intellectual product are listed as authors.

- (b) Education researchers take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have contributed.
- (c) Education researchers ensure that principal authorship, authorship order, and other publication credits are based on the relative scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved, regardless of their status. Education researchers specify the criteria for making these determinations at the outset of the writing process.
- (d) A student is usually listed as principal author on any multiple-authored publication that substantially derives from the student's dissertation or thesis.

## 16. Publication Process

Education researchers adhere to the highest ethical standards, including standards of competence, when participating in publication and review processes as authors or editors.

### 16.01 *Submission of Manuscripts for Publication*

- (a) In cases of multiple authorship, education researchers confer with all other authors prior to submitting work for publication and establish mutually acceptable authorship agreements regarding the submission.
- (b) In submitting a manuscript to a professional journal, book series, or edited book, education researchers grant that publication first claim to publication except where explicit policies allow multiple submissions. Education researchers do not submit a manuscript to a second publication until after an official decision has been received from the first publication or until the manuscript is withdrawn. Education researchers submitting a manuscript for publication in a journal, book series, or edited book can withdraw the manuscript from consideration until an official acceptance is made.
- (c) Education researchers do not submit a book manuscript to multiple publishers unless the submission guidelines of the publishers permit the practice. Once education researchers have signed a contract, they may not withdraw a manuscript from publication unless there is reasonable cause to do so.
- (d) In submitting a manuscript for publication, education researchers make data available upon an editor's request to verify a finding or address questions that arise in the course of review.

### 16.02 *Duplicate Publication of Data*

- (a) Education researchers do not submit for subsequent publication work that has been previously published unless it is published with citation to the first publication and undertaken consistent with any applicable laws and agreements.
- (b) When education researchers publish data or findings that they have previously published elsewhere, they accompany these publications with proper acknowledgment.

### 16.03 *Responsibilities of Editors*

- (a) When serving as editors of journals or book series, education researchers are fair in the application of

standards for publication and operate without favoritism or malice. As editors, education researchers are cognizant of any potential conflicts of interest.

- (b) When serving as editors of journals or book series, education researchers ensure the confidential nature of the review process and supervise editorial office staff, including students, in accordance with practices that maintain confidentiality.
- (c) When serving as editors of journals or book series, education researchers are bound to publish all manuscripts accepted for publication unless major errors or ethical violations (e.g., plagiarism or other misconduct) are discovered after acceptance.
- (d) When serving as editors of journals or book series, education researchers ensure the anonymity of reviewers unless they otherwise receive permission from reviewers to reveal their identity. Editors ensure that their staff conforms to this practice.
- (e) When serving as journal editors, education researchers ensure the anonymity of authors unless and until a manuscript is accepted for publication or unless the established practices of the journal are known to be otherwise.
- (f) When serving as journal editors, education researchers take steps to provide for the timely review of all manuscripts and respond promptly to inquiries about the status of the review.

## 17. Responsibilities of Reviewers

Education researchers adhere to the highest ethical standards, including standards of competence, when serving as reviewers for publication, grant support, or other evaluation purposes.

- (a) In reviewing material submitted for publication, grant support, or other evaluation purposes, education researchers respect the confidentiality of the process and the proprietary rights in such information of those who submitted it.
- (b) Education researchers disclose conflicts of interest or decline requests for reviews of the work of others where conflicts of interest are involved.
- (c) If asked to review a manuscript, book, or proposal they have previously reviewed, education researchers make it known to the person making the request (e.g., editor, program officer) unless it is clear that they are being asked to provide a reappraisal.

## 18. Teaching, Training, and Administering Education Programs

Education researchers who serve as teachers, trainers, or administrators of education and training programs perform their responsibilities conscientiously, competently, and with integrity. They model and foster ethical behavior for their students and trainees.

### 18.01 *Teaching and Training*

- (a) Education researchers who are responsible for teaching and training perform these responsibilities with appropriate skills and knowledge or are receiving appropriate training.

- (b) Education researchers provide accurate information at the outset about their courses, particularly regarding the subject matter to be covered, bases for evaluation, and the nature of course experiences.
- (c) Education researchers make decisions concerning textbooks, course content, course requirements, and grading solely on the basis of educational criteria without regard for financial or other incentives.
- (d) Education researchers provide proper training and supervision to their teaching assistants and other teaching trainees and take reasonable steps to ensure that such persons perform these teaching responsibilities responsibly, competently, and ethically.
- (e) Education researchers do not permit personal animosities or intellectual differences with colleagues to foreclose students' or supervisees' access to these colleagues or to interfere with student or supervisee learning, academic progress, or professional development.

#### *18.02 Administering Education Programs*

- (a) Education researchers who are responsible for education and training programs seek to ensure that the programs are competently designed, provide relevant experiences, and meet all goals for which claims are made by the program.
- (b) Education researchers who are responsible for education and training programs seek to ensure that there is an accurate description of the program content, training goals and objectives, and requirements that must be met for satisfactory completion of the program.
- (c) Education researchers who are responsible for education and training programs take steps to ensure that graduate assistants and temporary instructors have the substantive knowledge required to teach courses and the teaching skills needed to facilitate student learning.
- (d) Education researchers who are responsible for education and training programs have an obligation to ensure that ethics are taught to their graduate students as part of their professional preparation.

### **19. Mentoring**

Education researchers who serve as mentors perform their responsibilities conscientiously, competently, and with integrity. They model and foster ethical behavior for their mentees.

- (a) Education researchers are committed to their mentees' welfare and progress and act in their mentees' best interests.
- (b) Education researchers inform their mentees about the ethical dimensions of their work and support them in performing their professional activities in ways consistent with the highest ethical standards.

### **20. Supervision**

- (a) Education researchers provide proper training and supervision to their students, supervisees, and employees and take reasonable steps to see that such persons perform services responsibly, competently, and ethically.

- (b) Education researchers delegate to their students, supervisees, and employees only those responsibilities that such persons, based on their education, training, or experience, can reasonably be expected to perform either independently or with the level of supervision provided.
- (c) Education researchers fairly evaluate the performance of their students, supervisees, and employees and communicate that evaluation fully and honestly.

### **21. Contractual and Consulting Services**

- (a) Education researchers undertake grants, contracts, or consultation only when they are knowledgeable about the substance, methods, and techniques they plan to use or have a plan for incorporating appropriate expertise.
- (b) In undertaking grants, contracts, or consultation, education researchers base the results of their professional work on appropriate information and techniques.
- (c) When financial support for a project has been accepted under a grant, contract, or consultation, education researchers make reasonable efforts to complete the proposed work on schedule.
- (d) In undertaking grants, contracts, or consultation, education researchers accurately document and appropriately retain their professional and scientific work.
- (e) In establishing a contractual arrangement for research, consultation, or other services, education researchers clarify, to the extent feasible at the outset, the nature of the relationship with the individual, organizational, or institutional client. This clarification includes, as appropriate, the nature of the services to be performed, the probable uses of the services provided, possibilities for the education researcher's future use of the work for scholarly or publication purposes, the timetable for delivery of those services, and compensation and billing arrangements.

### **22. Adherence to the Ethical Standards of the American Educational Research Association**

Education researchers have an obligation to confront, address, and attempt to resolve ethical issues that arise under this Code of Ethics.

#### *22.01 Familiarity With the Code of Ethics*

Education researchers have an obligation to be familiar with this Code of Ethics, other applicable ethics codes, and their application to education researchers' work. Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.

#### *22.02 Confronting Ethical Issues*

- (a) When education researchers are uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action would violate the Code of Ethics, they consult with other education researchers knowledgeable about ethical issues or with other organizational entities such as institutional review boards. They may also consult with the AERA Ethics Committee as a source of information or guidance.

- (b) When education researchers take actions or are confronted with choices where there is a conflict between ethical standards enunciated in the Code of Ethics and laws or legal requirements, they make known their commitment to the Code and take steps to resolve the conflict in a responsible manner by consulting with colleagues, professional organizations, or the AERA Ethics Committee.

#### *22.03 Fair Treatment of Parties in Ethical Disputes*

- (a) Education researchers do not discriminate or retaliate against a person on the basis of his or her having made an ethical complaint.
- (b) Education researchers do not discriminate or retaliate against a person on the basis of his or her allegedly having committed an ethical violation. This does not preclude taking action based upon the outcome of an ethical complaint.
- (c) Education researchers may take into account confirmed ethical violations of others in making professional decisions and judgments about these individuals.

#### *22.04 Reporting Ethical Violations of Others*

When education researchers have substantial reason to believe that there may have been an ethical violation by another education researcher, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual if an informal resolution appears appropriate or possible; bringing it to the attention of appropriate authorities or officials; or seeking advice about whether or how to proceed based on this belief, assuming that such activity does not

violate any confidentiality rights. Such action might include consultation with or referral to the AERA Ethics Committee on matters relating to the conduct of AERA activities or programs.

#### *22.05 Improper Complaints*

Education researchers do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous or solely intended to harm the alleged violator rather than to protect the integrity of the education research profession and the public that is being served.

#### *22.06 Cooperating With Ethics Committees*

Education researchers cooperate in ethics investigations, proceedings, and resulting decisions of the American Educational Research Association.

**Note:** This revised edition of the American Educational Research Association's Ethical Standards builds on the Ethical Standards adopted in 1992 and revised in 1996 and 2002. The revised edition is henceforth called the Code of Ethics. This edition has been structured and modified to make more accessible the ethical standard by eliminating certain guidance that does not relate to the individual conduct of education researchers and by expanding on or clarifying the ethical standards in the prior editions. This revision has drawn on and greatly benefited from the 1997 Code of Ethics of the American Sociological Association and the 1992 version of the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. Language from these codes is used in the AERA Code with permission.