Summary of Ethics Law and Policies

OVERVIEW

This section provides a brief summary of applicable elements of the Washington State Ethics Law (RCW 42.52) and provides cross-references to related University policies and procedures.

State Executive Ethics Board

For a complete description and interpretation of the Law, refer to the Executive Ethics Board website.

Ethics Compliance Advisor

For information regarding ethics-related issues, contact the Ethics Compliance Advisor; e-mail baf.ethics.advisor@wsu.edu. (See BPPM 10.22.)

APPLICABILITY

The Ethics Law applies to all University employees and officers.

SELECTED ETHICS LAW PROVISIONS

The following provides a brief summary of pertinent items from the Ethics Law.

NOTE: Because many provisions of the Ethics Law have conditional exceptions, readers should review, in entirety, any provision of interest.

If an employee has questions about any particular item, they should review the law and contact the Ethics Compliance Advisor.

For convenience, some related University policies and procedures are also referenced.

NOTE: Any single referenced policy or procedure may only deal with a limited aspect of the specified legal provision.

Activities Incompatible with Public Duties (RCW 42.52.020)

A University employee may not have an interest in or engage in an activity that conflicts with the proper discharge of their official duties.

Related Policies/Procedures

Nepotism (BPPM 60.14)

University Purchases from State Employees (BPPM 70.15)

Policy Prohibiting Discrimination and Harassment (EP15)

Policy on Faculty-Student and Supervisor-Subordinate Relationships (EP28)

Financial Interests in Transactions (RCW 42.52.030)

A University employee may not have a beneficial interest in a contract, sale, lease, purchase, or grant that may be made through, or is under the supervision of the employee.
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<td><strong>Assisting in Transactions</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.040'&gt;RCW 42.52.040&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>Except in the course of performing official duties, a University employee may not assist another person, directly or indirectly, whether or not for compensation, in a transaction involving the state: (a) in which the employee has at any time participated; or (b) if the transaction involving the state is or has been under the official responsibility of the employee within a period of two years preceding such assistance. A University employee may not share in compensation received by another for assistance that the employee is prohibited from providing by law.</td>
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<td><strong>Confidential Information</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.050'&gt;RCW 42.52.050&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>A University employee may not disclose confidential information to unauthorized persons or use confidential information for personal benefit or the benefit of others.</td>
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<td><strong>Special Privileges</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.070'&gt;RCW 42.52.070&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>Except as required to perform duties within the scope of employment, a University employee may not use their position to secure special privileges or exemptions for themselves, or their spouse, child, parents, or other persons.</td>
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<td><strong>Employment after Public Service</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.080'&gt;RCW 42.52.080&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>There are statutory limitations which restrict employment of University employees after they leave state employment.</td>
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<td>Related Policies/Procedures</td>
<td>Personal Services Contracts (&lt;a href='#BPPM 70.50'&gt;BPPM 70.50&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
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<td><strong>Compensation for Official Duties or Nonperformance</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.110'&gt;RCW 42.52.110&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>A University employee may not ask for, give, or receive, or agree to receive compensation, gift, reward, or gratuity for performing or deferring the performance of official state duties except as permitted by the State or by law.</td>
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<td><strong>Compensation for Outside Activities</strong> (&lt;a href='#RCW 42.52.120'&gt;RCW 42.52.120&lt;/a&gt;)</td>
<td>A University employee may not receive any thing of economic value under any contract or grant outside of their official duties, except as permitted by law.</td>
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<td>Extended Professional Activities, Faculty Manual Section IV. E</td>
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<td>Faculty Compensation Outside Assigned Duties (BPPM 60.44)</td>
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<td>Honoraria (RCW 42.52.130)</td>
<td>A University employee may not receive an honorarium unless specifically authorized by WSU and receipt is consistent with applicable laws.</td>
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<td>Honoraria, Faculty Manual, II D. 3.</td>
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<td>Travel Payments from Third Parties (BPPM 95.16)</td>
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<td>Gifts (RCW 42.52.140)</td>
<td>A University employee may not receive, accept, take, seek, or solicit, directly or indirectly, gifts that reasonably appear to influence the performance or nonperformance of official duties.</td>
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<td>Limitations on Gifts (RCW 42.52.150)</td>
<td>A University employee may not accept gifts with an aggregate value in excess of fifty dollars from a single source in a calendar year or a single gift from multiple sources with a value in excess of fifty dollars.</td>
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The following items may be accepted without regard to the limit: unsolicited flowers, plants, and floral arrangements; unsolicited advertising or promotional items of nominal value, such as pens and note pads; unsolicited tokens or awards of appreciation in the form of a plaque, trophy, desk item, wall memento, or similar item; unsolicited items received by an employee for the purpose of evaluation or review; informational material, publications, or subscriptions related to the recipient's performance of official duties; food and beverages consumed at hosted receptions where attendance is related to official duties; admission to, and the cost of food and beverages consumed at, events sponsored by or in conjunction with a civic, charitable, governmental, or community organization; and unsolicited gifts from dignitaries from another state or a foreign country that are intended to be personal in nature.

Limitations on Gifts (cont.) (RCW 42.52.150) | An employee having regulatory responsibilities or responsibilities for initiating University contracts has a more stringent set of rules. See RCW 42.52.150 (4). |

Use of Resources for | A University employee may not employ or use any person, money,
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**Private Gain**  
(RCW 42.52.160)  
(WAC 292-110-010)  
or property under the officer's or employee's official control or  
direction, or in their official custody, for the private benefit or  
gain of the employee, or another.

Related Policies/Procedures  
Use of University Property (**BPPM 20.35**)

Personal Use of University Resources (**BPPM 20.37**)

Electronic Communication Policy, Executive Policy Manual **EP4**

**Giving, Paying, Loaning Any Thing of Economic Value to State Employee**  
(RCW 42.52.170)  
No person shall give, pay, loan, transfer, or deliver, directly or  
indirectly, to any other person anything of economic value if  
receipt constitutes a violation of **RCW** 42.52.040, 42.52.110,  
42.52.120, 42.52.140, or 42.52.150.

**Use of Public Resources for Political Campaigns**  
(RCW 42.52.180)  
A University employee may not use or authorize the use of  
University facilities directly or indirectly, for the purpose of  
assisting a campaign for election of a person to an office or for the  
promotion of or opposition to a ballot proposition.

Related Policies/Procedures  
Use of University Property (**BPPM 20.35**)

Political Activity of WSU Employees (**BPPM 60.90**)

Reporting State Lobbying Activity (**BPPM 10.25**)

Reporting Federal Lobbying Activity (**BPPM 10.26**)