

# Academy of Management

## Code of Ethics

February 2006

### INTRODUCTION

The "Academy of Management (AOM) Code of Ethics" sets forth (1) principles that underlie the professional responsibilities and conduct of the AOM's membership and (2) enforced ethical standards that apply to members in official AOM roles and to those participating in AOM-sponsored activities.<sup>1</sup> The *principles* are guidelines for everyday professional activities. They constitute normative statements for academicians, researchers, and managers and provide guidance on issues that AOM members may encounter in their professional work. The *enforced ethical standards* are standards that individuals must adhere to when participating in and carrying out the work of the Academy of Management. Although not enforced outside of the Academy, these standards may also be viewed as guides for positive professional practice. Nonmembers who participate in AOM activities (e.g., authors, job seekers, etc.) also agree to adhere to the enforced ethical standards and to abide by the rules and policies pertaining to the specific AOM activities they engage in.

AOM's "Code of Ethics" consists of these sections: Introduction, Preamble, General Principles, Professional Principles, and Ethical Standards. A separate document, the "Academy of Management Code of Ethics Policies and Procedures for Handling Charges of Ethical Standards Violations," accompanies the "Code of Ethics."

The Preamble, General Principles, and Professional Principles set forth aspirational goals to guide AOM members toward the highest ideals of research, teaching, practice, and service. Although these goals are not enforceable, AOM members should consider them in seeking to arrive at ethical courses of action.

The Ethical Standards set forth enforceable rules for conduct by AOM members.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Ethical Standards are written broadly in order to apply to members in varied roles and activities, and the application of an Ethical Standard may vary depending on the Academy context. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive. General rules of participation also exist at various levels in the Academy (e.g., program submission, manuscript submission, placement, governance activities, etc.). Conduct that this "Code of Ethics" does not specifically address is not necessarily ethical or unethical.

Membership in the AOM commits members to uphold the principles of the "AOM Code of Ethics" and to adhere to the enforced ethical standards and the accompanying policies and procedures. Members are advised of this obligation upon joining the Academy of Management. Violations of the ethical standards may lead to the imposition of sanctions, including termination of membership.

### PREAMBLE

The Academy of Management is devoted to increasing scientific and professional knowledge of management practices. It promotes the use of such knowledge to improve the work lives of individuals, the efficiency and effectiveness of organizations, and the well-being of society as a whole. The AOM ensures that attention is paid to the rights and well-being of all organizational stakeholders.

AOM members respect and protect civil and human rights and the central importance of freedom of inquiry and expression in research, teaching, and publication. They seek to help managers, employers, and public officials

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<sup>1</sup> The Academy of Management Code of Ethics is adapted from the codes of other professional associations whose scientific principles are similar to the Academy. These include the APA, AIA, and ACA and others referenced in *Codes of Professional Responsibility* (Gorlin, R. (Ed.) (1999). *Codes of Professional Responsibility* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Washington, DC: Bureau of National Affairs.

<sup>2</sup> "AOM member(s)" generally refers to members of the Academy of Management as well as to nonmembers participating in AOM activities.

develop informed judgments and choices concerning the impact of business practices on individual employees and society, both nationally and globally. In doing so, AOM members perform many roles, acting as researchers, teachers, consultants, diagnosticians, supervisors, administrators, commentators, and social interventionists. AOM members realize that to maintain ethical standards they must make a personal, lifelong commitment to behaving ethically themselves; to encouraging students, supervisees, employees, employers, and colleagues to behave ethically; and to consulting with others when ethical questions arise.

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES

These general principles are aspirations and serve as a guide for AOM members in determining ethical courses of action in various contexts. They exemplify the highest ideals of professional conduct and are intended to challenge members to the highest ethical ideals of the profession.

### 1. Responsibility

AOM members establish relationships of trust with those with whom they work (students, colleagues, administrators, clients). They are aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to society and to the specific communities in which they work. AOM members uphold professional standards of conduct, clarify their professional roles and obligations, accept appropriate responsibility for their behavior, and seek to manage conflicts of interest that could lead to exploitation or harm. They are concerned about the ethicality of their colleagues' scientific, educational, and professional conduct. They strive to contribute portions of their professional time for little or no compensation or personal advantage.

### 2. Integrity

AOM members seek to promote accuracy, honesty, and truthfulness in the science, teaching, and practice of their profession. In these activities AOM members do not steal, cheat, or engage in fraud, subterfuge, or intentional misrepresentation of fact. They strive to keep their promises, to avoid unwise or unclear commitments, and to reach for excellence in teaching, scholarship, and practice. They treat students, colleagues, research subjects, and clients with respect, dignity, fairness, and caring. They accurately and fairly represent their areas and degrees of expertise.

### 3. Respect for People's Rights and Dignity

AOM members respect the dignity and worth of all people and the rights of individuals to privacy, confidentiality, and self-determination. AOM members are aware of and respect cultural, individual, and role differences, including those based on age, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language, and socioeconomic status, and they consider these factors when working with all people. AOM members try to eliminate the effect on their work of biases based on these factors, and they do not knowingly participate in or condone activities of others based upon such prejudices. The AOM and its members are also committed to providing academic and professional work environments that are free of sexual harassment and all forms of sexual intimidation and exploitation.

## PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPLES

Our professional goals are to enhance the learning of students and colleagues and the effectiveness of organizations through our teaching, research, and practice of management. We have five major responsibilities:

**1. To our students.** Relationships with students require respect, fairness, and caring, along with commitment to our subject matter and to teaching excellence. We accomplish these aims by:

- Striving for teaching excellence. It is the duty of AOM members who are educators to maintain current knowledge of their fields; to devote sufficient time to preparation, classroom communication, and timely grading; and to sensitize students to the ethical dimensions of management.
- Showing respect for students. It is the duty of AOM members who are educators to show appropriate respect for students' feelings, interests, needs, contributions, intellectual freedom, and rights to privacy.
- Maintaining objectivity and fairness. It is the duty of AOM members who are educators to treat students equitably. Impartiality, objectivity, and fairness are required in all dealings with students.
- Counseling students. It is the duty of AOM members to be helpful and sensitive in counseling students.

2. **To the advancement of managerial knowledge.** Prudence in research design, human subject use, and confidentiality and reporting of results is essential. Proper attribution of work is a necessity. We accomplish these aims through:

- Conducting and reporting. It is the duty of AOM members conducting research to design, implement, analyze, report, and present their findings rigorously.
- Planning and implementation. It is the duty of AOM members to minimize the possibility that results will be misleading and, when possible, to consult with experts or authoritative bodies on the ethics of research if a practice is unclear.
- Participants. It is the duty of AOM members to preserve and protect the privacy, dignity, well-being, and freedom of research participants.
- Dissemination. It is the duty of journal editors and reviewers to exercise the privilege of their positions in a confidential, unbiased, prompt, constructive, and sensitive manner.
- Grants and contracts. It is the duty of AOM members to represent themselves and their proposed projects accurately, and to manage those projects as promised.

3. **To the Academy of Management and the larger professional environment.** Support of the AOM's mission and objectives, service to the AOM and its institutions, and recognition of the dignity and personal worth of colleagues are required. We accomplish these aims through:

- Sharing and dissemination of information. To encourage meaningful exchange, AOM members should foster a climate of free interchange and constructive criticism within the AOM and should be willing to share research findings and insights fully with other members.
- Academy participation. The AOM is a voluntary association whose existence and operations depend on cooperation, involvement, and leadership from its members.
- Commitment to professional standards of conduct. By this Code, the AOM provides ongoing ethical guidance for its members.
- Strengthening and renewal of the Academy. The AOM must have continuous infusions of members and new points of view to remain viable and relevant as a professional association.
- Membership in the professional community. It is the duty of AOM members to interact with others in our community in a manner that recognizes individual dignity and merit.

4. **To both managers and the practice of management.** Exchange of ideas and information between the academic and organizational communities is essential. Consulting with client organizations ("clients") has potential for enriching the teaching and practice of management, for translating theory into practice, and for furthering research and community service. To maximize such potential benefits, it is essential that members who consult be guided by the ideals of competence, integrity, and objectivity. We accomplish these aims through:

- Credentials and capabilities. It is the duty of consultants to represent their credentials and capabilities in an accurate and objective manner.
- Obligations to clients. Consultants have a duty to fulfill their obligations to their present and prospective clients in a professionally responsible and timely manner.

- Client relations. Consultants must fulfill duties of confidentiality and efficiency as part of their relationships with their clients.
  - Remuneration. It is the duty of consultants to negotiate clear and mutually accepted remuneration agreements for their services.
  - Societal responsibilities. Consultants have a duty to uphold the legal and moral obligations of the society in which they function. Consultants should report to the appropriate authorities any unlawful activities that may have been uncovered during the course of their consulting engagements (except where their functional or professional codes direct otherwise).
5. **To all people with whom we live and work in the world community**. Sensitivity to other people, to diverse cultures, to the needs of the poor and disadvantaged, to ethical issues, and to newly emerging ethical dilemmas is required. We accomplish this aim through:
- Worldview. Academy members have a duty to consider their responsibilities to the world community. In their role as educators, members of the Academy can play a vital role in encouraging a broader horizon for decision making by viewing issues from a multiplicity of perspectives, including the perspectives of those who are the least advantaged.

## ETHICAL STANDARDS

These are enforceable standards of conduct applying to members in official Academy roles and members and nonmembers participating in Academy-sponsored activities. The Academy of Management is an association whose existence and operations depend on cooperation, involvement, and leadership from its members. AOM members adhere to the highest ethical standards when interacting with others in the association, participating in AOM activities, and assuming official roles. Members also abide by the rules and policies pertaining to the specific AOM activities they engage in (e.g., program submission, division bylaws, board requirements, etc.).

### 1. Human Relations

- 1.1. Unfair Discrimination: AOM members do not engage in unfair discrimination based on age, gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, culture, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, or any basis proscribed by law.
- 1.2. Sexual Harassment: AOM members do not engage in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is sexual solicitation, physical advances, or verbal or nonverbal conduct that is sexual in nature, occurs in connection with the member's Academy activities, and either: (1) is unwelcome, is offensive, or creates a hostile environment, and the member knows or is told this; or (2) is sufficiently severe or intense as to be deemed abusive by a reasonable person in the context. Sexual harassment can consist of a single intense or severe act or of multiple persistent or pervasive acts.
- 1.3. Other Harassment: AOM members do not knowingly engage in behavior that is harassing or demeaning to others with whom they interact, including behavior conducted electronically (e.g., spamming, spoofing, mail-bombing, etc.).
- 1.4. Avoiding Harm: AOM members take reasonable steps to avoid harming others with whom they interact and to minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable.
- 1.5. Conflicts of Interest: AOM members take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts.
  - 1.5.1. Roles. AOM members refrain from assuming roles in which their interests or relationships could reasonably be expected to: (1) impair their objectivity, competence, or effectiveness; or (2) expose the persons or organizations with whom the relationships exist to harm or exploitation.
  - 1.5.2. Disclosure. AOM members disclose relevant information and personal or professional relationships that may have the appearance of or potential for a conflict of interest.
  - 1.5.3. Decision making. AOM members carefully assess their potential for bias when making decisions affecting those with whom they have had strong conflicts or disagreements.
- 1.6. Exploitative Relationships: AOM members do not exploit persons over whom they have evaluative or other authority, such as authors, job seekers, or student members.

- 1.7. Informed Consent: When AOM members conduct research, including on behalf of the AOM or its divisions, they obtain the informed consent of the individual or individuals, using language that is reasonably understandable to that person or persons. Written or oral consent, permission, and assent are documented appropriately.
- 1.8. Fiduciary Responsibility:
- 1.8.1. AOM best interests. Members in official AOM roles (e.g., chairs, board members, division officers) act in a manner that is trustworthy and that inspires confidence that the members are acting in the AOM's best interest.
- 1.8.2. Duty of accounting. Members who receive or handle AOM funds provide a true accounting of the money and/or property entrusted to them and do not cheat, steal, misappropriate AOM resources, or circumvent AOM financial policies.
- 1.8.3. Personal gain. Members in official AOM roles do not receive compensation, gifts, or other special consideration in return for the promise of AOM business.

## **2. Privacy and Confidentiality**

AOM members have an obligation to ensure the protection of confidential information. When gathering confidential information, AOM members should take into account the long-term uses of the information, including its potential placement in public archives or the examination of the information by others.

### 2.1. Maintaining Confidentiality:

- 2.1.1. AOM members take reasonable precautions to protect the confidentiality rights of others.
- 2.1.2. Confidential information is treated as such even if it lacks legal protection or privilege.
- 2.1.3. AOM members maintain the integrity of confidential deliberations, activities, or roles, including, where applicable, those of committees, review panels, or advisory groups (e.g., the AOM Placement Committee, the AOM Ethics Adjudication Committee, etc.).
- 2.1.4. When using private information, AOM members protect the confidentiality of individually identifiable information. Information is private when an individual (e.g., an AOM scholarship applicant) can reasonably expect that the information will not be made public with personal identifiers.

### 2.2. Avoidance of Personal Gain:

- 2.2.1. Under all circumstances, AOM members 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 that information is otherwise made publicly available.

### 2.3. Limits of Confidentiality:

- 2.3.1. AOM members determine their ability to guarantee absolute confidentiality at the outset and, as appropriate, inform others of (1) the relevant limitations on confidentiality and (2) the foreseeable uses of the information generated.
- 2.3.2. AOM members may confront unanticipated circumstances where they become aware of information that is clearly threatening to others. In these cases, AOM members balance the importance of guarantees of confidentiality with other principles in this "Code of Ethics," ethical conduct, and applicable law.
- 2.3.3. 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 by custom. Similarly, confidentiality is not required in the case of information available from public records.

### 2.4. Anticipation of Possible Uses of Information:

- 2.4.1. When maintaining or accessing personal identifiers in databases or systems of records, such as division rosters, annual meeting submissions, or manuscript review systems, AOM members delete such identifiers before the information is made publicly available or employ other techniques that mask or control disclosure of individual identities.
- 2.4.2. When deletion of personal identifiers is not feasible, AOM members take reasonable steps to determine that the appropriate consent of personally identifiable individuals has been obtained before they transfer such data to others or review such data collected by others.

### 2.5. Electronic Transmission of Confidential Information:

AOM members use extreme care in delivering or transferring any confidential data, information, or communication over public computer networks when conducting AOM work. AOM members are attentive to the problems of maintaining confidentiality and control over sensitive material and data when the use of technological innovations, such as public computer networks, may open their communication to unauthorized persons.

### 3. Public Statements

- 3.1. AOM members do not make public statements, of any kind, that are false, deceptive, misleading, or fraudulent, either because of what they state, convey, or suggest or because of what they omit, including, but not limited to, false or deceptive statements concerning other AOM members.
- 3.2. When, at the request of the association, AOM members provide public comment on behalf of AOM, they take reasonable precautions to ensure that: (1) the statements are based on appropriate research, literature, and practice, (2) the AOM is credited, and (3) the statements are otherwise consistent with this "Code of Ethics."
- 3.3. AOM members do not speak for or represent the AOM unless authorized by its president to do so.

### 4. Research and Publication

- 4.1. Reporting on Research: AOM members adhere to the highest ethical standards when disseminating their research findings, such as at the annual meeting or in AOM publications.
  - 4.1.1. AOM members do not fabricate data or falsify results in their publications or presentations.
  - 4.1.2. In presenting their work, AOM members report their findings fully and do not omit data that are relevant within the context of the research question(s). They report results whether they support or contradict expected outcomes.
  - 4.1.3. AOM members take particular care to present relevant qualifications to their research or to the findings and interpretations of their research. AOM members also disclose underlying assumptions, theories, methods, measures, and research designs that are relevant to the findings and interpretations of their work.
  - 4.1.4. In keeping with the spirit of full disclosure of methods and analyses, once findings are publicly disseminated, AOM members permit their open assessment and verification by other responsible researchers, with appropriate safeguards, where applicable, to protect the anonymity of research participants.
  - 4.1.5. If AOM members discover significant errors in their publication or presentation of data, they take appropriate steps to correct such errors in the form of a correction, retraction, published erratum, or other public statement.
  - 4.1.6. AOM members report sources of financial support in their papers and note any special relations to any sponsor. AOM members may withhold the names of specific sponsors if they provide an adequate and full description of the sponsors' nature and interest.
  - 4.1.7. AOM members report accurately the results of others' scholarship by using complete and correct information and citations when presenting the work of others.
  - 4.1.8. AOM members who analyze data from others explicitly acknowledge the contribution of the initial researchers.
- 4.2. Publication Process: AOM members adhere to the highest ethical standards when participating in publication and review processes.
  - 4.2.1. Plagiarism
    - 4.2.1.1. AOM members explicitly identify, credit, and reference the author of any data or material taken verbatim from written work, whether that work is published, unpublished, or electronically available.
    - 4.2.1.2. AOM members explicitly cite others' work and ideas, including their own, even if the work or ideas are not quoted verbatim or paraphrased. This standard applies whether the previous work is published, unpublished, or electronically available.
  - 4.2.2. Authorship Credit
    - 4.2.2.1. AOM members ensure that authorship and other publication credits are based on the scientific or professional contributions of the individuals involved.
    - 4.2.2.2. AOM members take responsibility and credit, including authorship credit, only for work they have actually performed or to which they have contributed.
    - 4.2.2.3. AOM members usually list a student as principal author on multiply authored publications that substantially derive from the student's dissertation or thesis.
  - 4.2.3. Submission of Manuscripts for Publication
    - 4.2.3.1. In cases of multiple authorship, AOM members confer with all other authors prior to submitting work for publication, and they establish mutually acceptable agreements regarding submission.

- 4.2.3.2. In submitting a manuscript to an AOM publication, members grant that publication first claim to publication, except where explicit policies allow multiple submissions.
- 4.2.3.3. It is AOM policy to permit the authors of manuscripts that have been previously published in any proceedings to submit substantially embellished manuscripts for AOM journal review.
- 4.2.3.4. AOM members may not submit a manuscript to a second publication until after a decision has been received from the first publication or until the authors have formally withdrawn the manuscript. AOM members submitting a manuscript for publication in a journal, book series, or edited book can withdraw a manuscript from consideration up until an official acceptance is made.
- 4.2.3.5. When AOM members publish data or findings that overlap with work they have previously published elsewhere, they cite these publications. AOM members must also send the prior publication or in-press work to the AOM journal editor to whom they are submitting their work.
- 4.2.4. Responsibilities of Editors
  - 4.2.4.1. When serving as editors of journals, books, or other publications, AOM members are fair in the application of academic publishing standards, and they operate without personal or ideological favoritism or malice. As editors, AOM members are cognizant of any potential conflicts of interest.
  - 4.2.4.2. When serving as editors of journals or book series, AOM members ensure the confidentiality of the review process and supervise editorial office staff, including students, in accordance with practices that maintain confidentiality.
  - 4.2.4.3. When serving as editors of journals or book series, AOM members are bound to publish all manuscripts accepted for publication unless major errors or ethical violations are discovered after acceptance (e.g., plagiarism or scientific misconduct).
  - 4.2.4.4. When serving as editors of journals or book series, AOM members ensure the anonymity of reviewers unless they receive permission from reviewers to reveal their identities. Editors ensure that their staff members conform to this practice.
  - 4.2.4.5. When serving as journal editors, AOM members 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.
  - 4.2.4.6. When serving as journal editors, AOM members take steps to provide for the timely review of all manuscripts and respond promptly to inquiries about the status of a review.
- 4.2.5. Responsibilities of Reviewers
  - 4.2.5.1. In reviewing material submitted for publication or other evaluation purposes, AOM members respect the confidentiality of the process and the proprietary rights of those who submitted the material.
  - 4.2.5.2. AOM members disclose conflicts of interest or decline requests to review others' work when they are aware of conflicts of interest.
  - 4.2.5.3. AOM members decline requests for reviews of the work of others when they believe that the review process may be biased or when they have questions about the integrity of the process.
  - 4.2.5.4. If asked to review a manuscript, book, or proposal they have previously reviewed, AOM members make that prior review 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.
- 5. **Ascribing to the Code of Ethics** Upon joining the AOM, members agree to uphold and promote the principles of the "AOM Code of Ethics" and to adhere to its enforced ethical standards.
  - 5.1. Familiarity with the "Code of Ethics": AOM members have an obligation to be familiar with this "Code of Ethics." Lack of awareness or misunderstanding of an ethical standard is not, in itself, a defense to a charge of unethical conduct.
  - 5.2. Confronting Ethical Issues:
    - 5.2.1. When AOM members are uncertain whether a particular situation or course of action might violate the "Code of Ethics," they may consult the AOM's Ethics Ombudsperson.
    - 5.2.2. When AOM members confront taking actions or making choices entailing 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 the AOM's Ethics Ombudsperson.
  - 5.3. Fair Treatment of Parties in Ethical Disputes:

- 5.3.1. AOM members do not discriminate against a person on the basis of his or her having made an ethical complaint or having been the subject of an ethical complaint. This consideration does not preclude taking action based upon the outcome of an ethical complaint.
- 5.4. Reporting Ethical Violations of Others: When AOM members have substantial reason to believe that there has been an ethical violation by another AOM member, they attempt to resolve the issue by bringing it to the attention of that individual. If an informal resolution appears appropriate or possible, or AOM members seek advice about how to proceed, they may contact the AOM's Ethics Ombudsperson for guidance.
- 5.5. Cooperating with Ethics Committees: AOM members cooperate in ethics investigations, proceedings, and resulting requirements of the AOM. In doing so, they make reasonable efforts to resolve any issues of confidentiality. Failure to cooperate may be an ethics violation.
- 5.6. Improper Complaints: AOM members do not file or encourage the filing of ethics complaints that are frivolous and are intended to harm the alleged violator.