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Организация  
Объединенных Наций по  
вопросам образования,  
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منظمة الأمم المتحدة  
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、  
科学及文化组织

# UNESCO Ethics Office

## 60 Minutes - UNESCO Ethics Office

UNESCO employees are subject to the highest standards of conduct and integrity which are reflected in the United Nations Charter, in the Constitution of UNESCO, and in the Staff Regulations and Staff Rules of UNESCO. Observance of these standards is essential to build trust, earn respect and enhance the reputation of the Organization and its personnel.

Indeed, the reputations of international organizations are more and more contingent upon the strength of their ethical frameworks, which will continue to grow in importance in the eyes of the general public and Member States in coming years. UNESCO's leadership position on the international stage, in terms of its mandate and priorities, can be consolidated by adopting and promoting ethical values which remain intrinsic to the implementation of its programmatic competence and the internal management of its personnel. Increasing transparency and accountability, and taking the initiative by prioritizing the importance of respecting ethical values, will place UNESCO as a forerunner to future demands in the area of ethics.

### Definition

Rules and regulations alone cannot ensure a high standard of conduct, or cover every possible scenario. A focus on ethics supports an organization and its employees when operating in an area where the rules are not clear. It is important to draw distinctions between legal compliance and ethics. Legal compliance describes the necessary and minimum conditions for following the law and avoiding punishment. Legal compliance focuses on what one has the right to do. By way of contrast, ethics describes the moral choices that organisations and individuals alike may make. Ethics is the discipline

related to the issue of right and wrong; moral duty and obligation; moral principles and values; and moral character. It reflects a commitment to moral thought and action in all aspects of how an organization is governed and run. Ethics are the "oughts" and "shoulds" of how organizations relate to their stakeholders rather than the "musts".

### The Ethics Office

On 9 October 2009, UNESCO established the Ethics Office (ref: DG/Note/09/56) located in UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, to assist UNESCO personnel both at UNESCO Headquarters and in the Field Offices. To ensure its independence from all other Central Services, the Ethics Office reports directly to the Director General, and the maximum term of office for the Ethics Advisor is four years.



The Ethics Office plays an important preventative advisory role by providing guidance and confidential advice to all members of UNESCO personnel on ethics related concerns, in order to reflect the values, principles and standards of conduct of the Organization. The Ethics Office does not replace existing mechanisms for reporting misconduct, but assists UNESCO personnel in maintaining high professional and ethical standards, as well as providing information and counsel.

## Scope

The Ethics Office offers guidance and advice on the following:

- Harassment (moral and sexual)
- Discrimination
- Financial Disclosure Programme
- Anti-retaliation policy
- Abuse of power or authority
  
- Conflicts of interests
  - Honours, Gifts and Remuneration
  - Favouritism
  - Outside Employment and Activities
  - Use of Privileged Information
  - Use of UNESCO Property and Assets

*As we are both UNESCO employees and private citizens, each and every one of us is likely to face ethical dilemmas entailing a conflict of interest at some time. Some conflicts of interest can often be complex, and difficult to identify. In general, we should strive to avoid situations where it can be perceived to benefit, directly or indirectly, or allow a third party to benefit, from the decisions we make. Even where such a perception is not warranted, we need to be aware of how their conduct, in the absence of explanation, could appear to others.*

## The 3 Core Values

### 1. Integrity

Integrity is a core value in all aspects of our professional and personal life. Integrity includes, but is not limited to:

- Loyalty; impartiality; fairness; honesty

These qualities provide a basis for ethical conduct and decision-making. As the integrity of UNESCO depends on the integrity of its personnel, we are expected to:

- reflect the values of UNESCO in our activities and conduct
- make decisions without consideration for personal gain
- resist political pressure in decision-making
- ensure power or authority is not abused
- take prompt and effective action to deal with unprofessional or unethical behaviour
- make appointments and award contracts based on merit

### 2. Professionalism

High-standards of professionalism are required to fulfill our duties at UNESCO. We should:

- show pride in our work
- demonstrate the highest standards of competence
- be conscientious and efficient in meeting goals and commitments
- be motivated by professional objectives rather than personal concerns

### 3. Respect for diversity

We take pride in the diversity of our colleagues, which brings together people from varied backgrounds, cultures and experiences. We should embrace this diversity, and view it as an advantage. We should:

- work constructively with people from all backgrounds
- examine our assumptions and avoid stereotypes
- show no discrimination against any individual or group.

### Training Workshops on Ethics

The Ethics Office will provide mandatory training workshops at UNESCO Headquarters and in the Field Offices around the world on ethics and the mandate of the Ethics Office. These training workshops will be on general issues related to ethics, and specifically tailored training workshops for Administrative Officers, for procurement staff and for senior management.

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