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About EthicsPoint

What is EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is a comprehensive and confidential reporting tool created by NAVEX Global and designed to assist us in working together to report, correct, and prevent fraud, abuse, and other misconduct in the Northwestern University community.

Why do we need a reporting system like EthicsPoint?

Northwestern is committed to promoting a culture of ethical conduct and adherence to law and policy, and provides several channels for students, staff, faculty, and other members of the University community to report or discuss concerns. While we recommend that you report your concerns directly to your department or school, we understand that in certain circumstances you may wish to remain anonymous. The EthicsPoint tool enables you to communicate issues and concerns associated with unethical or illegal activities while maintaining your anonymity and confidentiality.

Reporting: When and What to Report

What types of situations should I report?

You should report any issue that appears to be in violation of federal, state, and local laws and regulations, or policies in Northwestern's *Standards of Professional and Ethical Conduct* or the faculty, staff and student handbooks.

Are there any situations that should not be reported through EthicsPoint?

EthicsPoint is not a 911 or emergency service. Do not use EthicsPoint to report events presenting an immediate threat to life or property or other emergency. Reports submitted through EthicsPoint may not receive an immediate response. If you require emergency assistance, please call 911.

Why should I report what I know? What's in it for me?

The University relies on the support and participation of faculty staff at all levels to maintain a healthy and productive working environment. If you have the first knowledge of activity that may be cause for concern, it is imperative that you report it. Early reporting of unethical behavior may minimize its potential negative impact to the University and its workforce.

Reporting: EthicsPoint Reporting Process

How do I file a report?

EthicsPoint is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. You have the ability to file a confidential, anonymous report by telephone or via the Internet.

If you call the hotline number, a specially trained EthicsPoint phone representative will walk you through the reporting process by identifying the broader compliance categories and specific issues within each category that you may report. Similarly, the online reporting system interface provides a series of questions to assist you in accurately identifying the category and issue you want to report.

Whether you file your report via phone or online, you will be asked to describe the suspected compliance problem with as much detail as possible, including when and where the incident occurred and who was involved.

Once you complete your report, you will receive a unique report key and create your own password. This information enables you to return to the EthicsPoint system—either by Internet or by phone—to access your report.

What happens after I file my report?

Your report goes directly to the EthicsPoint secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. EthicsPoint then routes your report to a small triage group that evaluates the information and engages a University investigation team based on the type of violation, the location of the incident, and the individuals involved. Everyone who reviews and investigates these reports is committed to conducting confidential, thorough, and responsive investigations.

How do I follow up with more information or hear about the outcome of a report?

By using your report key and password, you can access your report in EthicsPoint throughout the investigation process—from initial review through resolution and closure. It is important that you check the system regularly for updates. The University investigation team may reach out to you through EthicsPoint to ask questions or request further information to aid their investigation.

Unless you choose to identify yourself, all interactions with EthicsPoint are anonymous.

Please note that the results of our investigations are confidential in order to protect reporters and other individuals providing information to the investigation. However, if upon closure of a report you continue observe inappropriate behavior, we encourage you to submit an additional report.

Reporting: Security & Confidentiality

Am I required to identify myself?

No. You do not have to reveal your identity to use EthicsPoint. However, our ability to investigate and address concerns might be limited for certain types of reports if you do not want your identity known.

Can the EthicsPoint report be traced back to me?

No. Calls are not traced or recorded. EthicsPoint does not generate or maintain any internal connection logs with IP addresses, so no information linking your computer to EthicsPoint is available. You may submit your report from any Internet portal (work, home, or public computer), and the EthicsPoint system strips away Internet addresses to maintain complete anonymity.

What protection do I have when I report?

Under Northwestern's Policy on Non-Retaliation, the University strictly prohibits retaliation against any member of its community for reporting or inquiring in good faith about suspected wrongful or unlawful activity, or participating in an investigation or proceeding relating to such activity. The University considers such actions to be protected activities in which all members of its community may freely engage without worry of negative consequence as a direct result.

Reports will be handled as promptly and discreetly as possible, with facts made available only to those who need to know to investigate and resolve the matter. EthicsPoint and the University are committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals who submit reports.

Does EthicsPoint replace existing reporting channels?

EthicsPoint supplements the many existing reporting channels across the University. Ideally, you should report any concerns to your direct supervisor so that possible violations of policy or law can be addressed promptly and appropriately. We recognize, however, that there may be circumstances when you are not comfortable reporting an issue in this manner. We would rather you report anonymously through EthicsPoint than keep the information to yourself.

What if my supervisor or other manager is involved in the violation? Will they get a copy of the report?

Conflict screening is built into the report review and investigation process. Initially EthicsPoint ensures that any individual identified in a report will not receive system notification or have access to the report. The University triage group performs additional conflicts screening to ensure that the investigation team will not include any individual who has a conflict or is cited in the report.

Are there confidentiality protections regarding the person a report is about?

University investigation teams maintain confidentiality throughout the investigative process to the extent that they can do so while completing their review. All reports are shared with the minimum number of individuals necessary to complete the investigation, and all individuals involved are apprised of the confidential nature of these reports.

All reports are treated as allegations only. No actions will be taken before conclusion of an investigation, unless temporary measures are necessary to address immediate institutional concerns as to personal safety or the protection of property.

Tips & Best Practices

I am aware of some individuals involved with unethical conduct, but it does not affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?

Unethical behavior, at any level, ultimately hurts all of us. In a worst-case scenario, unethical behavior jeopardizes the University in its entirety, and that affects all of us and our jobs. If you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, it is your duty as a member of the Northwestern community to report it.

I am not sure if what I have observed or heard is a violation of policy, or involves unethical conduct, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?

File a report. EthicsPoint can help you prepare and file your report so properly describes your concerns. We would rather you report a situation that turns out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you are not sure.

What if my boss or other managers are involved in a violation?

The EthicsPoint system and Northwestern's report evaluation and investigation process are designed so that implicated parties are not notified or granted access to reports in which they have been named.

What if I remember something important about the incident after I file the report? Or, what if the company has further questions for me concerning my report?

Use your report key and password to return to the EthicsPoint system and access your original report to provide additional or updated information or to answer questions posed by the investigation team.

We strongly suggest that you return to the site often for updates.

Are these follow-ups on reports as secure as the first one?

All EthicsPoint correspondences are held in the same strict confidence as the initial report.

Can I still file a report if I do not have access to the Internet?

You can file an EthicsPoint report from any computer that can access the Internet. You can file from home. Many public locations, including the public library, have Internet computers. If you do not have access to or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call the EthicsPoint toll-free hotline, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

If you still have questions, please contact University Compliance at (847) 467-6170 or university.compliance@northwestern.edu