



American Academy of Nursing Policy on Ethical Conduct of Fellows

Effective: April 29, 2015; May 28, 2014; to be executed effective December 1, 2014.

Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to set forth guidance and direction in response to a reported potential ethical infraction of a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Membership in good standing includes personal and professional ethical conduct.

Ethical issues. The American Academy of Nursing supports the examples of ethical issues that the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) has identified in its FAANP Ethics Policy in which ethical infractions may arise:

Abuse of power: Those in a position of power must respect the autonomy of others. An example of a breach of this principle would be abuse of power for personal gain, such as a faculty member requiring inappropriate authorship of student papers.

Personal misconduct: Personal conduct should be consistent with legal and social mores. An example of a breach of this principle might be conviction of a felony, which indicates that the Fellow may be a danger to public health or safety.

Conflict of interests: Fellows have a duty to maintain transparency in relation to any competing interests. An example of a breach of this principle might be putting personal gain before professional responsibilities.

Publication and research misconduct: Fellows have a duty to maintain honesty and integrity in all areas of research and scholarship. An example of a breach of this principle would include fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in conducting research and/or in disseminating knowledge.

Fraudulent behavior: Fellows have a duty to be honest and maintain integrity in all personal and professional behavior. An example of a breach of this principle would include any intentional or passive act or omission designed to deceive, such as falsification of credentials, exaggeration of achievements, or insurance fraud.

The Academy also includes as an ethical infraction evidence of egregious behavior including such that results in **loss of a professional nursing license**.

Academy Ethics Committee. The Academy Ethics Committee is a Standing Committee of the American Academy of Nursing. The ultimate decision on an ethics violation reported to the Academy, however, is made by the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. The Committee is charged with exploring allegations of infractions by Fellows who we believe to be in good standing, including reviewing evidence of the infraction and the response from the named Fellow; and making a report to the President of the Academy Board of Directors regarding the infraction. The Ethics Committee is not to serve as the investigative body; the committee reviews

materials regarding complaints already investigated and acted upon by another body (e.g., board of nursing, journal, institution funding agency, court of law). The Ethics Standing Committee is comprised of three members. Ethics Committee members shall be appointed (or elected) for a period of three years.

Confirmation of abiding by Ethics Policy. Every applicant to the Academy will sign a statement to abide by the Ethics Policy. Fellows will sign the agreement when they renew their membership annually.

Confidentiality and notification. Any complaints of reported infractions will be held in strict confidence by all those involved in the process of review until a final decision has been made by the Executive Committee. If an Academy member is found to have committed an ethics infraction, the Academy president shall inform the American Nurses Association but the Academy has no reporting obligation to other entities.

Sanctions. Sanctions may include loss of membership for a designated period of time or lifetime revocation of membership in the Academy.

Timeline. Timely action should be taken when a complaint is received. Swift justice should be administered.

- Process**
1. Ethical infraction notifications in writing are sent to the President of the Academy Board of Directors.
 2. The Academy President sends the written notification of a potential ethical infraction to the standing committee on ethics within two weeks of receipt.
 3. The Ethics Committee is responsible for reviewing the evidence in relation to the alleged infraction, including written documents that support the ethical violation or infraction and any written response from named Fellow accused of ethical violation that refutes/explains/responds to the allegation. The review is completed and the Ethics Committee's written report is submitted to the President of the Academy Board of Directors within six weeks of receipt of the complaint from the Board.
 4. The Executive Committee of the Academy Board of Directors will review all written materials and the report of the Ethics Committee. The Academy Executive Committee makes the final decision on whether the reported ethical violation violates the Academy's Policy on Ethical Conduct of Fellows.
 5. The Academy President of the Board of Directors communicates to the named Fellow in writing the Board's decision within two weeks of the Executive Committee's decision.

References:

Academy Policy on Code of Ethics (April 26, 2012)

Academy Whistleblower Policy (June 28, 2013)

FAANP Ethics Policy

Revised by the Academy Board of Directors April 29, 2015; May 28, 2014

Approved by the Academy Board of Directors October 15, 2013