



Northern Illinois University

NEW HIRE/ORIENTATION ETHICS TRAINING

2020

This training course has been developed in accordance with requirements of the *State Officials and Employees Ethics Act* (5 ILCS 430/5-10). It has been developed for this purpose under the direction of the Board of Trustees of the Northern Illinois University.

Introduction to Ethics Training

The *State Officials and Employees Ethics Act* (5 ILCS 430/5-10) (*Ethics Act*) requires university employees to complete, at least annually, an ethics training program conducted by their university. It also requires that new employees complete ethics training within 30 days of the commencement of employment or appointment. This training program is intended for newly hired employees and seasonal/temporary employees (undergraduate student workers, extra help employees, and medical residents) to allow you to meet your obligation to comply with those requirements.

You will be notified by the university each calendar year when you are required to complete annual ethics training. This usually occurs during the fall semester. For the purposes of ethics training, employees are defined as individuals who receive a paycheck from the university as well as Board of Trustee members. Employees who do not complete the training as directed may be subject to disciplinary action and those who fail to do so in compliance with the law may face administrative fines by the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission (EEC).

Ethics plays a central role in business and social settings alike, so it is important to understand and demonstrate the highest ethical standards. As employees of the State of Illinois and its public universities, we share the responsibility to maintain the highest ethical standards in order to effectively and honestly serve the citizens of Illinois. Understanding our ethical obligations helps us to avoid the risk of misconduct and the appearance of impropriety.

Training Requirements

New Employees: If you are a newly hired employee, ethics training must be completed within 30 days of the commencement of employment by law. During the first year of employment, employees must complete the orientation program, in addition to satisfying the annual ethics training requirement.

Seasonal/Temporary Employees: If you are an undergraduate student worker, extra help employee, or medical resident, this training is approved for your annual use.

Permanent Employees and Appointees (faculty, staff, etc.): Permanent employees and appointees must complete an interactive, online course annually during a designated window. The university Ethics Officer will inform you of the required completion dates. The version of training used for undergraduate student workers, extra help, and medical residents is not a substitute for the interactive online training provided to permanent employees and appointees.

The Office of Executive Inspector General for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor (OEIG) establishes the hours and training frequency and provides standards to guide the development of ethics training programs. Training is overseen by the OEIG and the EEC in consultation with the Office of the Attorney General.

University Ethics and Compliance Office

Each university and every state agency has an ethics officer who serves as the liaison between the institution, the appropriate Inspector General, and the EEC.

Some responsibilities of the university Ethics Officer include: developing and/or administering annual ethics training; reviewing the Statement of Economic Interests forms for officers and certain other employees; and providing guidance on interpretation and implementation of the *Ethics Act*. Interpretation of the *Ethics Act* is based on court decisions, Attorney General opinions, and the findings and opinions of the EEC. University Ethics Officer work products are exempt from production in response to *Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)* requests. The University Ethics and Compliance Office reports administratively to the President of the University.

Sarah Garner
Ethics and Compliance Officer
815-753-5560 or
NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu

Kristin Good
Ethics Investigator
815-753-2434 or kgood1@niu.edu

Karen Smith
Ethics Training Administrator, HRS
815-753-9192 or
EthicsTraining@niu.edu

For more information on the University Ethics and Compliance Office, training, and other processes, please visit: www.niu.edu/ethics-compliance.

Executive Ethics Commission / Inspector General

The EEC is composed of nine appointed commissioners, each serving a four-year term. The EEC's duties include, but are not limited to: conducting administrative hearings on alleged violations of the *Ethics Act*, providing guidance to university Ethics Officers, and overseeing ethics training for all employees of the executive branch of state government.

For additional information about the EEC, visit its website at:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/eec/Pages/default.aspx>.

For university employees, which includes board members, the OEIG serves as the Executive Inspector General. This position is appointed by the Governor of the State of Illinois for a term of five years.

The OEIG is an independent state agency. Its primary function is to investigate fraud, waste, abuse, and violations of the Ethics Act and other laws, rules, and policies of governmental entities. The OEIG investigates allegations of misconduct by employees, appointees, and elected officials, and those doing business with entities under its jurisdiction, including traditional state agencies and boards, as well as state universities and the regional transit boards.

For additional information about the OEIG or its investigative process and procedures, visit its website at:
<https://www2.illinois.gov/oeig/Pages/default.aspx>.

Gift Ban

The gift ban section of the *Ethics Act* is highly relevant in a university environment. As a result of the university's diverse mission, employees at all levels, including appointees, may be presented with gifts (e.g., gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, item having monetary value, honoraria related to employment or position, etc.) from a prohibited source.

Current vendors, along with their spouses and immediate family members living with the vendor, as well as those who do business or seek to do business with the university, are prohibited sources. Further, those seeking official action or who have interests that may be substantially affected by the performance or non-performance of the official duties of a university employee or the university are considered prohibited sources.

Under the Ethics Act gift ban, university employees are generally prohibited from intentionally accepting or soliciting gifts from prohibited sources. You, as well as any member of your immediate family living with you, must abide by the gift ban and the exceptions included within the law when offered a gift from a prohibited source. Gifts are defined in the law as any gratuity, discount, entertainment, hospitality, loan, forbearance, or other tangible or intangible item having monetary value including, but not limited to, cash, food and drink, and honoraria for speaking engagements related to or attributable to government employment or the official position of an employee, member or officer.

Some of the commonly occurring exceptions to this ban are as follows:

1. You pay market value for the gift.
2. The offering is of educational materials and missions and is all of the following: classified as one that has a close connection to your employment, predominately benefits the public, furthers the university's mission, and is approved in advance of acceptance by the Executive Director of the EEC or a delegate. For Northern Illinois University, this authority has been delegated to the university Ethics Officer.
3. The gift is from a relative.
4. The offering is provided on the basis of personal friendship, not in expectation of an official act.
5. The gifts are from another university employee or an employee of another governmental entity.
6. Bequests, inheritances, and other transfers at death.

There are additional exceptions listed in the *Ethics Act*, but the most frequently occurring exceptions are detailed above. Ill. Exec. Order No. 15-09 (Jan. 13, 2015) further restricts gift acceptance by state and public university employees, prohibiting the solicitation or acceptance of any gift from a prohibited source unless one of the above exceptions is met.

Per EO 15-09, food and beverage provided by a prohibited source may only be accepted when provided as a de minimis meal or refreshment at a business meeting or reception attended by the employee in the course of their official duties.

Please note, the restrictions identified in EO 15-09 do not apply to students in positions that are exclusive to enrolled students, such as graduate assistants, medical residents, teaching assistants, and undergraduate student workers. They may still accept gifts meeting the exceptions, in addition to smaller items from a prohibited source totaling less than \$100 per calendar year, and meals not exceeding \$75 in value per calendar day.

A full listing of the exceptions provided within the *Ethics Act* can be found at:

<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs4.asp?DocName=000504300HArt%2E+10&ActID=2529&ChapterID=2&SeqStart=1900000&SeqEnd=2400000>.

III. Exec. Order No. 15-09 can also be referenced at:

https://www2.illinois.gov/Pages/government/execorders/2015_9.aspx.

Any gift offered in an effort to influence the official actions of an employee, even if it is permissible by an exception to the gift ban provisions, is inappropriate and possibly illegal and must not be accepted. If in doubt, call your university Ethics Officer if you have any questions or concerns regarding a gift.

Corrective Action if a Gift from a Prohibited Source was Accepted

If you accept a gift from a prohibited source, you do not violate the law if you promptly do any of the following:

- Return the gift to the giver.
- Donate the gift to an appropriate 501(c)3 charitable organization.
- Make a contribution equal to the value of the gift to an appropriate 501(c)3 charitable organization.

Knowledge Check

Recently, several University vendors were on campus for employees to sample and learn more about their products. The vendors provided employees with key chains, lanyards, pens, and memo pads. Employees provided their business cards at the door to allow vendors to contact them following the expo. Unknown to attendees, those business cards were used to enter them into a drawing being held for a new laptop that was donated by one of the vendors. Louise won the drawing when her business card was randomly selected from the population of attendees.

What options does Louise have related to the laptop?

- A. Louise can refuse the gift.
- B. Louise can make a charitable donation equal to the fair market value of the laptop.
- C. Louise can donate the laptop to a charitable organization.
- D. Louise can accept the laptop and take no further action.

The correct responses are: A, B, and C.

Explanation of the Answer:

Since Louise was unaware her business card would be used to enter her into the drawing, she did not intentionally solicit the gift. Nevertheless, Louise must take action to comply with the gift ban. She can return the laptop to the vendor, make a charitable donation equal to the fair market value of the laptop, or donate the laptop to a charitable organization. Louise should maintain documentation of whatever action she chooses.

Personnel Policies

As a university employee, you are required by law to periodically submit time sheets documenting the time spent each day on official business to the nearest quarter hour. Your department can assist you in explaining the standard practice within your unit. Falsification may be considered fraud and/or theft of resources punishable by discipline up to and including termination.

Knowledge Check

Through a regularly scheduled internal audit, Lisa learns that Ned, an employee under her supervision, has falsified his time reports.

Should Lisa consult with Human Resources and begin appropriate disciplinary action?

- A. Yes, because falsification of timecards is considered a theft of University resources.
- B. No, timecard falsification is not a violation of University policy.

The correct response is Yes, A.

Explanation of the Answer:

As a state employee, you are required to periodically submit time sheets documenting the time spent each day on official state business to the nearest quarter hour. Falsification of timecards is considered a theft of University resources and is an action warranting disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

Northern Illinois University time reporting policies can be found at: <https://www.niu.edu/policies/policy-documents/state-officials-employees-ethics-act.shtml>.

As you will read in the next section, employees are expected to be honest and truthful in all communications, whether oral or written. This includes, but is not limited to documents such as timecards, records, reports, and email communications.

Truthful Oral and Written Statements

As a university employee, you must be honest in all communications, regardless of whether they are oral or written. This includes, but is not limited to, all work products, documents, conversations, and electronic communications. To avoid violating any law, rule, or policy, or intentionally committing fraud, be sure to fully review and complete your documents. Knowingly providing false, inaccurate, or incomplete information is punishable up to and including termination of employment.

Use of State Property and Resources

University policy and good business practice do not allow for the use of university resources, including both tangible and intangible goods, such as equipment and time, for non-university purposes. It is important to remember any improper use of university property, equipment, or time while working, violates university policy and procedure.

Knowledge Check

Damien just started working at the university and his supervisor overlooked authorizing access to a university system he needs to conduct his work. It will take 24 hours for Damien to gain access, so in the interim, his supervisor has asked a graduate student for her net ID and password to allow Damien to begin inputting data immediately.

Is it a security violation and a misuse of university resources for the graduate student to provide this information to her supervisor for Damien's use?

- Yes, it is a misuse of resources to share ID's and passwords.
- No, sharing ID's and passwords is not a misuse of university resources.

The correct answer is Yes

Explanation of the Answer:

It is a misuse of university resources and a violation of university policies to share net ID's and passwords. Additionally, the sharing of ID's and passwords can put employees at risk, as each action taken under their net ID is ultimately tied to them. In this scenario, it is also an abuse of authority for a supervisor to request for a subordinate to violate university policies. The supervisor should work through existing policies and procedures to obtain Damien's access to the system. Employees who are asked to share their ID and password should escalate their concern up through their reporting line or report the matter to the campus privacy/security officer.

Adherence to Policies

As employees, it is important to be aware of and review institutional policies related to technology use, telephone use, procurement, hiring practices, and more, to better understand our role as stewards of the university and its resources.

It is important to note that as employees, we are governed by a multitude of state, campus, and departmental policies, and it is our responsibility to become educated in these areas to allow us to make informed decisions in the best interest of the university. More information specific to policies can be found at <https://www.niu.edu/policies/>.

Conflicts of Interest

Actual or potential conflicts of interest exist when you have an opportunity to improperly advance your own interests or those of family members or friends above the interests of the University. These conflicts need to be disclosed, according to the appropriate university policy, and adequately managed or avoided. Each potential or actual conflict scenario is unique and employees are advised to thoroughly review the related university policy and consult with designated experts, supervisors, or the university Ethics Officer as necessary.

The University's Policy on Conflicts of Commitment and Interests for Academic Professional employees can be found at: <http://www.niu.edu/board/regs/sectionII.shtml>.

Examples of Conflicts of Commitment and/or Interest:

- You have or your spouse has a university contract or a significant financial interest in a company doing business with the university.
- An opportunity for you to advance personally conflicts with the action that would be in the best interest of the university.
- You have a conflicting interest, such as a second position outside of the university that interferes with your ability to satisfy your university duties and responsibilities.
- You abuse your position and authority to divert university business to a private interest or for personal financial gain.

Knowledge Check

Grant works in the student health center as a nurse and has been offered an evening position outside of the University, working as a home health nurse.

Does this opportunity pose a potential conflict of interest?

- Yes, this is a potential conflict of interest that should be further considered.
- No, having a second position outside of the University is not considered a conflict of interest.

The correct response is Yes.

Explanation of the answer: Grant should notify his supervisor in writing of this second position and obtain approval before accepting the work. The University does not seek to regulate positions outside of the University, provided they do not interfere with an employee's ability to conduct their work responsibilities. The disclosure of such outside positions helps to ensure a plan is in place. For example, if Grant accepted the night shift position and was therefore unable to come to work on time or unable to stay awake during the day, this would be a conflict that disrupted Grant's ability to conduct his university work and as such, would be a conflict that could not be managed. Employees should also verify that their unit does not have stricter policies related to conflicts of interest that would prevent second positions outside of the University.

Conflicts Related to Procurement

As it relates to the Illinois *Procurement Code* (30 ILCS 500/50-13), no employee making greater than 60% of the governor's salary, or their spouse or minor children, may acquire a contract that is wholly or partially paid using funds appropriate by the General Assembly. There are a few exceptions to this provision, notably:

- Public aid payments
- Ministerial duties
- Licensed professionals
- Teaching
- Child and family services

For greater detail on the above exceptions, employees should contact their university procurement specialist or review the Illinois *Procurement Code* at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation>.

Employees convicted of violating the conflict provision are considered guilty of a business offense and may be fined between \$1,000 and \$5,000.

Prohibited Political Activity

The *Ethics Act* goes into significant detail, listing specific political activities that are prohibited. The basic definition of prohibited political activity includes activities in support of or in connection with any campaign for elective office or any political organization, or those activities that are either in support of or in opposition to a referendum question.

University employees may not intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time other than vacation, personal, or compensatory time off and they may not intentionally misappropriate any state property or resources (including university property or resources) by engaging in any prohibited political activity for the benefit of any campaign for elective office or any political organization or referendum question.

Prohibited political activity includes, but is not limited to: soliciting campaign contributions or votes, assisting at the polls, circulating petitions, and hosting rallies for candidates for elective office. Though these activities are not allowable during compensated time, they are permissible if you are outside of that time and are not using university property or resources, such as, but not limited to, telephones, vehicles, tools, copiers, fax machines, email accounts, and computers.

Additionally, to avoid any misconception of personal views in any way representing the university's position, employees should not attend political events in a university-issued uniform.

You may be involved in these types of political activities during your typical work hours if you use vacation, personal, or compensatory time off to perform the activity and do not intentionally misappropriate any state property or resources.

Examples of prohibited activities range from things as simple as placing a campaign contribution jar on an office desk for a candidate's fund, to actively soliciting votes for a candidate, or a political party, while on work time, or using university email to distribute campaign materials or solicit campaign contributions. Additionally, the *Ethics Act* states it is illegal for any supervisor to intentionally misappropriate the services of any university employee by requiring that employee to perform any prohibited political activity as part of their job duties, as a condition of their employment, or during any time off that is compensated by the university (such as vacation, personal, or compensatory time off).

Prohibited Offer or Promise: You or a candidate for executive or legislative branch office may not promise anything of value related to university business or state government in consideration for a contribution to a political committee, political party, or other entity that has as one of its purposes, the financial support of a candidate for elective office. If you are offered anything of value for your engaging in prohibited activity, such offer must be reported to the university Ethics Officer or the OEIG.

- **What is "anything of value related to university business"?**
Examples of this include job positions or appointments at the university, promotions, salary increases, the award of a contract, title changes, increased paid time off, or other employment benefits.

Knowledge Check

Kendra would like to post a nonpartisan sign, encouraging people to "Go Vote" on her office door during the upcoming elections.

Would this be permissible per the Ethics Act?

- A. Yes, Kendra would be allowed to post the image.
- B. No, posting the image would put Kendra in violation of the Ethics Act.

The correct response is Yes, A.

Explanation of the Answer:

Utilization or posting of a nonpartisan image would not be considered a prohibited political activity per the Ethics Act because it does not promote any political organization or candidate for elective office or is not for or against any referendum question.

Contributions on University Property: Political campaign contributions may not be intentionally solicited, accepted, offered, or made on state or university property, unless rented or leased, by public officials, state or university employees, candidates for elective office, lobbyists, or officers, employees or agents of any political organization.

- **What is "state or university property"?**
Any building or portion of a building owned or exclusively leased by the State of Illinois or the university. This includes an office of the state or university within a privately-owned office building.
- **What is NOT "state or university property"?**
Any portion of a building that is rented or leased from the state or university by a private person or entity is not state or university property. For example, a privately-owned restaurant within a state/university building or a private party being held in a part of a state/university building that the private person has rented for the evening would not be considered state or university property.

*An inadvertent solicitation, acceptance, offer, or making of a contribution is **not** a violation if reasonable and timely action is taken to return the contribution to its source.*

Public Service Announcements

Section 5-20 of the *Ethics Act* discusses public service announcements as they relate to political officials. Universities receive state funding and as such, are prohibited from using the proper name, image, or voice of any executive branch constitutional officer or member of the General Assembly in any advertisements, such as billboards, brochures, or media presentations produced using state funding. Additionally, executive branch constitutional officers or members of the General Assembly may not appear, by name or image, in any promotional items, such as bumper stickers, lapel pins, buttons, magnets, stickers, or other similar materials that are not in furtherance of the person's official duties, if any portion of the advertising is paid for using state funding.

Reporting Violations of Law, Rule, Regulation, or Policy

If you witness misconduct or have evidence of it, you should report it to the proper authorities. Alleged violations may be reported to the OEIG anonymously.

To report a non-emergency violation of law, rule, or regulation, you should contact the OEIG via:

- Its toll-free hotline at 866-814-1113.
- The Internet at: www.inspectorgeneral.illinois.gov.
- A telecommunications device for the deaf at 888-261-2734.

In the event of an emergency, such as those involving the illegal possession or use of a weapon, you should contact the police.

Rights and Responsibilities in Investigations

University employees who become involved in an investigation conducted by the OEIG have both rights and responsibilities.

As a university employee, you have an obligation to cooperate in OEIG investigations. You must participate in interviews as requested, tell the truth, and not withhold information. Failure to cooperate includes, but is not limited to, intentional omissions and knowing false statements, and is grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal.

As a university employee, you have various rights during investigations, including, but not limited to, those resulting from the Ethics Act and EEC rules (2 Ill. Adm. Code 1620.300). Rules governing OEIG investigations may be found on the OEIG's website at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/oeig/Pages/default.aspx>.

Whistleblower Protection

The *Ethics Act* (5 ILCS 430/15), the *Whistleblower Act* (740 ILCS 174), Executive Order 16-04, and university policy, protect employees who, in good faith, report or threaten to report an act or omission they believe to be a violation of law, policy, or procedure.

Protected Activities

The university or an employee of the university cannot retaliate against you for engaging in any of the following protected activities:

- Disclosing or threatening to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any practice, activity, or policy of a state or university employee or state agency or university that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of a law, rule, or regulation.
- Providing information to or testifying before a public body about any violation of the law, rule, or regulation, by any officer, member of the General Assembly, university or state employee, state agency, or the university.
- Assisting or participating in a proceeding to enforce the *Ethics Act*.

Under the *Ethics Act*, retaliatory action is defined as reprimand, discharge, suspension, demotion, or denial of promotion or transfer, or change in the terms or conditions of employment of any state employee, which is taken in retaliation for involvement in a protected activity. It is not retaliation if the employer can demonstrate, by clear and convincing evidence, the same personnel action would have been taken even in the absence of the protected activity.

In addition, under the *Ethics Act*, any employee who commits retaliation in violation of the Act may be subject to discipline or discharge.

Under both the *Whistleblower Act* and the *Ethics Act*, it is generally unlawful for any employer to retaliate or threaten retaliation for an employee's disclosure of information to a government or law enforcement agency if the employee has reasonable cause to believe that the information discloses a violation of a state or federal law, rule, or regulation.

If an employer retaliates against an employee in violation of these laws, the employee may bring a civil action against the employer that may result in:

- Reinstatement of employment and seniority rights.
- Back pay, with interest.
- Compensation for any damages including litigation costs, expert witness fees, and reasonable attorney's fees.

Knowledge Check

Madison intentionally violated the Ethics Act with some co-workers. Recognizing her wrongdoing and fearing reprimand, she filed a report about her co-workers' wrongdoing, excluding her own involvement. She is confident that if her role and violations are revealed through the investigation, because she made the report, she will be granted whistleblower protections and will not be subject to reprimand.

Is Madison's understanding of the whistleblower protections accurate?

- A. Yes, she can't be reprimanded.
- B. No, she can still be reprimanded for violating the Ethics Act.

The correct response is B.

Explanation of the answer:

The whistleblower protections do not protect employees from discipline that would have normally occurred in the absence of a report. As such, while the employee will be protected from retaliation as a direct result of her report, she will still be held accountable for her actions and involvement in violating the Ethics Act.

Official Misconduct

The Illinois *Criminal Code of 2012* (720 ILCS 5/33-3) indicates that any public officer or employee commits misconduct when, in their official capacity, they:

- Intentionally or recklessly fail to perform a mandatory duty as required by law; or
- Knowingly perform an act which the employee knows to be forbidden by law to perform; or
- Intentionally performs an act in excess of the employee's lawful authority with intent to obtain a personal advantage for themselves or another; or
- Knowingly accepts or purposefully solicits a fee or reward for the performance of any act which the employee knows is unauthorized by law.

Any employee or public officer convicted of violating any provision of this section commits a Class 3 felony.

If anyone attempts to improperly influence your official actions as a state public university employee, especially if there is an attempt to have you or another employee act in a manner that is unlawful or is in violation of university policies, it is your responsibility to immediately report this matter to the appropriate authorities. In certain instances, failure to report a violation, such as a bribe, can place an employee in violation of the law as well.

Revolving Door Prohibition

The revolving door prohibitions impact a small number of university employees annually. Under the Ethics Act revolving door provisions, for one year after leaving university employment, university employees, and their spouses or immediate family members living with them, are prohibited from accepting employment with an entity with whom they participated personally and substantially in certain contracting, licensing, or regulatory decisions within the previous year. [5 ILCS 430/5-45(a) and (b)]. The university does not generally make professional licensing or regulatory decisions but does make contracting decisions.

Under these prohibitions, if during the year preceding departure of state/university employment, the employee participated personally and substantially in awarding of contracts to vendors with a cumulative value totaling \$25,000 or more, the employee, spouse, or immediate family members living with the employee, is prohibited from accepting non-state employment from that vendor for a one-year period immediately following termination of state/university employment.

By law, there are two groups of employees primarily subject to these restrictions.

- The President or members of the Board of Trustees (referred to as H list parties).
- Employees in positions the university has identified as having the authority to participate personally and substantially in contracting decisions (referred to as C list employees). If you are a C list employee, you should have been notified of this status by your university Ethics Officer and you should have confirmed, in writing, your receipt of the notification.

H list parties are prohibited from accepting employment or receiving compensation or fees for services from certain individuals or entities for a full year after ending their university position. This restriction is in place regardless of whether the H list party was involved in the contract decision or not. [5 ILCS 430/5-45(h)]

C list employees must go through a determination process with the OEIG before accepting the employment offer.

More information regarding the determination process, decisions, appeal options, and forms for submitting notification to the OEIG regarding a non-state/university employment offer may be found at <https://www2.illinois.gov/oeig/Pages/default.aspx>. OEIG determinations may be appealed to the EEC within 10 calendar days by the person subject to the determination or the Attorney General. OEIG determinations are not considered final until the EEC has made a determination or the 10-day window to appeal the OEIG's determination has expired.

If an employee accepts non-state employment in violation of the revolving door prohibitions, they may be subject to significant fines.

Knowledge Check

When Joseph's wife is transferred out of state, he leaves the University. Immediately, he has a job offer from a vendor he recently worked with at the University on a very large contract.

Could accepting the job be a problem?

- A. Yes, accepting the job could be a problem.
- B. No, Joseph can accept the employment without any problems.

The correct response is A.

Explanation of the Answer:

The revolving door prohibitions are a section of the Ethics Act that may be applicable in Joseph's case. These prohibitions only generally affect a select group of University employees. Revolving door prohibitions restrict employees and their immediate family living with them from accepting non-state employment if they participated personally and substantially in awarding contracts with a cumulative value of \$25,000 or more, including change orders, within the previous year, to the prospective

employer. Prior to accepting such non-state employment, these individuals should consult the university Ethics Officer regarding the OEIG's process for seeking a determination regarding such opportunities.

Statement of Economic Interests

The Statement of Economic Interests form is a disclosure required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act (5 ILCS 420) to be filed with the Office of the Secretary of State. A select population of University of Illinois employees is required to submit this form by May 1st annually.

The university coordinates this process with the Secretary of State, providing the mailing addresses for all employees who are required to file. Those individuals required to file are notified early each spring via the address provided to the Secretary of State. The Illinois Governmental Ethics Act identifies certain categories of individuals who are required to file a Statement of Economic Interests form (Statement), including but not limited to: members of the Board of Trustees; deans, directors, and department heads; persons who have supervisory authority over, or direct responsibility for the formulation of contracts; persons who supervise 20 or more university employees; and employees who have responsibility with respect to the procurement of goods and services.

The Ethics Act requires that university Ethics Officers review certain employee Statements prior to submitting them to the Secretary of State for filing. Please refer to your university Ethics Officer for more detailed filing instructions. You may also refer to Section 4A-101 of the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act.

Ill. Exec. Order 15-09 also requires this population to file a Supplemental Statement of Economic Interests form with the EEC. The Supplemental Statement does NOT require university Ethics Officer review and is due May 1st annually. The Supplemental Statement of Economic Interests should be filed with the EEC and not the Secretary of State.

Procurement Communications Reporting

Illinois procurement laws require university employees to follow specific processes and requirements in an effort to protect the integrity of the procurement process.

To provide greater transparency in state procurement matters, university employees who are personally and substantially involved in communications related to a purchasing decision that could materially impact the outcome of an active procurement matter, may have an obligation to document that communication in the web-based Procurement Communications Reporting System (PCRS). [IL Procurement Code, 30 ILCS 500/50-39].

There are some exceptions that do not require documentation in the PCRS system, including, but not limited to, any communication held in or posted to a public forum including posting on the Illinois Procurement Bulletin, communications that are privileged, protected, or confidential by law, or are about general procedural steps. For more information on the reporting process, please contact your university Ethics Officer.

Any university employee who suspects collusion or other anticompetitive practice among any bidders, offerors, contractors, or employees of the state, must notify the Attorney General, the OEIG, and the Chief Procurement Officer. Additionally, any chief procurement officer, state purchasing officer, designee, or

executive officer who willfully compromises the fairness or integrity of the procurement or contract process may be subject to immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution. [30 ILCS 500/50-40 and 45].

State employees, including public university employees, cannot be involved in the negotiation of contracts with any firm, partnership, association or corporation where the state employee currently has a contract for future employment or is contracting or negotiating their own future employment [30 ILCS 500/50-15].

Penalties within the Law

Penalties for violations of ethics-related laws, rules, and policies by university employees are dependent upon the specific circumstances. Penalties may include administrative action up to and including termination of employment. In addition, the EEC may levy administrative fines for certain violations of the *Ethics Act*. Illegal acts, such as bribery or official misconduct, may result in criminal prosecution. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always contact your university Ethics Officer.

Thank you for your completion!

Thank you for completing your ethics training as required by the *Ethics Act*. Please note that continued employment as a student worker, graduate assistant, or extra help employee will require you to complete ethics training each calendar year; this New Hire/Orientation Ethics Training is approved for your annual use. Permanent employees and appointees (faculty, staff, etc.) must complete the annual ethics training; this New Hire/Orientation Ethics Training does not satisfy the annual training requirement, only the new-hire requirement. Permanent employees and appointees must complete an interactive, online course annually during a designated window. The university Ethics Officer will inform you of the required completion dates.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Ethics Act, please contact the University Ethics and Compliance Office via email at NIUEthicsOfficer@niu.edu or call 815-753-5560.

REMEMBER

Inspiring integrity at Northern Illinois University requires each and every employee's dedication.

Please do your part by reporting fraud, waste, abuse, mismanagement, misconduct, conflicts of interest, lack of compliance, or other violations of federal law, state law, contractual agreements, or University policy.



Northern Illinois University

2020 New Hire/Orientation Ethics Training

I certify that I have carefully read and reviewed the content of, and completed the 2020 New Hire/Orientation Ethics Training. Furthermore, I certify that I understand that my failure to comply with the laws, rules, policies, and procedures referred to within this training course may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of state employment/appointment, administrative fines, and possible criminal prosecution, depending on the nature of the violation.

Name (Last, First, Middle Initial)

Signature

Today's Date

Date of Birth (MMDD only)

Department of Employment

To be properly credited for participating in ethics training, please complete and return the signature page to the Ethics Training Administrator via the following ways:

Campus mail: NIU Ethics Training Administrator, HSC 7th Floor – 709, NIU, DeKalb, IL 60115
Email: EthicsTraining@niu.edu