

Ethics Policy of the Midwifery Education Accreditation Council

Adopted June 2005

The highest standard of ethical conduct and fair dealing is expected of each employee, director, officer, volunteer and representative of MEAC. Our reputation is a valuable asset and therefore this Ethics Policy is set in place in order to earn the trust, confidence and respect of our consumers, our members, and our community.

This policy provides general guidance on the ethical principles. No policy can anticipate all situations. We expect honesty and good judgment from every individual. We must be sensitive to the way others might perceive and interpret our actions.

If you have any questions about this policy, it is your responsibility to consult your supervisor or the Executive Director. Everyone is expected to promptly disclose to the officers of MEAC any incident that may be in violation of this policy. Retaliation or retribution against anyone who brings violations to the board's attention shall not be tolerated.

I. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

All MEAC activities are to be conducted in compliance with the letter and spirit of all laws and regulations. MEAC representatives have a responsibility to understand the applicable laws, recognize potential dangers, and seek legal advice when necessary.

II. Conflicts of Interest

MEAC's policy is to have effective controls against conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest by MEAC representatives. A "conflict of interest" is defined as a situation where members of the Board of Directors, staff, site visitors, or others acting in an official capacity for MEAC may have an opportunity to influence business or accreditation decisions in ways that could lead to personal gain or give improper advantage to associates.

1. Whenever MEAC is called upon to consider an application for accreditation or make an accreditation decision related to a midwifery education program or institution, and a MEAC Board member or committee member is affiliated with the program/institution, then that person:
 - a. Shall disclose prior to MEAC's discussion of the program's application or accreditation action the nature of his or her affiliation with the program/institution; and
 - b. Shall not be present during discussion of and voting on the program/institution's application or accreditation action.
2. No MEAC representative accompanying a site visit team or committee may be affiliated with the program/institution being visited.

For the purposes of this policy, a person is *affiliated* with a midwifery program or institution if he or she, or his or her spouse, parent, child, brother or sister:

1. Has been an officer, director, trustee, employee, contractor, consultant, or student of the midwifery program or institution within the last two years;
2. Has had any other dealings with the institution or program from which he or she has or will receive cash or property within the last two years.
3. In any event, all previous relationships should be disclosed.

If for any other reason a MEAC representative believes he or she has a conflict of interest or the appearance of one with regard to any program or institution's application or accreditation action before MEAC, the representative shall declare the conflict or appearance of one.

If a representative of a midwifery program or institution that has an application or accreditation action before MEAC has a reason to believe a member or representative may have a conflict of interest or the appearance of one, or if any other members or MEAC's executive director may so believe, and if that member does not declare the conflict or the appearance of one, a request may be made that MEAC consider the matter. The possible conflict of interest or the appearance of one shall be discussed by all parties and resolved if necessary by consensus, or vote, with all MEAC Board members entitled to vote.

Other areas involving conflict of interest include:

1. Employment decisions if these concern friends, business associates, relatives, or themselves.
2. Purchasing or other contract decisions in which the individual may have a personal interest.

III. Giving and Receiving Gifts

MEAC representatives may not give or receive gifts from a supplier, governmental official, an accredited organization or applicant, or other organization. Exceptions may be made for gifts which are customary and lawful, are of nominal value, and are authorized in advance. Gifts or benefits for more than a nominal value should be reported promptly, and shall be returned or donated to a suitable charity and this exchange documented.

Meals and refreshments are acceptable if they are infrequent, are of nominal value, and are in connection with business discussions.

Anyone doing or desiring to do business with MEAC should be informed that all gifts other than advertising novelties are discouraged.

IV. Political Activity

MEAC recognizes that employees may participate in the political process by supporting political parties, candidates, or causes. However, MEAC is a tax exempt organization which is prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in any political campaign supporting or opposing any candidate or issue. MEAC may not contribute anything of value, including employee's time, to political campaigns, publish or distribute materials on behalf of any candidate or party, or engage in any other activity which may be considered political.

MEAC representatives may personally contribute to a candidate or party of their choice. However, no compensation or reimbursement by MEAC shall be received for a personal contribution. Any efforts devoted to political activity must be outside working hours. MEAC representatives must make clear that any statements on political or public issues are not those of MEAC.

V. Personal Conduct

MEAC strives to provide all employees, directors, volunteers and members a healthy, safe and positive environment. The climate at MEAC shall be free from discrimination and harassment based on race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, disability, marital or familial status, veteran status, or any other factors unrelated to MEAC's legitimate interests.

MEAC shall not tolerate sexual advances or comments, threats of violence, or any other conduct that creates, in the opinion of the management of MEAC, an intimidating or otherwise offensive environment. Similarly, the use of racial or religious slurs, or any other remarks, jokes or conduct that encourages or permits an offensive environment will not be tolerated.

If a member, employee or volunteer is subjected to improper conduct, or becomes aware of the improper conduct of others, they should bring this to the attention of the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors. MEAC maintains an employee handbook for relevant policies. All complaints will be investigated promptly (consult MEAC employee handbook.).

VI. Employee Privacy and Other Confidential Information

MEAC collects personal information about employees and other representatives that relates to their involvement with MEAC. Access to this information is limited to people with a need to know and any release of the information to others must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director or the President of the Board of Directors. Personal information is released outside MEAC only with the individual's approval and authorization of the Executive Director, except to verify employment or to satisfy legitimate investigatory or legal requirements.

Information confidential to MEAC shall be handled in accord with the policy and procedure on maintaining confidentiality in the MEAC Handbook.

VII. Use and Protection of MEAC Assets

Members have a fiduciary duty to preserve MEAC's assets by demonstrating cost control and following vigorous procurement standards. MEAC employees, materials, equipment or other assets shall not be utilized for any unauthorized purpose. Assets shall be tracked and inventoried. Appropriate action shall be taken if there are any losses.

VIII. Accounting and Financial Reports

MEAC shall abide by accurate record keeping and reporting. Reimbursable business expenses should be justifiable, reasonable, and supported by receipts. Receipts are not required for per diem payments.

MEAC's financial statements and all books and records on which they are based must accurately reflect all of the organization's transactions. All disbursements and receipts of funds must be properly authorized and recorded. No undisclosed or unreported fund may be established for any purpose.

Those responsible for the handling or disbursal of funds must assure that all transactions are executed as authorized and recorded to permit financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

IX. Compliance

Failure to comply with this policy may result in formal disciplinary action that may include reimbursement to MEAC for any losses or damages, termination of employment, dismissal from the Board, and/or referral for criminal prosecution. Action may also be taken against anyone who fails to report a violation or withhold relevant information concerning a violation of this Ethics Policy. All directors and employees must sign the attached Certification.

Adopted by the Board of Directors, June 27, 2005

Certification

I have read and understand the Ethics Policy of MEAC and I agree to abide by this policy in all dealings for and with MEAC. I state that I have no interests which conflict or may conflict with my service for MEAC except as set forth below.

I have a conflict of interest with regard to the following institutions or programs of midwifery education:

Signature

Print Name

Date