

POLICY

Effective Date: December 2, 2002
Revised:
Approved By:

Authority: [RCW 42.52](#); [RCW 28B.35.120\(12\)](#);
[WAC 294-110-010](#); [WAC 516-24](#);
[516-36](#); DES Policy [12.20.05](#)

See Also: [Ethics FAQ's website](#)

POL-U5400.05 USING UNIVERSITY RESOURCES

The state ethics law establishes high ethical and public service standards and holds University employees accountable to the public in many areas including outside consulting, using university facilities, property, and equipment, outside business interests, and conflicts of interest. The law and this policy applies to all faculty and staff, including student employees.

Definitions:

Personal Use: Not for the business use of the University.

University Facilities: Facilities of the University include, but are not limited to, use of stationery, postage, machines, and equipment, use of University's employees during working hours, vehicles, office space, publications of the University, and clientele lists of persons served by the University.

University Property: All buildings, grounds, or assets owned or controlled by the University and the streets, sidewalks, plazas, parking lots, and roadways within the boundaries of property owned or controlled by the University.

1. University Ethics Officer Responsible for Oversight of Ethics Law Compliance

The University Ethics Officer (Assistant Vice President for Human Resources), under the purview of the Vice President of Business and Financial Affairs, is responsible for:

- a) Serving as the primary contact for ethical questions and concerns from employees and management, and
- b) Assessing situations and making recommendations to ensure compliance and effecting change.

This policy applies to the use of University resources except when authorized in other state law or rule, or University policy including, but not limited to, the [POL-U4520.03 Patent and Copyright Policy and WAC 516-24; 516-35; 516-36](#).

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More specific guidance on and examples of permitted and not permitted use of University resources can be found on the [Ethics FAQ webpage](#).

2. Employees Responsible for Proper Use

All University employees, including student employees, are responsible for the proper use of University resources, including funds, facilities, tools, property, and their time.

3. University Resources to be Used for Official State Purpose

Employees are permitted use of University resources to conduct official University duties, activities reasonably related to the conduct of official University duties, activities related to state employment, and activities otherwise allowed by statute.

4. Personal Use of University Resources Is Limited

This section applies to any use of state resources not included in section (2) of this policy. Personal use of University resources is limited to *de minimis* use. A University employee's use of state resources is *de minimis* only if each of the following conditions are met:

- a) There is little or no cost to the University or state,
- b) Any use is brief,
- c) Any use occurs infrequently,
- d) The use does not interfere with the performance of any University employee's official duties,
- e) The use does not compromise the security or integrity of state property, information systems, or software,
- f) The use is not for the purpose of conducting an outside business, in furtherance of private employment, or to realize a private financial gain,
- g) The use is not for supporting, promoting the interests of, or soliciting for an outside organization or group, and
- h) A University employee may use University resources for wellness or combined fund drive activities as long as use conforms with the *de minimis* conditions listed above or as authorized in state law and rule.

Exception:

Personal use of state vehicles is strictly prohibited ([DES Policy 12.20.05](#)).

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5. University President May Authorize Limited Use of University Employee Time and Resources

The University President authorizes Deans and Directors to permit, at their discretion, the *limited use* of University staff time and resources for the following uses:

- a) Supporting, promoting, or soliciting for charitable activities,
- b) Activities supporting employee morale and a collegial work environment,
- c) University or state sponsored health activities, and/or
- d) Employee recognition, including birthday, retirement, wedding/baby showers, or other similar celebrations.

The President further delegates the University Ethics Officer to address any questions or concerns regarding the use of University resources.

6. No Expectation of Privacy

Technologies such as electronic mail, facsimile transmissions, the internet, and voice mail may create an electronic record. This is what separates these from other forms of communication such as a telephone conversation. The ethics rules do not distinguish between the various forms of communication. Electronic records are reproducible and therefore cannot be considered private. Such records may be subject to disclosure under the Public Records Act ([RCW 42.56](#)), or may be disclosed for audit or legitimate state operational or management purposes.

7. University May Seek Reimbursement for Approved Personal Use

In some limited situations, such as employees working at remote locations, the University may seek reimbursement for limited personal use of University resources by the University employee.

8. Use of University Facilities and Property in Political Campaigns Prohibited

No University employee may use or authorize the use of any of the University's facilities **or property**, directly or indirectly, for the purpose of assisting a political campaign for election of any person to any office or for the promotion of or opposition to any ballot proposition.

Exceptions: See [RCW 42.52.180](#) for a list of exceptions.