

Valdosta State University

Office of Financial Aid

Code of Conduct

As representatives of Valdosta State University and the State of Georgia, it is vital that all employees in the Office of Financial Aid maintain the trust of current and future students as well as their parents and the public in general. To fulfill that obligation it is vital that this office and the staff employed in it functions in a manner consistent with the highest ethical standards.

In carrying out the official duties and obligations each of us must work for the public good and avoid even the appearance that our actions are motivated by private or personal interest. We must use our authority to further the public interest and not for any financial or other personal benefit beyond the salary compensation and employer-provided benefits we are entitled to receive.

All staff members of the Office of Financial Aid must safeguard their ability to make objective, fair, and impartial decisions and therefore should not accept benefits of any sort under circumstances in which it could be inferred by a reasonable observer that the benefit was intended to influence a pending or future decision or to reward a past decision.

All staff members of the Office of Financial Aid must avoid any conduct, whether in the context of business, financial, or social relationships, which might undermine the public trust, whether that conduct is unethical or presents the appearance of ethical impropriety.

To ensure that staff members in the Office of Financial Aid uphold the highest standards of conduct the following activities are prohibited. This is not intended to be an all inclusive list and should be considered guidelines which reflect inappropriate activities which should not be undertaken. Activities which are not listed but are unethical or appear to be unethical are also prohibited.

1. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will accept personal gifts from a student, parent or vendor of more than minimal value. Such gifts may be construed as an attempt to curry favor and are not appropriate.
2. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will accept travel expenses paid by a student, parent or vendor. It is acceptable for a staff member to accept travel expenses from professional associations when they are serving in an official capacity of that professional association. These professional organizations include but are not limited to GASFAA, SASFAA, NASFAA or NASPA. These payments must be provided directly from the organization and not from a vendor or sponsor.

3. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will cause the advancement, employment, promotion, or transfer of a family member to an office or position within the Office of Financial Aid. Staff members are prohibited from knowingly awarding financial aid funds to themselves or any immediate family members and are also prohibited from processing loans for themselves or an immediate family member. When these situations arise it is each employee's responsibility to request that their supervisor handle these awarding and processing duties.
4. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will lobby any governmental official, local, state or federal, in an attempt to influence legislative activity without permission from the President of Valdosta State University. It is appropriate for staff members to respond to requests for professional opinions, comments on proposed changes to legislation, or reviews of procedural issues as long as these requests are initiated by government officials or if they are submitted through advisory boards, professional organization or standing professional committees.
5. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will make personal long distance calls charged to an office telephone. Personal calls should be short and must not interfere with an employee's duties.
6. No staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will use computers or internet access to violate copyright protection or other laws, to access inappropriate material or for other improper purposes. They will comply with all aspects of the VSU information resource acceptable use policy found at <http://www.valdosta.edu/it/security/policies/documents/Acceptable-Use-Policy.pdf>.
7. No staff member in the Office of Financial Aid will sign a contract or participate in any arrangement with any lender or service provider in exchange for revenue sharing or other funds paid to them or Valdosta State University. These prohibited contracts include arrangements for preferred lender listing, guiding students to select particular lenders or to provide call center or financial aid office services.
8. No staff member in the Office of Financial Aid will sign a contract with any private loan lender in exchange for concessions on Title IV loans.
9. No staff member in the Office of Financial Aid will assign a lender to a first time borrower or delay certification of a loan.
10. Every staff member of the Office of Financial Aid will provide equal access to all students and parents to the service of the Office of Financial Aid and the financial aid programs which they are eligible to receive.