

Principles for Professional Conduct For Career Services & Employment Professionals

Career services and employment professionals are involved in an important process—helping students choose and attain personally rewarding careers, and helping employers develop effective college relations programs which contribute to effective candidate selections for their organizations. The impact of this process upon individuals and organizations requires commitment by practitioners to principles for professional conduct.

Career services and employment professionals are involved in this process in a partnership effort, with a common goal of achieving the best match between the individual student and the employing organization. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE, formerly the College Placement Council, Inc.), as the national professional association for career planning, placement, and recruitment, is also concerned with this process. The concern led NACE to the development and adoption of the *Principles for Professional Conduct*. The principles presented here are designed to provide practitioners with three basic precepts for career planning, placement, and recruitment:

- Maintain an open and free selection of employment opportunities in an atmosphere conducive to objective thought, where job candidates can choose optimum long-term uses of their talents that are consistent with personal objectives and all relevant facts;
- Maintain a recruitment process that is fair and equitable to candidates and employing organizations;
- Support informed and responsible decision making by candidates.

Adherence to the guidelines will support the collaborative effort of career planning, placement, and recruitment professionals while reducing the potential for abuses. The guidelines also apply to new technology or third-party recruiting relationships which may be substituted for the traditional personal interaction among career services professionals, employer professionals, and students.

These principles are not all-inclusive; they are intended to serve as a framework within which the career planning, placement, and recruitment processes should function, and as a foundation upon which professionalism can be promoted.

As part of NACE's commitment to provide leadership in the ethics area and to facilitate the ongoing dialogue on ethics-related issues, the [NACE Principles for Professional Conduct Committee](#) was established. The committee, made up of representatives from the national association and each of the five regions—Southwest Association of Colleges & Employers (SWACE), Southeastern Association of Colleges and Employers (SACE), Midwest Association of Colleges and Employers (Midwest ACE), Eastern Association of Colleges and Employers (EACE), and a Mountain Pacific Association of Colleges and Employers (MPACE), a group that formed when Rocky Mountain Association of Colleges and Employers and Western Association of Colleges and Employers combined in 2005—will provide advisory opinions to members on the application of the *Principles*, act as an informational clearinghouse for various ethical issues arising within the regions, periodically review and recommend changes to this document, and resolve problems which may arise.

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It is important to keep in mind one final point. The *Principles* do not address certain professional obligations to support state and regional associations, professional development programs, salary surveys, and other demographic trend surveys. Obligations such as these are recognized as vital to the continuing growth of our profession, but since they do not relate directly to the recruitment process, they are not addressed specifically in this document. However, the National Association of Colleges and Employers Board of Governors strongly encourages career services and employment professionals to support and participate in these activities.

The Board of Directors

The National Association of Colleges and Employers
August 1998

Principles for Career Service Professionals

- 1.** Career services professionals, without imposing personal values or biases, will assist individuals in developing a career plan or making a career decision.
- 2.** Career services professionals will know the career services field and the educational institution and students they represent, and will have appropriate counseling skills.
- 3.** Career services professionals will provide students with information on a range of career opportunities and types of employing organizations. They will inform students of the means and resources to gain access to information which may influence their decisions about an employing organization. Career services professionals will also provide employing organizations with accurate information about the educational institution and its students and about the recruitment policies of the career services office.
- 4.** Career services professionals will provide generally comparable services to all employers, regardless of whether the employers contribute services, gifts, or financial support to the educational institution or office and regardless of the level of such support.
- 5.** Career services professionals will establish reasonable and fair guidelines for access to services by employers. When guidelines permit access to organizations recruiting on behalf of an employer and to international employers, the following principles will apply:
 - a)** Organizations providing recruiting services for a fee may be asked to inform career services of the specific employer they represent and the specific jobs for which they are recruiting. When deemed necessary, career services can request contact information to verify that the organization is recruiting for a bona fide job opportunity. Career services must respect the confidentiality of this information and may not publish it in any manner. Third-party recruiters that charge fees to students will not be permitted access to career services;
 - b)** Employers recruiting for work outside of the United States are expected to adhere to the equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy of the career services office. They will advise the career services office and the students of the realities of working in that country and of any cultural and foreign law differences.
- 6.** Career services professionals will maintain EEO compliance and follow affirmative action principles in career services activities in a manner that includes the following:

a) Referring all interested students for employment opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, and providing reasonable accommodations upon request;

b) Notifying employing organizations of any selection procedures that appear to have an adverse impact based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;

c) Assisting recruiters in accessing certain groups on campus to provide a more inclusive applicant pool;

d) Informing all students about employment opportunities, with particular emphasis on those employment opportunities in occupational areas where certain groups of students are underrepresented;

e) Developing awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences and the diversity of students, and providing responsive services;

f) Responding to complaints of EEO noncompliance, working to resolve such complaints with the recruiter or employing organization, and, if necessary, referring such complaints to the appropriate campus department or agency.

7. Any disclosure of student information outside of the educational institution will be with prior consent of the student unless health and/or safety considerations necessitate the dissemination of such information. Career services professionals will exercise sound judgment and fairness in maintaining the confidentiality of student information, regardless of the source, including written records, reports, and computer data bases.

8. Only qualified personnel will evaluate or interpret tests of a career planning and placement nature. Students will be informed of the availability of testing, the purpose of such tests, and the disclosure policies regarding test results.

9. If the charging of fees for career services becomes necessary, such fees will be appropriate to the budgetary needs of the office and will not hinder student or employer access to services. Career services professionals are encouraged to counsel student and university organizations engaged in recruitment activities to follow this principle.

10. Career services professionals will advise students about their obligations in the recruitment process and establish mechanisms to encourage their compliance. Students' obligations include providing accurate information; adhering to schedules; accepting an offer of employment in good faith; notifying employers on a timely basis of an acceptance or nonacceptance and withdrawing from the recruiting process after accepting an offer of employment; interviewing only with employers for whom students are interested in working and whose eligibility requirements they meet; and requesting reimbursement of only reasonable and legitimate expenses incurred in the recruitment process.

11. Career services professionals will provide services to international students consistent with U.S. immigration laws; inform those students about these laws; represent the reality of the available job market in the United States; encourage pursuit of only those employment opportunities in the United States that meet the individual's work authorization; and encourage pursuit of eligible international employment opportunities.

12. Career services professionals will promote and encourage acceptance of these principles throughout their educational institution, and will respond to reports of noncompliance.

Principles for Employment Professionals

- 1.** Employment professionals will refrain from any practice that improperly influences and affects job acceptances. Such practices may include undue time pressure for acceptance of employment offers and encouragement of revocation of another employment offer. Employment professionals will strive to communicate decisions to candidates within the agreed-upon time frame.
- 2.** Employment professionals will know the recruitment and career development field as well as the industry and the employing organization that they represent, and work within a framework of professionally accepted recruiting, interviewing, and selection techniques.
- 3.** Employment professionals will supply accurate information on their organization and employment opportunities. Employing organizations are responsible for information supplied and commitments made by their representatives. If conditions change and require the employing organization to revoke its commitment, the employing organization will pursue a course of action for the affected candidate that is fair and equitable.
- 4.** Neither employment professionals nor their organizations will expect, or seek to extract, special favors or treatment which would influence the recruitment process as a result of support, or the level of support, to the educational institution or career services office in the form of contributed services, gifts, or other financial support.
- 5.** [Serving alcohol should not be part of the recruitment process.](#)
- 6.** Employment professionals will maintain equal employment opportunity (EEO) compliance and follow affirmative action principles in recruiting activities in a manner that includes the following:
 - a)** Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability, and providing reasonable accommodations upon request;
 - b)** Reviewing selection criteria for adverse impact based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;
 - c)** Avoiding use of inquiries that are considered unacceptable by EEO standards during the recruiting process;
 - d)** Developing a sensitivity to, and awareness of, cultural differences and the diversity of the work force;
 - e)** Informing campus constituencies of special activities that have been developed to achieve the employer's affirmative action goals;
 - f)** Investigating complaints forwarded by the career services office regarding EEO noncompliance and seeking resolution of such complaints.
- 7.** Employment professionals will maintain the confidentiality of student information, regardless of the

source, including personal knowledge, written records/reports, and computer data bases. There will be no disclosure of student information to another organization without the prior written consent of the student, unless necessitated by health and/or safety considerations.

8. Those engaged in administering, evaluating, and interpreting assessment tools, tests, and technology used in selection will be trained and qualified to do so. Employment professionals must advise the career services office of any test conducted on campus and eliminate such a test if it violates campus policies. Employment professionals must advise students in a timely fashion of the type and purpose of any test that students will be required to take as part of the recruitment process and to whom the test results will be disclosed. All tests will be reviewed by the employing organization for disparate impact and job-relatedness.

9. When using organizations that provide recruiting services for a fee, employment professionals will respond to inquiries by the career services office regarding this relationship and the positions the organization was contracted to fill. This principle applies equally to any other form of recruiting that is used as a substitute for the traditional employer/student interaction.

10. When employment professionals conduct recruitment activities through student associations or academic departments, such activities will be conducted in accordance with the policies of the career services office.

11. Employment professionals will cooperate with the policies and procedures of the career services office, including certification of EEO compliance or exempt status under the Immigration Reform and Control Act, and will honor scheduling arrangements and recruitment commitments.

12. Employment professionals recruiting for international operations will do so according to EEO standards. Employment professionals will advise the career services office and students of the realities of working in that country and of any cultural or foreign law differences.

13. Employment professionals will educate and encourage acceptance of these principles throughout their employing institution and by third parties representing their employing organization on campus, and will respond to reports of noncompliance.

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Principles for Third Party Recruiters

Preface: The *NACE Principles* provides definitions and guidelines for third parties and contractual/staffing services. It is our hope that career services will use this information to make appropriate decisions about the use of third-party, contractual, and staffing services in their operations, including career fairs. These standards are also designed to provide guidance to third-party recruiters who recruit college graduates through the college recruitment process. These standards are not to be construed as requiring or encouraging, or prohibiting or discouraging, use of third-party recruiters by college or employer professionals.

1. Definition of third-party recruiter:

- a) Third-party recruiters are agencies, organizations, or individuals recruiting candidates for temporary, part-time, or full-time employment opportunities other than for their own needs. This includes entities that refer or recruit for profit or not for profit, and it includes agencies that collect

student information to be disclosed to employers for purposes of recruitment and employment;

b) Third-party recruiting organizations charge for services using one of the following fee structures:

1. Applicant paid fee—The applicant pays the third-party recruiter a flat fee for services rendered or a fee based upon the applicant's starting salary once the applicant is placed with an employer.

2. Employer paid fee—

a) Retainer—The employer pays a flat fee to the third-party recruiter for services performed in the recruiting of individuals to work for the employer.

b) Contingency fee—The employer pays to the third-party recruiter a percentage of the applicant's starting salary once the applicant is hired by the employer.

c) Fee for service—The employer pays a fee for specific services, e.g. job postings, access to resumes, booth space at a job fair, etc.

c) The above definition includes, but is not limited to, the following entities regardless of the fee structure used by the entity to charge for services:

1. Employment Agencies—Organizations that list positions for a number of client organizations and receive payment when a referred candidate is hired. The fee for listing a position is paid either by the firm listing the opening (fee paid) or by the candidate who is hired.

2. Search Firms—Organizations that contract with clients to find and screen qualified persons to fill specific positions. The fees for this service are paid by the clients.

3. Contract Recruiter—Organizations that contract with an employer to act as the employer's agent in the recruiting and employment function.

4. Online Job Posting or Resume Referral Services—For-profit or commercial organizations that collect data on job seekers and display job opportunities to which job seekers may apply. The data collected on job seekers are sent to prospective employers. Fees for using the services may exist for the employer, school, or job seeker.

d) Temporary Agencies or Staffing Services—Temporary agencies or staffing services are employers, not third-party recruiters, and will be expected to comply with the professional conduct principles set forth for employer professionals. These are organizations that contract to provide individuals qualified to perform specific tasks or complete specific projects for a client organization. Individuals perform work at the client organization, but are employed and paid by the agency.

e) Outsourcing Contractors or Leasing Agencies—Outsourcing contractors or leasing agencies are employers, not third-party recruiters, and will be expected to comply with the professional conduct principles set forth for employer professionals. These are organizations that contract with client organizations to provide a specific functional area that the organization no longer desires to perform, such as accounting, technology services, human resources, cafeteria services, etc. Individuals hired by the outsourcing or leasing firm are paid and supervised by the firm, even though they work on the client organization's premises.

f) In most cases temporary agencies, staffing services, outsourcing contractors, or leasing firms will be treated as employers. However, should these firms actually recruit individuals to be employees of another organization, then the third-party professional conduct principles shall apply.

2. Third-party recruiters will be versed in the recruitment field and work within a framework of professionally accepted recruiting, interviewing, and selection techniques.

3. Third-party recruiters will follow EEO standards in recruiting activities in a manner that includes the following:

a) Referring qualified students to employers without regard to the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;

b) Reviewing selection criteria for adverse impact and screening students based upon job-related criteria only, not based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;

c) Refusing, in the case of resume referral entities, to permit employers to screen and select resumes based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;

d) Avoiding use of inquiries that are considered unacceptable by EEO standards during the recruiting process;

e) Affirming an awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences and the diversity of the work force;

f) Investigating complaints forwarded by the career services office or the employer client regarding EEO noncompliance and seeking resolution of such complaints.

4. Career centers may choose to advise students to approach with caution third-party recruiters who charge a fee. Members are encouraged to make available to students the NACE publication, "[A Student's Guide to Interviewing With Third-Party Recruiters](#)."

5. Third-party recruiters will disclose information as follows:

a) Third-party recruiters will disclose to students the name(s) of the client, or clients, that the third-party recruiter is representing and to whom the students' credentials will be disclosed.

b) When deemed necessary, third-party recruiters will disclose information upon request to career services that would enable career services to verify that it is recruiting for a bona fide job opportunity. Information should include contact information for the organization for which the third party is providing recruiting services. Career services must respect the confidentiality of this information and may not publish it in any manner.

6. Third-party recruiters will not disclose to any employer, including the client-employer, any student information without obtaining prior written consent from the student. Under no circumstances can student information be disclosed for other than the original recruiting purposes nor can it be sold or provided to other entities. Online job posting and resume referral services must prominently display their privacy policies on their web sites, specifying who will have access to student information.

7. Third-party recruiters attending career fairs will represent employers who have authorized them and will disclose to career services the names of the represented employers.

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Advisory Opinions

A NACE member/regional association may request an advisory opinion regarding an interpretation of the *Principles* document at any time. The advisory opinion will apply to the situation as explained and will not be considered precedent for a subsequent complaint brought to NACE.

- The member/association will prepare a written statement detailing the conduct in question. Statements will include the section, or sections, of the *Principles* to be interpreted relative to the conduct in question.

- The information will be reviewed by the NACE Principles for Professional Conduct Committee and a response given to the member/association.

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Problem Solving Procedures

Questionable practices or problems involving recruiters and career services practitioners will be resolved between the parties as quickly as possible. NACE recommends the following:

- Discuss the incident with all parties involved in the situation. Determine the specifics of the problem.

- Attempt to resolve the incident among the affected parties.

- Refer unresolved concerns to the supervisors of the involved individuals or to other appropriate officials.

- If informal resolution is not successful, the parties are encouraged to use the regional association's problem-solving mechanism.

If the problem remains unresolved, complaints or requests for advisory opinions may be presented to the NACE Principles for Professional Conduct Committee for ultimate determination by the NACE Board of Governors. Remedies for violations can include written warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion from NACE membership. For specific details for filing and processing complaints or for requesting an advisory opinion, contact:

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