

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
CODE OF ETHICS
(Approved March 2016)

I. PREAMBLE

- (1) Criminology is a scientific discipline and criminologists subscribe to the general tenets of science and scholarship. They also recognize that the discovery, creation, transmission, and accumulation of knowledge in any scientific discipline involve ethical considerations at every stage.
- (2) The Code of Ethics of the American Society of Criminology (ASC) sets forth General Principles and Ethical Standards that provide criminologists with professional responsibilities and conduct in the context of our everyday professional activities, and will serve as guidelines for professional conduct.
- (3) The General Principles contained in this Code of Ethics express the values and ideals of the American Society of Criminology for ethical behavior in the context of the professional activities of ASC members, and should be considered by ASC members in arriving at ethical courses of action in specific situations.
- (4) The Ethical Standards set forth guidelines, written broadly, to apply to ASC members in varied roles. The Ethical Standards are not exhaustive: conduct that is not included in the Ethical Standards is not necessarily ethical or unethical. Ethical standards are not simply determined by whether an action is legally actionable; behavior that is technically legal may still be unethical. The Ethical Standards of the American Society of Criminology must be interpreted in the context of the General Principles and in ways that enhance the credibility of and foster public trust in the profession of criminology.

II. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- (5) In their professional activities, ASC members are committed to enhancing the general well being of societies and of the individuals and groups within them. Thus, ASC members have an obligation to avoid forms of social injustice such as discrimination, oppression, or harassment in their own work. ASC members also must be careful to avoid incompetent, unethical, or unscrupulous use of criminological knowledge.
- (6) ASC members recognize the great potential for harm that is associated with the study of crime and criminal justice and disclose such potential to all involved in their studies or research. Although some of the work done by ASC members involves risk, ASC members will not knowingly place the well-being of any participant in jeopardy in their professional work. ASC members fully apprise researchers, interviewers, and other staff of potential risks and only involve those who consent once this information has been disclosed.
- (7) ASC members are honest and accessible in their professional dealings with others. They are committed to free and open access to knowledge, to public discourse on findings, and to sharing

sources of those findings whenever possible. They do not knowingly present false, misleading or deceptive accounts of their own or other peoples' professional work for any purpose or for any reason.

- (8) ASC members strive to maintain high levels of competence in their work. Such competence includes familiarity with current ideas, literature, and research in the subject area. ASC members recognize the limits of their expertise and undertake those tasks for which they are qualified through education, training, and experience.
- (9) ASC members respect the rights, dignity and worth of all people, including students, research participants, colleagues, crime victims, and those accused or convicted of crimes. They do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, immigrant status, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, gender expression, health or physical condition, or domestic status. They are sensitive to individual, cultural, and role differences among people(s). They acknowledge the rights of other people and groups who endorse values, attitudes, and opinions that are different from their own.
- (10) ASC members do not force, coerce, or obtain through manipulation personal favors, sexual activity or economic or professional advantages from any person including faculty, students, research respondents, clients, patients, research assistants, clerical staff or colleagues. ASC members will not engage in workplace harassment, aggression, or bullying of any kind.

III. ETHICAL STANDARDS

- (11) The following Ethical Standards clarify these general principles as ethical courses of action. Individual ASC members should evaluate the ethical requirements of a specific situation, actively seek a range of alternatives, consult with colleagues and experts on the matter, decide on ethical courses of action, and take responsibility for those actions.

A. ASC MEMBERS AS RESEARCHERS

ASC Members Strive to Maintain Objectivity and Integrity in the Conduct of Criminological Research.

- (12) ASC members adhere to the highest possible technical standards in their research, including:
 - a. setting forth ex ante the limits of their knowledge and the disciplinary and personal limitations that may affect the validity of their findings;
 - b. fully reporting findings, including relevant null findings contrary to the researcher's expectations, preferences, or conclusions, and fully reporting details of their theories, methods, and research designs that might bear upon interpretations of research findings;
 - c. fully reporting all sources of financial support and other sponsorship;
 - d. completing work according to negotiated time frames.

- (13) ASC members do not accept grants, contracts or research assignments that violate the principles enunciated in this Code, and will dissociate themselves from the research when a violation is discovered and they are unable to correct it.
- (14) ASC members involved in a joint project with others (students, assistants, and other employees) will develop and modify as appropriate mutually accepted, explicit (protected in writing) agreements with respect to the division of work, compensation, access to data, rights of authorship, and other rights and responsibilities. Authorship of a completed research product should reflect the relative contribution of authors. Students are normally the principal authors of work that substantially derives from their theses or dissertation.
- (15) ASC members disseminate their research findings, excluding those likely to cause harm to clients, collaborators or participants, those which violate formal or implied promises of confidentiality, or those which are proprietary under a formal or informal agreement.
- (16) ASC members should freely share their data and documentation as a regular practice, so that others may re-analyze or otherwise investigate their work and conclusions, consistent with prior commitments of confidentiality. Parties who use data first gathered or analyzed by other researchers (secondary data) explicitly acknowledge the role and contribution of the original researchers in all presentations and publications related to these data. Authors should supply data and programs when requested, within a reasonable time from the completion of data collection, for archival material.

ASC Members Respect the Rights of Research Populations.

- (17) ASC members conform their study design and information gathering techniques to regulations protecting the rights of human participants as outlined by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) in "Regulations Governing Research On Human Subjects: Academic Freedom and the Institutional Review Board," *Academe*, December 1981: 358-370. Specifically, they:
 - a. comply with appropriate federal and institutional requirements pertaining to the proper review and approval for research that involves human research subjects, materials, and procedures;
 - b. do not mislead respondents to purposes for which research is being conducted;
 - c. ensure participants' rights of personal anonymity unless they are otherwise waived;
 - d. ensure confidentiality of any data not obtained from records open to public scrutiny;
 - e. anticipate potential threats to confidentiality, including the Freedom of Information Act, and adopt various means of coding, storing, and maintaining data to protect the confidentiality of research participants;
 - f. fully inform potential participants in cases in which they are unable to guarantee confidentiality;
 - g. make every effort to ensure the safety and security of respondents and project staff;

- h. obtain informed consent when the risks of research are greater than the risks of everyday life;
 - i. take special efforts when individuals studied are illiterate, are mentally ill, are minors, have low social status, are not comfortable or familiar with the language being used in the research, are under judicial or penal supervision, or are unfamiliar with social research and its constraints and purposes.
- (18) ASC members do not use their positions as professionals, researchers or faculty, as a pretext for gathering intelligence for any organizations (including consulting firms and nonprofit groups) or governments. ASC members will not consult or use their research in any way that would support espionage, spying, torture and other activities that violate human rights or civil liberties in the US or elsewhere.
- (19) ASC members respect research collaborators' expressed wishes or needs for anonymity.
- (20) Research administrators and chief investigators ensure that access to confidential information is restricted, and to instruct research staff members that the ethical obligations above apply to all members of research organizations (interviewers, transcribers, coders, clerical staff, etc.).

B. PUBLICATIONS AND REVIEW PROCESS

ASC Members are Ethical in their Roles as Editors and Authors.

- (21) ASC members must acknowledge people who contribute to their research and publications. The ordering of authorship and acknowledgments accurately reflects the contributions of participants in the research and writing (except in those cases where such ordering or acknowledgment is determined by an official protocol). ASC members must not list as authors individuals who did not contribute substantially to the research and writing process.
- (22) ASC members must use appropriate citations to identify data and material taken from another person's published or unpublished work, verbatim or otherwise, including methodological techniques such as instruments, scales, and statistical tools.
- (23) ASC members diligently follow the procedures specified by journals when submitting work for publication, including refraining from multiple submission of papers to journals with exclusive submission policies.
- (24) Editors must show respect for the professional integrity of criminologists who submit their work for consideration. They:
- a. apply professional standards equitably without personal or ideological malice;
 - b. provide prompt decisions to authors of submitted manuscripts;

- c. abide by commitments to publish manuscripts, and work to publish accepted papers expeditiously.

ASC Members are Ethical in the Review Process.

- (25) ASC members must decline requests for reviews of work by others where conflicts of interest are involved, which may occur when a person is asked to review work by teachers, friends, or colleagues for whom there is an overriding sense of personal obligation, competition, or enmity, or when such requests cannot be fulfilled on time, or when the work is in an area the individual is unqualified to review.
- (26) Materials sent for review are read conscientiously, carefully, and confidentially. Evaluations are justified and explained clearly and are free from insulting or unnecessarily negative comments. ASC members should conduct conscientious and confidential reviews.
- (27) ASC members who are asked to review manuscripts and books they have previously reviewed will make this fact known to the editor requesting review.
- (28) ASC members will not share review materials with others without first obtaining consent of the editor or author. Also, ASC members should not appropriate the text or the ideas of others whose work they are editing or reviewing.

C. TEACHING AND SUPERVISION

ASC Members Honor the Dignity of Students and Others.

- (29) ASC members do not harass students and others they supervise on the basis of gender, race, age, national origin, immigrant status, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, health or physical condition, or domestic status.
- (30) When acting as administrators, ASC members:
 - a. ensure that instructors are qualified to teach the courses to which they are assigned;
 - b. ensure the equal and fair treatment of all students by adhering, both in spirit and content, to established equality of opportunity guidelines;
 - c. provide graduate students explicit policies and criteria regarding conditions for admission into the graduate program, program requirements, financial assistance, employment, funding, evaluation, and possible dismissal.
- (31) When acting as teachers or administrators, ASC members:
 - a. provide students with an honest statement of the scope and perspective of their courses, clear expectations for student performance, and fair, timely and easily accessible evaluations of their work;

- b. make decisions concerning textbooks, course content, course requirements, and grading solely on the basis of professional criteria without regard for financial or other incentives;
- c. refrain from disclosure of personal information concerning students where such information is not directly relevant to issues of professional competence; and
- d. do not let their personal animosities or intellectual differences interfere with students' contact with other professionals.

(32) ASC members do not coerce or obtain through manipulation personal or sexual favors or economic or professional advantages from any person, including all students (not just those currently in a professor-student relationship), respondents, clients, patients, research assistants, clerical staff, or colleagues.

D. ASC MEMBERS AS EVALUATORS, EMPLOYERS, AND EMPLOYEES

ASC Members are Ethical in the Workplace.

- (33) ASC members enumerate the requirements of appointment, promotion and tenure, and communicate these requirements thoroughly to colleagues and prospective colleagues.
- (34) ASC members ensure equal opportunity and fair treatment to all people at all levels of employment and include input that is sensitive to cultural diversity when adopting employment practices.
- (35) ASC members who are employers or administrators establish fair grievance procedures and communicate these procedures to colleagues to protect the rights of employees who initiate complaints.
- (36) ASC members who seek employment provide prospective employers with accurate information on their relevant professional qualifications and experiences.
- (37) ASC members employed in practice and research settings negotiate a clear understanding of any constraints on their research and scholarly activity, and keep those constraints consistent with the professional obligations contained in this Code.
- (38) ASC members will provide their employers with adequate notice of intention to leave their employment.
- (39) In helping to secure employment for students and trainees, ASC members should make every attempt to avoid conflicts of interest, and fully disclose any conflicts of interest to those seeking employment.

E. ASC MEMBERS AS EXPERTS

(40) ASC members who are requested to render a professional judgment will accurately and fairly represent their areas and degrees of expertise. They will forbear situations and pressures that might lead to the misuse of their expert judgment.

This code and these procedures were developed using the American Sociological Association's Code of Ethics with its permission.