

# FINANCIAL FRAUD & ETHICS HOTLINE

## FAQs



### 1. Why does the University have a financial fraud hotline?

The University of Washington is committed to providing an environment where individuals can safely and confidently come forward to identify instances of financial fraud and ethics violations. As a public institution, the University must be a responsible steward of financial resources and the public trust. The Financial Fraud & Ethics Hotline provides an anonymous method of reporting known or suspected misconduct.

### 2. Who can use the UW Financial Fraud & Ethics Hotline to make a report?

Any member of the University community may use the Hotline to report matters related to financial fraud and ethics violations. This includes all academic personnel, staff, students, vendors, former employees or other individuals who have knowledge about possible violations. Reports can be made about any member of the University community.

### 3. What kinds of situations can be reported on the financial fraud hotline?

The Financial Fraud & Ethics Hotline is designed to receive reports regarding suspected or known fraudulent or unethical actions or practices. **USE 911 for emergencies.**

Please report any situation or conduct you believe violates a law, regulation, requirement or university policy. This includes:

- **Accounting or auditing matters**, including any fraudulent or embezzlement activities. Examples include but are not limited to: misappropriation of university funds or property; authorizing or receiving compensation or reimbursement for goods not received, services not performed, or hours not worked; misstatement of revenues, expenses or assets; wrongful transactions; falsification of contracts, reports or records; or mishandling of donor funds.
- **Ethics and improper activities** such as giving or receiving of gifts or supplemental compensation; conflicts of interest; work outside the University; personal interest in a public contract; nepotism; contractor or supplier selection based on personal gain; or unauthorized use of university resources and technologies for personal gain.
- **Any other financial fraudulent activity** not detailed above.

**4. I am not sure if what I heard or observed is unethical or a violation, but it does not look right to me. What should I do?**

You do not need to know the exact law or regulation, or be certain a violation has occurred, or will occur. If you suspect something is wrong, the better course of action is to report it. We would rather you report a situation that turns out to be harmless than let possibly fraudulent or unethical behavior go unchecked because you were not sure.

**5. Is my hotline report anonymous?**

Yes. We are committed to safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals who submit good faith reports. The Hotline is administered through an independent company that operates the call center and the online reporting system which guarantees your anonymity if you choose that option.

To protect your anonymity, be careful not to report information in a manner that may personally identify you. For example:

- Do not include your relationship to persons identified in your report (do not say “my boss”)
- Do not include your physical location relative to persons or incidents in your report (do not say “in XYZ building where I work”)
- Do not include other personal information (such as “since I was hired in 2010”)

**6. What can I expect when I call or file an online report?**

Individuals who report over the phone will be connected to a live operator trained to obtain and record the appropriate information. Individuals who report via the website will follow the same process except they will complete a standardized web-based questionnaire instead of speaking to a live operator.

**IMPORTANT** - At the conclusion of your submission, by phone or by web, you will receive a “report key” (12 digit number) and be asked to create your own “password” which will allow you to check the status of your report. It also enables the University to seek clarification or request additional information from you. Requests for clarification and additional information are routed through the third party vendor to protect your anonymity. If you forget/misplace your report key or password, you will need to file a new report to be able to continue to follow up on the matter.

**7. What happens after I make a report?**

UW Internal Audit will be notified of the report and will be responsible for performing a complete and thorough investigation, or referring the information to an appropriate office if it concerns something other than financial fraud or ethics violations. All reports are treated confidentially, as are all investigations to determine the facts related to the allegations. The length of the investigation depends on many factors, such as complexity of the issue, the number of people involved, the nature and extent of documents or other evidence,

and the urgency of the matter. A notice will be posted in the online reporting system once the investigation of the report is completed and closed. You can use the report key and password you received when you filed your report to learn that the investigation has been completed.

**8. What if I remember something important after I make a report?**

The Hotline gives you the ability to provide additional information at any time during the investigation. When you file a report, either by phone or via the website, you will receive a report key and create a password. The report key and password provides you access to your report (by phone or via the website), where you can add additional information or details. The Hotline also enables UW Internal Audit to post questions back to you, even if you report anonymously. We strongly suggest that you return to the Hotline two weeks after filing your report to answer any questions that may be submitted by the investigators.

**9. What should I do if I feel I am being retaliated against for making the report?**

You should immediately report any retaliation or reprisals to Human Resources or Academic Human Resources, depending on your job classification. The UW Board of Regents has adopted a “Statement of Ethical Principles” (Regents Policy No. 14) which says in part, “Our duty includes an obligation to report suspected violations of laws, regulations, or university policies to appropriate university officials and to avoid retaliation against others who in good faith report such violations”. Human Resources or Academic Human Resources will work with you to address any retaliation or reprisals you feel are the result of making a report.

**10. What if someone uses the Hotline to make a false claim about me?**

Individuals are expected to act in “good faith” when making a report, and provide truthful and candid information during any investigation of alleged illegal or wrongful conduct. Providing information known to be false or intentionally misleading, either in a report or during an investigation, is a serious matter that could result in discipline or termination.

**11. Is my report subject to public records?**

The University is subject to disclosing information received through the Hotline in accordance with state laws. As a result, the University cannot provide assurance of identity protection to a reporter who self-identifies. Throughout the course of any investigation, the identity of a reporter will be protected to the fullest extent possible in accordance with state law.

**12. What if I want to speak to a UW official directly?**

You may contact the Executive Director of UW Internal Audit with any questions or concerns regarding financial fraud or ethics violations.