

# North Central Sociological Association

## Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics seeks to identify the ethical standards that inform the professional responsibilities and conduct of sociologists. While the standards are not exhaustive, they do provide normative guidance on issues sociologists encounter in their professional activities, and as such are to be used when examining and evaluating those activities. In this sense, the Code of Ethics constitute a set of broad rules, or standards, that the members of the North Central Sociological Association (NCSA) are expected to adhere to in their professional lives. These ethical standards are drawn from American Sociological Association's (ASA) Code of Ethics, which NCSA adheres to in all respects.

Membership in the NCSA commits members to the standards outlined in the Code of Ethics. As a set of general principles the Code is designed to guide sociologists toward the highest ideals of sociology. While these ideals do not constitute a set of enforceable rules, they should nevertheless be considered by NCSA members in their professional activities and may be considered by the Committee on Profession, Freedom, and Responsibility in interpreting the Ethical Standards. Violations of the behavioral rules outlined in the Code may lead to the imposition of sanctions, including termination of membership. NCSA members subject to the Code of Ethics may be reviewed under these Ethical Standards only if the activity is part of or affects their work-related functions, or if the activity is sociological in nature. Personal activities with no connection to the professional role of sociologists are not subject to the NCSA Code of Ethics.

### Ethical Standards

#### 1. Professional standards

Sociologists adhere to the highest possible standards in their research, teaching, practice, and service activities. This means they rely on scientifically and professionally derived knowledge; act with honesty and integrity; and avoid knowingly false, deceptive, or undocumented statements in the pursuit of professional activities.

#### 2. Competence

Sociologists conduct research, teach, practice, and provide service only within the boundaries of their competence, based on their education, training, supervised experience, or appropriate professional experience. This means they recognize the limits of their expertise as well as the need for ongoing education to remain professionally competent.

#### 3. Expertise and integrity

In research, teaching, service, or other situation where sociologists are called upon to render professional judgments, they accurately and fairly represent their areas and degrees of expertise. Because sociologists' scientific and professional judgments may affect the lives of others, they are alert to and guard against personal, financial, social, organizational, or political factors that might lead to misuse of their knowledge, expertise, or influence.

#### 4. Delegation and supervision

Sociologists provide proper training and supervision to their students, supervisees, or employees and take reasonable steps to ensure that (a) such persons perform services responsibly, competently, and ethically, and (b) such persons have the education, training, or experience necessary to fulfill delegated responsibilities.

#### 5. Nondiscrimination

Sociologists do not engage in discrimination in their work based on age; gender; race; ethnicity; national origin; religion; sexual orientation; disability; health conditions; marital, domestic, or parental status; or any other applicable basis proscribed by law.

#### 6. Nonexploitation and nonharassment

Sociologists do not exploit--personally, economically, professionally, or sexually--persons over whom they have direct or indirect authority (such as students, supervisees, employees, or research participants). Sociologists do not engage in harassment of any person, including students, supervisees, employees, colleagues or research participants. Harassment consists of acts that are demeaning, abusive, offensive, or create a hostile professional, teaching, or workplace environment.

#### 7. Employment

Sociologists have an obligation to adhere to the highest ethical standards when participating in employment related decisions. As employers, they do not discriminate (see above) in hiring, promotion, salary, treatment, or any other conditions of employment. As employees, they (a) provide prospective and actual employers with accurate and complete information about their professional qualifications and expertise, and (b), when leaving a position, provide their employers with adequate notice.

#### 8. Conflicts of interest

Sociologists maintain the highest degree of integrity in their professional work and avoid conflicts of interest and the appearance of conflicts. Conflicts of interest arise when actual or potential personal and/or financial interests prevent sociologists from performing their professional work in an unbiased manner.

## 9. Public communication

Sociologists take steps to ensure the highest professional standard and accuracy of all public communications about their credentials and expertise, work products, or publications, whether these communications are from themselves or from others (such as sponsors, publishers, employees, students, colleagues). In working with the press, radio, television, or other communications media or in advertising in the media, sociologists are cognizant of potential conflicts of interest or appearance of such conflicts, and therefore adhere to the highest standards of professional honesty.

## 10. Confidentiality

Sociologists are under an obligation to ensure that confidential information obtained in research, teaching, practice, and service is protected, and make every effort to ensure that those who provide confidential information understand the actual and potential consequences of so doing, including long-term consequences. Moreover, sociologists are under an obligation to inform themselves about all laws and regulations that may limit or alter guarantees of confidentiality. Generally, confidentiality is not required with regards to activities conducted in public spaces, or other settings where no rules of privacy are provided by law or custom (including information available from public records).