

Ethics

Key concepts The NACM Model Ethics Code Confidentiality Conflicts of Interest
Legal Advice Political Activity Social Media

Executive Summary

Ethics is the expression of a personal commitment to the principles of citizenship and justice. Ethics permeate all competencies of the CORE®. Ethics form the bedrock that supports the fundamental purposes and responsibilities of courts and constitute the framework within which court leaders demonstrate leadership, manage caseflow and workflow, hold each other and the courts accountable, and preserve the public's trust and confidence in courts and the rule of law.

Learning Objectives

As a result of this education, participants will be able to:

- Identify differences in ethics codes, their own court's code and other codes, model codes and some from specific states and courts.
- Describe and assess the effectiveness of their own court's ethics code.
- Apply ethics codes to a variety of topical ethical situations and issues.
- Evaluate the degree of knowledge and commitment staff and court officials have toward their court's ethics code.
- Determine the organizational structure needed to develop and implement a code of conduct.

Activities

There are corresponding activities for each learning objective, including:

- Ethics code and personnel rules
- Giving legal advice
- Political activity

Curricular Resources

The full curriculum has a detailed listing of relevant resources and a bibliography.

- Model codes of conduct
- Sample documents-forms-questionnaires
- Role play scenarios

Ethics Curriculum

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Section 1 | The Ethics Code

- The Ethics Code and Personnel Rules
- Ethics Code Topics

Section 2 | Issues in Court Ethics

- Assisting Litigants and Giving Legal Advice
- Maintaining Records
- Confidentiality and Ex Parté Communications
- Fairness and Respect for Others
- Gifts
- Loyalty and Personal Relationships
- Privilege
- Conflicts of Interest and the Dignity of the Court
- The Misconduct of Others
- Involvement in Matters before the Court
- Public Resources
- Financial Disclosure
- Political Activity
- Social Media
- Honesty and Truthfulness

**“Divorced from
ethics, leadership
is reduced to
management.”**

— James MacGregor Burns

General Resources:

[Ethics – NACM CORE[®] Curriculum](https://nacmnet.org/competency/ethics)
nacmnet.org/competency/ethics

[The NACM Model Code of Conduct](https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/NACM-Code-of-Conduct-082418.docx)
<https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/NACM-Code-of-Conduct-082418.docx>

[NACM CORE[®]: What Court Professionals Need to Know](https://nacmnet.org/nacm-core)
nacmnet.org/nacm-core

[The CORE[®] in Practice – a Guide to Strengthen Court Professionals through Application, Use, and Implementation](https://nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CORE-IN-PRACTICE-Guide-2023.pdf)
nacmnet.org/wp-content/uploads/THE-CORE-IN-PRACTICE-Guide-2023.pdf