Policy Title:	**FEPAC Code of Conduct**
Approved By:	FEPAC Commission
Document History:	Policy Implementation Date: February 9, 2026
	Last Updated:
Related Commission Document:	FEPAC Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement FEPAC Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure Policy
References:	
Responsible Official:	Operations, Policies and Procedures Committee

POLICY SUMMARY

This code of conduct sets the guiding principles for the ethical execution of Commission activities. It is necessary to act with professionalism, a sense of commitment, transparency and confidentiality to achieve the goals and objectives of the Commission. This policy affirms our commitment to participate in all accreditation decisions in a fair, open and unbiased manner, free of any external influences.

DEFINITIONS

Commission Representative: a FEPAC employee, Commissioner, volunteer, consultant, or person acting in any capacity as the FEPAC's designated representative.

COMMISSION COMMITMENT*

The Commission is committed to maintaining a high standard of professional integrity in fostering scientific and educational work in the fields of forensic science. It is essential that the Commission Representatives, communities of interest, and the public (stakeholders) recognize and have confidence in this commitment.
The Commission endeavors, under all circumstances, to be guided by principles of collegiality, fairness, honesty and integrity when conducting Commission business and ourselves.

The Commission is committed to:

- Applying with good faith effort its policies, procedures, Standards for Accreditation as fairly and consistently as possible.
- Providing programs and other stakeholders opportunities to comment on Accreditation Standards and to conduct ongoing and regular reviews to make necessary changes.

- Providing programs, students, and the public with access to non-confidential information regarding commission actions and policies.
- Encouraging continuing communication between the Commission and programs through the Program Director(s) at each program.
- Maintaining and implementing a conflict-of-interest policy for Commission Representatives.
- Supporting student success and learning.
- Assisting and stimulating improvement in program educational effectiveness.
- Providing programs a reasonable period to comply with Commission requests for information and documents consistent with Commission policies.
- Striving to protect the confidentiality of a program's proprietary information.
- With respect to the accreditation review process:
    - Emphasizing the value and importance of programmatic self-evaluation and the development of appropriate evidence to support the accreditation review process.
    - Conducting evaluations using qualified peers under conditions that promote impartial and objective judgment and avoid conflicts of interest.
    - Providing programs an opportunity to object, for cause, to the assignment of a person to the program's evaluation team.
    - Arranging for interviews with administration, faculty, students, and program leadership during the accreditation review process.
- With respect to Commission decisions on a program's accreditation, providing opportunity for the program to:
    - Respond in writing to site visit reports to correct errors of fact and propose redaction of proprietary information.
    - Respond, in writing, to site visit reports on issues of substance.
    - Appear before the Commission when reports are considered as conditions warrant.**
    - Receive written notice from Commission staff generally within thirty (30) days after Commission decisions are made.
    - Seek reconsideration of and appeal Commission actions according to published procedures.

**Note: this Commission Commitment statement was adapted from the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, Senior College and University Commission's commitment statement.*

*** Appearance in person is at the expense of the Program. Video appearance is an acceptable alternative to in-person appearance.*

CONFIDENTIALITY

All Commission Representatives must adhere to the content and principles outlined in the FEPAC Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure Agreement document and Conflicts of Interest and Disclosure Policy.

While FEPAC is not recognized by the US Department of Education, it is important that the Commission and those acting on its behalf remain separate and independent of any related, associated, or affiliated trade association or membership organization. Commission Representatives must treat all the Commission's accreditation-related activities, deliberations, and work products, except those that are conducted in conjunction with FEPAC public

hearing protocols, as confidential information. Should a third-party seek comment on contact regarding Commission business, it is important that a timely referral is made to FEPAC's Accreditation and Outreach Manager for official comment on behalf of the Commission.

PROFESSIONALISM

Commission Representatives are expected to conduct themselves in a manner which promotes a professional environment. Due to the inherently unequal relationship that exists between certain individuals - including supervisors and their subordinates or Commission Representatives and FEPAC accredited programs - romantic or intimate social relationships can be problematic. In addition, the real or perceived problem of favoritism can have negative and far-reaching consequences and can seriously affect the management process as well as undermine the reputation of the Commission and its commitment to professional integrity. Commission representatives must disclose these relationships pursuant to the COI policy.

APPROPRIATE BUSINESS GIFTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

The acceptance of certain modest business gifts and entertainment (e.g., refreshments provided by a host institution during a site visit; seasonal and/or thank you cards or similar tokens of gratitude) may be appropriate if not intended to influence the recipient's intentions. However, because no clear guidelines exist to define the point at which common social courtesies may be regarded as improper or unethical inducements, extreme caution must be taken in this regard. Modest business entertainment may only be accepted in certain limited scenarios and must not create an expectation or inference of an obligation by the beneficiary to the giver. Commission Representatives should consult with FEPAC's Accreditation and Outreach Manager if unsure whether a particular gift or activity is appropriate.

The following direct and indirect forms of compensation or inducements are strictly prohibited:

- Gifts – including entertainment and/or travel - of more than nominal values (e.g., $20) from current or prospective FEPAC-accredited programs, suppliers or vendors;
- Personal loans or services from current or prospective FEPAC-accredited programs, suppliers or vendors;
- Separate individual payment for FEPAC-related activities by an entity other than the Commission.

Should any of these gifts or inducements be offered by a third party, it must be respectfully declined, unless prior written approval from FEPAC's Accreditation and Outreach Manager has been received. If receipt of a gift is unavoidable, it must be reported in a timely fashion to FEPAC's Accreditation and Outreach Manager for a determination of whether the gift may be retained or whether it must be disposed of properly.

NON-DISCRIMINATION

FEPAC is committed to an environment where Commission Representatives and those we serve are treated fairly, have an equal chance to succeed, and are appreciated and treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, gender, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identification, age, national origin, disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law.

PROTECTION AND USE OF TIME, EQUIPMENT AND RESOURCES

Commission Representatives may be provided with certain resources and supplies to assist in the efficient and effective performance of various work duties. Depending on the activity, these items may include a computer, mobile device, or software[1]. When provided, internet access is intended for business use and may not be used for any inappropriate, unethical, or illegal activity. There should be no expectation of privacy in email or on any Commission owned computer system or computer network. The Commission may, without prior notice and for any reason, monitor, access, review, copy, delete, disclose, and distribute to any party any message sent, received, or stored on the email system or on any computer or network that makes up the Commission computer and network infrastructure. Incidental personal use of Commission resources is allowed; however, misuse or wasting of either Commission assets or work time is not permitted.

Theft and loss have a direct impact on Commission activities and steps must be taken to ensure that any equipment or assets provided by the Commission are protected and handled properly. Any mobile phone, computer, or other device used as a whole or in part for Commission business purposes must have appropriate security protection and should be locked and stored in a safe place when not in use (e.g., in locked file drawers, hotel safes, automobile trunks).

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The Commission has ownership interests in intellectual property assets, including materials, inventions, or ideas that may be copyrighted, trademarked, or patented using the Commission's brand identity, name and logo. We all have an obligation to preserve the intellectual property ownership interests of the Commission. Further, as part of the Commission's commitment to fair dealing, all employees and representatives are prohibited from using or disclosing the intellectual property or trade secrets of third parties (e.g., eligible, pre-accredited and accredited institutions/programs) for personal benefit. This includes respecting copyright protections and adhering to fair use principles under the federal Copyright Act. Questions or concerns regarding the use of intellectual property or fair use under the federal Copyright Act should be referred to FEPAC's Accreditation and Outreach Manager.

Revision History

Date Revised	Summary of Revisions	Approved By

[1] Regardless as to whether resources such as a computer, mobile devices or software are provided or if communication for Commission activities occurs using non-Commission equipment (e.g., personal computer), all Commission Representatives should note that any Commission communication (e.g., email, text messages, etc.), may be subject to inclusion in the official Commission record.