AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CRIMINOLOGY
CODE OF ETHICS

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 underlie our professional responsibilities and conduct in the context of our everyday professional activities and should serve as guidelines for professional conduct.

(3) The General Principles contained in this Code 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 an ethical course 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 always should 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 not to recreate 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 do not knowingly place the well-being of any subject in jeopardy in their professional work. ASC members fully apprize 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 open 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 by education, training, and experience.

(9) ASC members respect the rights, dignity and worth of all people, including students, colleagues, crime victims, those accused or convicted of crimes, and students or other research subjects. They do not discriminate on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, 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 to hold values, attitudes, and opinions that are different from their own.

(10) ASC members do not force, coerce, or obtain through manipulations 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.

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 out a range of alternatives, consult with other colleagues and experts on the matter, decide on an ethical course of action, and take responsibility for those actions.

A. ASC MEMBERS AS RESEARCHERS

ASC members should strive to maintain objectivity and integrity in the conduct of criminological research.

(12) ASC members should 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 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 should not accept grants, contracts or research assignments that appear likely to violate the principles enunciated in this Code, and should dissociate themselves from research when they discover a violation and are unable to correct it.

(14) ASC members involved in a joint project with others--students, assistants, and other employees--should develop and modify as appropriate mutually accepted, explicit agreements with respect to 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, except 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 take advantage of archival services to 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 explicitly acknowledge the role and contribution of the original researchers in all presentations and publications related to these data.

ASC Members Should Respect the Rights of Research Populations.

(17) ASC members conform their study design and information gathering techniques to regulations protecting the rights of human subjects 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 as to purposes for which that research is being conducted;

c. ensure subjects' rights of personal anonymity unless they are 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 subjects;

f. fully inform potential subjects 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 as a pretext for gathering intelligence for any organization or government.

(19) ASC members respect a research collaborator's express wish or need for anonymity.

(20) Research administrators and chief investigators insure that access to confidential information is restricted and 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 sole 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 of others where conflicts of interest are involved, such as 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 consciously, 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 make this fact known to the editor requesting review.

(28) ASC members should not share review materials with others without first obtaining consent of the editor or author.

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, religion, sexual orientation, 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 students, 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 in adopting employment practices.

(35) ASC members who are employers or administrators establish fair grievance procedures and communicate these procedures to colleagues so as 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 should provide their employers with adequate notice of intention to leave.

(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 job seekers.

E. ASC MEMBERS AS EXPERTS

(40) ASC members who are requested to render a professional judgment accurately and fairly represent their areas and degrees of expertise. They 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.