



Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling  
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# Statement and Principals of Good Practice: NACAC's Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (The CEPP)

**A Guide for Admission Professionals and Others  
Who Work With Prospective Students**



**The *CEPP* was adopted in September 2017 by the NACAC Assembly.**

*This document:*

- provides clear ethical principles, as well as rules for implementing them
- protects students from unethical recruitment practices

**All NACAC members agree to follow the *CEPP*.**

The *CEPP*:

- Is user-friendly
- Enjoys the support of professionals from across the field of college admission counseling
- Stands as the conscience of our profession

# Navigating the *CEPP*



**The document can be viewed at**  
**[www.nacacnet.org/cepp](http://www.nacacnet.org/cepp).**

**It includes an introduction and preamble as well as four sections:**

- Section I: The Ethical Core of College Admission
- Section II: The Responsible Practice of College Admission
- Section III: Definitions of Procedures and Glossary
- Section IV. Education, Monitoring, and Compliance Procedures

# Section I: The Ethical Core of College Admission

- Truthfulness and Transparency
- Professional Conduct
- Respect for Confidentiality

## Section II: The Responsible Practice of College Admission

- Application Plans for First-Time Undergraduates in the United States
- Admission Cycle Dates, Deadlines, and Procedures for First-Time Entry Undergraduates
- Wait Lists
- Transfer Admission
- The Use of Commissioned Agents in International Student Recruitment

## **Section III: Definitions of Procedures and Glossary**

## **Section IV: Education, Monitoring, and Compliance**

Penalties could include:

- Expulsion from NACAC-sponsored events
- Suspension of membership and all membership privileges
- Permanent termination of membership in NACAC



## What's New?



# 2018-19 Moratorium

- At the annual NACAC conference, delegates agreed to a moratorium of enforcement for Section II. A, B, and D for one year or until the investigation by the Department of Justice has been resolved.

- The Assembly was advised to submit concerns or suggestions about the CEPP to [Governance@nacacnet.org](mailto:Governance@nacacnet.org) for review by the Admission Practices Committee.

- Please know that while this moratorium is in effect, NACAC and PACAC members are still expected to remain in compliance with all principles contained in the CEPP.** We will continue to follow up on inquires and to work toward bringing all cases of non-compliance to a positive resolution.

## The *CEPP* addresses

- Professional conduct
- Transparency
- Conflicts of interest
- Application plan definitions
- Deferred and mid-year admission
- Transfer admission
- Wait lists
- International recruitment

## Features of the CEPP

- All provisions are mandatory
- Education, Monitoring and Penalties is part of the document
- Individual Member Discipline is part of CEPP

## Other features include:

- Emphasizes the importance of May 1
- Establishes restrictions on using housing deadlines to manipulate commitments before May 1
- Requires transparency from colleges in their financial aid award letters
- Requires transparency in secondary school reporting including
  - Grading policies
  - Policy on reporting students' disciplinary records
  - Change in student enrollment status
- Includes a Definition of Procedures and Glossary

# Wait Lists

- Acknowledges difference between verbal and written offers
- Recognizes colleges' need for quick responses to offers from waitlist
- Ensures students on the waitlist know
  - How financial need will affect their chances of being offered admission
  - Availability of campus housing

# Transfers

- Allows institutional dates and deadlines for transfer students
- Requires transparency from college regarding transfer policies
- Requires colleges to list all transfer agreements with other institutions
- Requires colleges to provide **estimated** transfer credit and financial aid before requiring a deposit

# Commissioned Agents

- Makes colleges responsible for the conduct of the agents that work on their behalf
- Requires colleges to publish the names of agents or agencies that are authorized to represent them
- Requires colleges to disclose the names of agents with whom they have business relationships.



# Filing a complaint

- Complete complaint form on NACAC website-  
<https://www.nacacnet.org/advocacy--ethics/statement-of-principles-of-good-practice/>
- Or on the PACAC website-  
<http://www.pacac.org/> (bottom left corner of homepage: Confidential Complaint Form)
- Attach supporting documents (if available)
- Submit to NACAC or PACAC

## What Happens When A Complaint is Filed?

- Most cases are resolved amicably with a simple phone call between an Admission Practices Committee Chair and a senior admissions officer at the institution that is the subject of the complaint. NACAC keeps a record of all complaints handled at the affiliate level.
- Cases that cannot be resolved at the Affiliate level are referred to the National AP Committee.
- If they cannot be resolved by the National Committee, then penalties may include a recommendation to the NACAC Board of Directors:
  - Excluding the institution from NACAC-sponsored events
  - Suspending membership and membership privileges
  - Terminating NACAC membership

# Case Studies



Case Study  
“Application Deadline”

“The early bird gets the worm, so start early on your application to Eager Beaver State College! Submit an application by July 31, and we will waive the \$75 application fee.”

**Is this compliant?**

## Answer: No!

Section II.B.1.a. states, “October 15: This date is the earliest deadline colleges may require first-year candidates to submit an application for fall admission. Members must give equal consideration to all applications received by that date.”

Section II.B.2. continues, “Colleges must not establish policies, engage in practices, imply advantage, or offer incentives whose effect is to circumvent the SPGP: NACAC’s Code of Ethics and Professional Practices’ established deadlines. Incentives are allowed when equally available to students who wait until the established deadlines.”

## Case Study “Rank Ordering”

Firefly University has included on their application the following question—

Please indicate your level of interest in Firefly University

- Firefly is my #1 choice
- Firefly is one of my top choices
- Firefly is in the top half
- Firefly is under consideration but not a top choice

**Is this compliant?**

# Answer: No!

Section I.C.3. states “College members will not ask candidates, their counselors, their schools, or others to divulge or rank order their college preferences on applications or other documents. They may ask the question verbally only if the answer will not be used to influence an admission, scholarship, or financial aid decision.

What if this question was optional?

- It cannot be included in the application at all.

What if the question was asked verbally in an interview?

- If it is being used in an admissions decision, it is still non-compliant.

## Case Study

### “Deposit Due Date”

On February 1<sup>st</sup> a student receives an offer of admission that includes this paragraph:

“It is my pleasure to congratulate you on your admission to Ruffed Grouse University. To accept this offer of admission and begin the enrollment process, please respond to this offer within 30 days.”

**Is this compliant?**



## Answer: No!

Section II.B.1.d. May 1—National Candidates Reply Date: Colleges must permit first-year candidates for fall admission to choose among offers of admission and institutional financial aid and scholarships until May 1. Binding Early Decision plans and recipients of athletic scholarships are recognized exceptions.

**OK, that's a pretty clear violation. But what about the following?**

# Case Study

## “Deposit Due Date Continued”

From Eastern Hemlock University’s offer of admission:

“Congratulations on your offer of admission to Eastern Hemlock University! I am pleased to confirm that you are being offered direct admission to both the undergraduate program as well as our School of Medicine. Your deadline to accept your direct admission is March 1.”

**Does it make a difference that the offer of admission is for a joint BA/MD program with their School of Medicine?**

## Answer: It is still not compliant

Section II.B.3.c. states, “The May 1 deadline also applies to any academic major, institutional scholarship, or special program to which the candidate has been offered admission. Examples of special programs may include honors programs and dual-enrollment graduate or professional degree programs.”

## Case Study

### “Discipline Policy”

Scrapple High School has on their school profile: “As per district policy, it is SHS’ policy not to report any expulsions or out-of-school suspensions for its students.”

Larry, a student, is expelled in February of his senior year for smoking weed at lunch. The school has notified all the colleges to which he applied that Larry is “no longer attending Scrapple High School.”

**Is this compliant?**

Answer: Yes

Section I.A.3.b. notes that “Schools must also disclose their policy for reporting disciplinary infractions. Regardless of such policies, they must disclose to colleges any change in a student’s enrollment status whether pre- or post-admission.”

The school has disclosed its policy and made the required notification.

# Case Study

## “Transfer Credit Evaluation”

Student has been admitted to Schuylkill University and contacts SU about their transfer credit before depositing. Schuylkill University does not produce degree audits to admitted transfer students but sends the student a link to their online transfer credit equivalency database to review potential transfer credit. The student’s deposit is due in two weeks.

Is this compliant?

Answer: Yes

### **II. D. 4. a. states**

Colleges will provide them with an evaluation of their prior college-level credits that is a good faith estimate of how those credits will be applied toward their graduation requirements. An online articulated transfer agreement will meet this requirement

**The University has demonstrated a good faith effort and is providing accessible information for the student.**

## Case Study

### “Financial Aid”

Amy has received a generous financial aid award from Blue & Gold University. Amy’s top choice is Mountain Laurel College and Amy contacts MLC to ask if they will revise their award to match that of Blue & Gold U. Mountain Laurel asks for a copy of the financial aid award from Blue & Gold University as part of their reconsideration.

**Is this compliant?**



## Answer: Yes

Section I.C.4. states “Colleges may, however, require documentation that might divulge the name of another institution when it supports a candidate’s appeal of an admission, financial aid, or scholarship decision. This is only permissible when the appeal has been initiated by the candidate and when the appeal references an offer from another institution.”

## Case Study “The Waitlist”

In March, Antigone Jones accepts a spot on the waitlist at Mars College. In April, Mars College contacts Antigone to ask:

What is your level of interest in Mars College now that you have received your other admission decisions?

- I am very interested in Mars College
- I am somewhat interested in Mars College
- I am no longer considering Mars College

**Is this compliant?**

## Answer: Yes

Section II.C.3. states “Colleges may ask students who have accepted a place on the wait list to indicate their level of interest, but must not ask them to rank order or identify their other college choices.”

Mars College is only asking about interest in their own institution from a student on the waitlist.

## Case Study

TastyKakes College has just become test optional in their admissions process. Once the class has been admitted, they request test scores from those students that did not submit them during the application process (for placement and research purposes). Someone in the office wonders if they need to include those scores in their Common Data Set as they were not reported during admissions.

Do they need to report those scores?

## Answer: They must report

Section I.A.1 States that all members agree:

a. they will accurately describe, represent, and promote their schools, institutions, organizations, and services to students and to colleagues and will not misrepresent themselves or their institutions. This includes the data that appear on profiles, websites, and promotional materials and data that are reported to the government, private agencies, and the media

b. when they share information about students, it will be relevant to the college admission process and will be accurate, up-to-date, complete, and free from misrepresentations of fact or material omissions

# Case Study

Punxsutawney University announces:

Benefits of Applying Early Decision to Punxsutawney:

- ED Applicants get first priority for housing
- ED Applicants have first priority to register for fall and spring classes

**Is this compliant?**

## Answer: No

Section II.A.3.a.vi. States, “Colleges must not offer incentives exclusive to students applying or admitted under an Early Decision application plan. Examples of incentives include the promise of special housing, enhanced financial aid packages, and special scholarships for Early Decision admits. Colleges may, however, disclose how admission rates for Early Decision differ from those for other admission plans.”

## Questions and Discussion:

What are the ethical issues in college admission that most concern you?



# Get Involved!

Membership in PACAC is affordable and has many benefits including:

- Professional development (conferences, workshops, webinars)
- Financial Resources (scholarship for students to attend college; scholarship for you to attend conferences)
- Inclusion and Access Resources for Students (Camp College)
- Networking with Colleagues
- Job Postings
- Legislative Action

[www.pacac.org](http://www.pacac.org)

