

ASAP

Association of Student Awards Professionals of BC

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Principles and code of ethics



Professional principles

Possible contexts in which professional principles and codes of ethics would apply in the daily work of a financial awards administrator may includes:

- Working with students (including advocacy role)
- Dealing with current and potential donors, as well as administering donor trusts
- Dealing with outside agencies and programs, including:
 - Government scholarships and need-based loan, grant and employment programs
 - Banks holding student loans
 - External awards
- Working with other branches of the educational institution, including other student services
- Dealing with parents and other individuals seeking information or assistance

ASAP members will make every effort to adhere to the standard code of ethics developed by their professional association. Since ASAP members work within a variety of educational settings and administrative structures, however, there may be instances in which the code must be adapted to the particular demands of a specific working environment.

Code of ethics

The Code of Ethics of a Financial Awards Administrator encompasses the following elements:

Working With Students

- All students will be treated with dignity and respect.
- Treatment of students will be consistent, equitable and just.
- Individual differences will be recognized and tolerated.
- The Financial Awards Administrator (FAA) will maintain objectivity.
- The FAA will ensure comprehensive and up-to-date student access to accurate awards information.
- Service to students, whether it be access to information, award adjudication or response to an appeal, will be timely.
- There will be transparency in all award adjudication procedures.
- Students will be informed about and have access to due process in questioning or appealing award adjudications.
- Students must be confident that the information they have provided verbally and in writing is strictly confidential. If certain information (e.g. that a loan is pending) may be shared with other student services, the student will be made aware of what kinds of information may be shared and with whom.
- If an outside agency is seeking information, the request must be submitted in writing with reference to or a copy of their authorization to obtain such information.

Dealing with donors and donor trusts

- The Financial Awards Administrator will observe legal limitations (including human rights legislation) in establishing new awards.
- The FAA will ensure at the outset that the institution's academic priorities and administrative requirements are clear to potential new donors, fund raisers, and departmental scholarship chairs (written guidelines helpful) so that any new award will be a "good fit" and will be practical to administer. Flexibility should be negotiated in case of fixture changes in academic offerings. The institution should develop a standard trust agreement for new endowed awards.
- The FAA will observe the terms of the donor trust. This may necessitate communicating the institution's legal and ethical obligations to academic and administrative departments.
- The FAA will maintain historical files (especially important for trusts which predate the implementation of a formal endowment deed) so that original award terms and any subsequent amendments, as agreed to by the donors or their representatives, can be tracked and documented.

- The FAA will observe standard accounting and audit principles in the administration and management of award accounts.
- The FAA will work with the institution to develop clear regulations and policies governing awards so that donors can be assured that recipients of their gifts are being selected fairly and consistently.

Dealing with other student services at the educational institution

- The Financial Awards Administrator will share only limited student information with other student services, on a need-to-know basis, in the context of benefiting the client. In this regard, the FAA should first ensure that other student services observe the same confidentiality principles as the awards office. If the student is being referred to another department, it was suggested that a referral form, to be signed by the client, be devised allowing the FAA to share specified types of information. The school's FOIPOP person can be used as a resource if there is uncertainty on confidentiality issues.
- The FAA will respect the need of other professionals (e.g. counsellors, student health workers, etc.) to adhere to their own professional codes of conduct.
- The FAA will endeavour to balance obligations to the individual student against obligations to the educational institution.
- In providing statistical data, the FAA should be aware of the danger of identifying individuals when using small samples.

Working with external agencies, including government loan and grant programs

- The FAA will adhere consistently to the policies and guidelines established for external programs, including those which provide government student loan and grants.
- The FAA will cooperate with banks and service agencies participating in government student loan programs to confirm enrolment and answer promptly any relevant questions pertaining to the clients' eligibility for a current loan or continued interest-free status. Responses to queries will, however, be restricted to enrolment and eligibility issues. The student's right to confidentiality in all other areas will be strictly observed.
- With the clients' permission and participation, the FAA will act as an advocate for students who are encountering difficulty in resolving processing problems and issues of inequitable treatment by government and bank officials.
- The FAA will endeavour to ensure that clear policies and procedures for dealing with external awards are drawn up by the institution and circulated to external donor contacts. (External awards are those for which the application and selection process is handled by an agency outside the educational institution and for which the institution serves only as an agent to confirm enrolment and provide a responsible conduit for applying award proceeds to the students' tuition and other educational costs).

Dealing with parents and other individuals seeking information or assistance

- The FAA will ensure that comprehensive and up-to-date information on awards and financial aid is easily accessible to parents, teachers and the general public.
- Information provided by students and parents, both verbally and in writing, is strictly confidential. If an outside agency is seeking information, the request must be submitted in writing with reference to or a copy of their authorization to obtain such information. If the outside agency does not have legal authorization to obtain information, confidentiality will be strictly enforced.
- Confidentiality of student data must be observed, even when information is requested by a spouse or by parents. The FAA will discuss information pertaining to a student's BCSAP application with a spouse or parent only when that individual is specifically named in the release signed by the student on the relevant BCSAP application. Otherwise, details of a student's awards and financial aid records cannot be released.

Compiled by Dan Worsley, UBC

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