

Reporting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

TCAT Elizabethton Stewardship of Resources

Tennessee State Law requires all public institutions of higher education to provide a means by which students, employees, or others may report suspected or known improper or dishonest acts. In addition, the Tennessee College of Applied Technology Elizabethton (TCATE) is committed to the responsible stewardship of our resources.

Whether you are part of departmental management, a faculty or staff member, a student, or an interested citizen, we encourage you to report known or suspected dishonest acts by employees, outside contractors, or vendors.

What Should I Report?

Dishonest acts, either known or suspected, should be reported, such as:

- Theft or misappropriation of funds, supplies, property, or other institutional resources
- Forgery or alteration of documents
- Unauthorized alteration or manipulation of computer files
- Improper and wasteful activity
- Falsification of reports to management or external agencies
- Pursuit of a benefit or advantage in violation of institution's conflict of interests policy
- Authorization or receipt of compensation for hours not worked

Think Before You Speak!

Before making allegations of dishonesty, be reasonably certain of any claims. Such allegations can seriously and negatively impact the accused individual's life and adversely affect the working environment of the department.

Reporting Options

Several options are available to all TCATE employees, students and others for reporting known or suspected dishonest acts.

You may report your concerns:

- To your supervisor or department head

- To the Director or Assistant Directors of TCATE
- To Northeast State Community College Internal Audit
- To the Tennessee Board of Regents by email at reportfraud@tbr.edu.
- To the Tennessee Comptroller's Hotline for Fraud, Waste, and Abuse at 1-800-232-5454

Investigations

- When Internal Audit receives allegations of dishonestly or other irregularity by an employee, outside contractor, or vendor, that are required to conduct an investigation.
- Departmental management should **not** attempt to conduct investigations nor alert suspected employees of an impending investigation.
- In an investigation, objectives include verifying the facts, maintaining objectivity and confidentiality, determining responsibility, and recommending corrective actions to help ensure that similar actions do not occur in the future.

Protection under State Law

As Internal Audit investigates allegations of dishonesty, the reporting individual's confidentiality is protected under Tennessee Code Annotated Title 10, Chapter 7 (subject to court action requiring disclosure). Also state law prohibits discrimination or retaliation of any kind against employees who report allegations of dishonest acts.

Reporting Responsibility

Internal Audit has reporting responsibility to the Audit Committee of the Tennessee Board of Regents through the Director of System-wide Internal Auditing. This reporting relationship enables them to independently and objectively review matters involving any level of administration at TCATE.

Preventing Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

TCATE Management is responsible for establishing and implementing systems and procedures to prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.

The basic elements of a proper control system include:

- Creating a culture of honesty and high ethics.
- Evaluating risks and implementing processes, procedures and controls to prevent, deter and detect fraud, waste, and abuse.

- Developing an appropriate oversight process.