



# PRINCIPLES FOR

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# PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

for Career Services &  
Employment Professionals



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Career services and employment professionals are involved in an important process—helping students choose and attain personally rewarding careers, and helping employers develop effective college relations programs that contribute to effective candidate selections for their organizations. The impact of this process upon individuals and organizations requires commitment by practitioners to principles for professional practice.

Career services and employment professionals are involved in this process in a partnership effort with a common goal of achieving the best match between the individual student and the employing organization. This partnership effort traditionally involves students, but may also involve alumni, community members, prospective students, and/or faculty/staff.

The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), as the national professional association to facilitate the employment of the college educated, is also concerned with this process. This concern led NACE to develop and adopt the *Principles for Professional Practice*. The principles presented here are designed to provide practitioners with three basic precepts for career planning and recruitment:

- Maintain an open and free selection of employment and experiential learning opportunities in an atmosphere conducive to objective thought, where candidates can optimize their talents and meet their personal objectives;
- Maintain a recruitment process that is fair and equitable to candidates and employing organizations;
- Support informed and responsible decision making by candidates.

Adherence to the guidelines will support the collaborative effort of career services and employment professionals while reducing the potential for abuses. The guidelines also apply to new technology or third-party recruiting relationships that may be substituted for the traditional personal interaction among career services professionals, employment professionals, and students.

These principles are not all-inclusive; they are intended to serve as a framework within which the career planning and recruitment processes should function, and as a foundation upon which professionalism can be promoted.

As part of NACE's commitment to provide leadership in the ethics area and to facilitate the ongoing dialogue on ethics-related issues, NACE established the NACE Principles for Professional Practice Committee. The committee, made up of practitioners, provides advisory opinions to members on the application of the *Principles*, acts as an informational clearinghouse for various ethical issues arising within the regions, periodically reviews and recommends changes to this document, and resolves problems that may arise.

It is important to keep in mind one final point: The *Principles* do not address certain professional obligations to support state and regional associations, professional development programs, salary surveys, and other demographic trend surveys. Obligations such as these are recognized as vital to the continuing growth of our profession, but since they do not relate directly to the recruitment process, they are not addressed specifically in this document. However, the NACE Board of Directors strongly encourages career services and employment professionals to support and participate in these activities.

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**The Board of Directors**  
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND EMPLOYERS  
(Revised January 2012)

# PRINCIPLES FOR Career Services Professionals

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1. Career services professionals, without imposing personal values or biases, will assist individuals in developing a career plan or making a career decision.
2. Career services professionals will know the career services field and the educational institution and students they represent, and will have appropriate counseling skills.
3. Career services professionals will provide students with information on a range of career opportunities and types of employing organizations. They will inform students of the means and resources to gain access to information that may influence their decisions about an employing organization. Career services professionals will also provide employing organizations with accurate information about the educational institution and its students, and about the recruitment policies of the career services office.
4. Career services professionals will provide comparable services to all employers, regardless of whether the employers contribute services, gifts, or financial support to the educational institution or office and regardless of the level of such support.
5. Career services professionals will establish reasonable and fair guidelines for access to services by employers. When guidelines permit access to organizations recruiting on behalf of an employer and to international employers, the following principles will apply:
  - a) Organizations providing recruiting services for a fee may be asked to inform career services of the specific employer they represent and the specific jobs for which they are recruiting. When deemed necessary, career services can request contact information to verify that the organization is recruiting for a bona fide job opportunity. Career services must respect the confidentiality of this information and may not publish it in any manner. Third-party recruiters that charge fees to students will not be permitted access to career services;
  - b) Employers recruiting for work outside of the United States are expected to adhere to the equal employment opportunity (EEO) policy and U.S. labor law policies of the career services office. They will advise the career services office and the students of the realities of working in that country and of any cultural and employment law differences.
6. Career services professionals will maintain EEO compliance and follow affirmative action principles in career services activities in a manner that includes the following:
  - a) Referring all interested students for employment and experiential learning opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability, and providing reasonable accommodations upon request;
  - b) Notifying employing organizations of any selection procedures that appear to have an adverse impact based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability;
  - c) Assisting recruiters in accessing certain groups on campus to provide a more inclusive applicant pool;
  - d) Informing all students about employment and experiential learning opportunities, with particular emphasis on those opportunities in occupational areas where certain groups of students are under-represented;
  - e) Developing awareness of, and sensitivity to, cultural differences and the diversity of students, and providing responsive services;
  - f) Responding to complaints of EEO noncompliance, working to resolve such complaints with the recruiter or employing organization, and, if necessary, consulting with the appropriate campus department.
7. Any disclosure of student information outside of the educational institution will be with prior consent of the student unless health and/or safety considerations necessitate the dissemination of such information. Career services professionals will exercise sound judgment and fairness in maintaining the confidentiality of student information, regardless of the source, including written records, reports, and computer data bases.

8. Only qualified personnel will evaluate or interpret assessments of a career exploration nature. Students will be informed of the availability of assessments, the purpose of such assessments, and the disclosure policies regarding assessment results.

9. If the charging of fees for career services becomes necessary, such fees will be appropriate to the budgetary needs of the office and will not hinder student or employer access to services. Career services professionals are encouraged to counsel student and university organizations engaged in recruitment activities to follow this principle.

10. Career services professionals will advise students about their obligations in the recruitment process and establish mechanisms to encourage their compliance. Students' obligations include providing truthful and accurate information; adhering to schedules; accepting an offer of employment in good faith; notifying employers on a timely basis of an acceptance or nonacceptance and withdrawing from the recruiting process after accepting an offer of employment; interviewing only with employers for whom they are interested in working and whose qualification requirements they meet; and requesting reimbursement of only reasonable and legitimate expenses incurred in the recruitment process.

11. Career services professionals will provide services to international students consistent with U.S. immigration laws; inform those students about these laws; represent the reality of

the available job market in the United States; encourage pursuit of only those employment opportunities in the United States that meet the individual's work authorization; and encourage pursuit of eligible international employment opportunities.

12. Career services will establish job and internship posting guidelines, communicate these guidelines to students and employers, and review job and internship postings submitted by employers. They will make a reasonable effort to ensure that jobs and internships posted to their systems adhere to their university's standards and NACE Principles, in a manner that includes the following:

- a) All postings should adhere standards and guidelines prescribed by the institution;
- b) Job postings should be suitable and appropriate for candidates from their institution, as determined by career services staff;
- c) Internship postings should meet the NACE definition and criteria for internships. (See "A Position Statement on U.S. Internships: A Definition and Criteria to Assess Opportunities and Determine the Implications for Compensation" [www.nacweb.org/connections/advocacy/internship\\_position\\_paper/](http://www.nacweb.org/connections/advocacy/internship_position_paper/).)

13. Career services professionals also will promote and encourage acceptance of these principles throughout their educational institutions, **particularly with faculty and staff who work directly with employers**, and will respond to reports of noncompliance.

## PRINCIPLES FOR Employment Professionals

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1. Employment professionals will refrain from any practice that improperly influences and affects acceptances. Such practices may include undue time pressure for acceptance of offers and encouragement of revocation of another offer. Employment professionals will strive to communicate decisions to candidates within the agreed-upon time frame.

2. Employment professionals will have knowledge of the recruitment and career development field as well as the industry and the employing organization that they represent, and work within a framework of professionally accepted recruiting, interviewing, and selection techniques.

3. Employment professionals will provide accurate information about their organization and employment opportunities. Employing organizations are responsible for information supplied and commitments made by their representatives. If conditions change and require the employing organization to revoke its commitment, the employing organization will pursue a course of action for the affected candidate that is fair and equitable.

4. Neither employment professionals nor their organizations will expect or seek to extract special favors or treatment that would influence the recruitment process as a result of support, or the level of support, to the educational institution

or career services office in the form of contributed services, gifts, or other financial support.

5. Serving alcohol should not be part of the recruitment process on or off campus. This includes receptions, dinners, company tours, etc.

6. Employment professionals will maintain equal employment opportunity (EEO) compliance and follow affirmative action principles in recruiting activities in a manner that includes the following:

- a) Recruiting, interviewing, and hiring individuals without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, or disability, and providing reasonable accommodations upon request;
- b) Reviewing selection criteria for adverse impact based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, veteran status, and or disability;
- c) Avoiding questions that are considered unacceptable by EEO guidelines for fair employment practices during the recruiting process;
- d) Developing a sensitivity to, and awareness of, cultural differences and the diversity of the work force;
- e) Informing campus constituencies of special activities that have been developed to achieve the employer's affirmative action goals;
- f) Investigating complaints forwarded by the career services office regarding EEO noncompliance and seeking resolution of such complaints.

7. Employment professionals will maintain the confidentiality of student information, regardless of the source, including personal knowledge, written records/reports, and computer data bases. There will be no disclosure of student information to another organization without the prior written consent of the student, unless necessitated by health and/or safety considerations.

8. Those engaged in administering, evaluating, and interpreting assessment tools, employment screening tests, and technology used in selection will be trained and qualified to do so. Employment professionals must advise the career services office of any test/assessment conducted on campus and eliminate such a test/assessment if it violates campus policies or fair employment practices. Employment professionals must advise students in a timely fashion of the type and purpose of any test/assessment that students will be required to take as part of the recruitment process and to whom the results will be disclosed. All tests/assessments

will be reviewed by the employing organization for disparate impact and position-relatedness.

9. When using organizations that provide recruiting services for a fee, employment professionals will respond to inquiries by the career services office regarding this relationship and the positions the organization was contracted to fill. This principle applies equally to any other form of recruiting that is used as a substitute for the traditional employer/student interaction. These principles apply to organizations providing such services.

10. When employment professionals conduct recruitment activities through student associations or academic departments, such activities will be conducted in accordance with the policies of the career services office.

11. Employment professionals will cooperate with the policies and procedures of the career services office, including certification of EEO compliance well as compliance with all federal and state employment regulations.

12. Employment professionals will only post opportunities that require college-educated candidates, in a manner that includes the following:

- a) All postings should adhere to EEO compliance standards;
- b) Job postings should be suitable and appropriate for candidates from the target institution;
- c) Internship postings should meet the NACE definition and criteria for internships. (See "A Position Statement on U.S. Internships: A Definition and Criteria to Assess Opportunities and Determine the Implications for Compensation" [www.nacweb.org/connections/advocacy/internship\\_position\\_paper/](http://www.nacweb.org/connections/advocacy/internship_position_paper/).)

13. Employment professionals will honor scheduling arrangements and recruitment commitments.

14. Employment professionals recruiting for international operations will do so according to EEO and U.S. labor law standards. Employment professionals will advise the career services office and students of the realities of working in the foreign country and of any cultural or employment law differences.

15. Employment professionals will educate and encourage acceptance of these principles throughout their employing institution and by third parties representing their employing organization on campus, and will respond to reports of noncompliance.

# PRINCIPLES FOR Third-Party Recruiters

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**Preface:** The *NACE Principles* provide definitions and guidelines for third party, contractual, and staffing services. It is our hope that career services will use this information to make appropriate decisions about the use of third-party, contractual, and staffing services in their operations, including career fairs. These standards are

also designed to provide guidance to third-party recruiters who recruit college graduates through the college recruitment process. These standards are not to be construed as requiring or encouraging, or prohibiting or discouraging, use of third-party recruiters by college or employment professionals.

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## 1. Definition of Third-Party Recruiter:

- a) Third-party recruiters are agencies, organizations, or individuals recruiting candidates for temporary, part-time, or full-time employment opportunities other than for their own needs. This includes entities that refer or recruit for profit or not for profit, and it includes agencies that collect student information to be disclosed to employers for purposes of recruitment and employment;
- b) Third-party recruiting organizations charge for services using one of the following fee structures:
  1. Applicant paid fee—The applicant pays the third-party recruiter a flat fee for services rendered or a fee based upon the applicant’s starting salary once the applicant is placed with an employer.
  2. Employer paid fee
    - a) Retainer—The employer pays a flat fee to the third-party recruiter for services performed in the recruiting of individuals to work for the employer.
    - b) Contingency fee—The employer pays to the third-party recruiter a percentage of the applicant’s starting salary once the applicant is hired by the employer.
    - c) Fee for service—The employer pays a fee for specific services, e.g. job postings, access to resumes, booth space at a job fair, and so forth.
- c) The above definition includes, but is not limited to, the following entities regardless of the fee structure used by the entity to charge for services:
  1. Employment agencies—Organizations that list positions for a number of client organizations and receive payment when a referred candidate is hired. The fee for listing a position is paid either by the firm listing the opening (fee paid) or by the candidate who is hired.
  2. Search firms—Organizations that contract with clients to find and screen qualified persons to

fill specific positions. The fees for this service are paid by the clients.

3. Contract recruiter—Organizations that contract with an employer to act as the employer’s agent in the recruiting and employment function.

4. Online job posting or resume referral services—For-profit or commercial organizations that collect data on job seekers and display job opportunities to which job seekers may apply. The data collected on job seekers are sent to prospective employers. Fees for using the services may exist for the employer, school, or job seeker.

- d) Temporary agencies or staffing services—Temporary agencies or staffing services are employers, not third-party recruiters, and will be expected to comply with the professional practice principles set forth for employment professionals. These organizations contract to provide individuals qualified to perform specific tasks or complete specific projects for a client organization. Individuals perform work at the client organization, but are employed and paid by the agency.
- e) Outsourcing contractors or leasing agencies—Outsourcing contractors or leasing agencies are employers, not third-party recruiters, and will be expected to comply with the professional practice principles set forth for employment professionals. These organizations contract with client organizations to provide a specific functional area that the organization no longer desires to perform, such as accounting, technology services, human resources, cafeteria services, and so forth. Individuals hired by the outsourcing or leasing firm are paid and supervised by the firm, even though they work on the client organization’s premises.
- f) In most cases temporary agencies, staffing services, outsourcing contractors, or leasing firms will be treated as employers. However, should these firms

actually recruit individuals to be employees of another organization, then the third-party professional practice principles shall apply.

2. Third-party recruiters will be versed in the recruitment field and work within a framework of professionally accepted recruiting, interviewing, and selection techniques.
3. Third-party recruiters will follow EEO standards in recruiting activities in a manner that includes the following:
  - a) Referring qualified students to employers without regard to the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, or disability;
  - b) Reviewing selection criteria for adverse impact and screening students based upon job-related criteria only, not based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, military service, veteran status, or disability;
  - c) Refusing, in the case of resume referral entities, to permit employers to screen and select resumes based upon the student's race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, military service, veteran status, or disability;
  - d) Avoiding use of inquiries that are considered unacceptable by EEO standards during the recruiting process;
  - e) Affirming an awareness of and sensitivity to cultural differences and the diversity of the work force;
  - f) Investigating complaints forwarded by the career services office or the employer client regarding EEO noncompliance and seeking resolution of such complaints.
4. Career centers may choose to advise students to approach with caution third-party recruiters who charge a fee. Members are encouraged to make available to students the NACE publication, "A Student's Guide to Interviewing With Third-Party Recruiters."
5. Third-party recruiters will disclose information as follows:
  - a) Third-party recruiters will disclose to students the name(s) of the client, or clients, that the third-party recruiter is representing and to whom the students' credentials will be disclosed.
  - b) When deemed necessary, third-party recruiters will disclose information upon request to career services that would enable career services to verify that it is recruiting for a bona fide job opportunity. Information should include contact information for the organization for which the third party is providing recruiting services. Career services must respect the confidentiality of this information and may not publish it in any manner.
6. Third-party recruiters will not disclose to any employer, including the client-employer, any student information without obtaining prior written consent from the student. Under no circumstances can student information be disclosed other than for the original recruiting purposes nor can it be sold or provided to other entities. Online job-posting and resume-referral services must prominently display their privacy policies on their web sites, specifying who will have access to student information.
7. Third-party recruiters attending career fairs will represent employers who have authorized them and will disclose the names of the represented employers to career services upon request.

## Advisory Opinions

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A NACE member/regional association may request an advisory opinion regarding an interpretation of the *Principles* document at any time. The advisory opinion will apply to the situation as explained and will not be considered a precedent for a subsequent complaint brought to NACE.

- The member/association will prepare a written statement detailing the conduct in question. Statements will include the section, or sections, of the Principles to be interpreted relative to the conduct in question.
- The information will be reviewed by the NACE Principles for Professional Practice Committee and a response given to the member/association.

# Problem-Solving Procedures

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Questionable practices or problems involving recruiters and career services practitioners will be resolved between the parties as quickly as possible. NACE recommends the following:

- Discuss the incident with all parties involved in the situation. Determine the specifics of the problem.
- Attempt to resolve the incident among the affected parties.
- Refer unresolved concerns to the supervisors of the involved individuals or to other appropriate officials.

If the problem remains unresolved, complaints or requests for advisory opinions may be presented to the NACE Principles for Professional Practice Committee for ultimate determination by the NACE Board of Directors. Remedies for violations can include written warning, probation, suspension, and expulsion from NACE membership. For specific details for filing and processing complaints or for requesting an advisory opinion, contact:

## **Executive Director**

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This *Principles for Professional Practice* is the ethics statement of the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the leading source of information for human resources professionals who recruit and hire college graduates and for career services practitioners on college campuses who advise students and alumni in career development and the employment process. The *Principles* serve as a framework within which the career planning and recruitment processes should function, and as a foundation upon which professionalism can be promoted. For information on the benefits of NACE membership, see [www.naceweb.org/join/](http://www.naceweb.org/join/).

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