



# Questions and Answers

## Q. What is the OSU Reporting System?

The OSU Reporting System is a comprehensive and confidential reporting tool to assist management and employees to work together to address fraud, abuse and misconduct in the workplace, while cultivating a positive work environment. While it does not replace other OSU reporting avenues, it provides a single opportunity especially useful when an individual may not know to whom or to what office specific concerns should be addressed.

## Q. Who is EthicsPoint and what is their involvement?

EthicsPoint, an expert in incident management systems, has been contracted by OSU to provide a confidential reporting system. As an outside company, EthicsPoint is outside the influence and control of OSU administrators. The OSU Reporting System is a valuable tool to help identify and resolve sensitive issues by receiving information, and providing an intermediary to those individuals who wish to maintain their anonymity in reporting concerns. All telephone reports are taken by EthicsPoint staff and all report data is maintained on EthicsPoint servers. Access to incident report data is controlled by EthicsPoint; selected OSU staff has access to incident data only to the extent needed to adequately investigate reports while maintaining confidentiality. Providing incident management systems to others is the business of EthicsPoint. Their ability to provide incident management systems while maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality is critical to their business success.

## Q. May I report using either the internet or the telephone?

Yes you may. By giving you choices, EthicsPoint helps ensure that employees can file a report confidentially and in the manner most comfortable or convenient to them.

## Q. Why has Oklahoma State University decided to adopt the EthicsPoint® reporting system?

We believe our people are our most important asset. By creating open channels of communication, we can promote a positive work environment and maximize productivity. As a public organization accountable to the citizens of the State of Oklahoma, we can benefit from a confidential reporting vehicle to assist us in stewardship of resources and achieving excellence.

## Q. Does management really want me to report?

We certainly do. In fact, we *need* you to report. You know what is going on in your area - both good and bad. You may have initial knowledge of an activity that may be cause for concern. Your reporting can minimize the potential negative impact on OSU and its people. Also, offering positive input may help identify issues that can improve corporate culture and performance.

## Q. Why should I report what I know? What's in it for me?

We all have the right to work in a positive environment and with that right comes the responsibility of acting in an ethical manner and letting the appropriate people know if someone is not acting appropriately. By working together, we can maintain a healthy and productive environment.

**Q. What type of situations should I report?**

The OSU Reporting System is a communications tool providing an avenue for sharing information of any kind. The actual report will then be routed to the appropriate compliance area. While we believe that OSU has few serious problems, it is not unrealistic to expect reports of ethical violations relating to accounting and finance and other incidents of misconduct such as theft, sexual harassment, discrimination, or collusion. We want to encourage reports on safety, facility security issues, and environmental concerns, as well as asking for positive suggestions, recommended solutions and questions regarding rules or policy clarification.

**Q. If I see a violation, shouldn't I just report it to my supervisor, security, human resources, or the appropriate office and let them deal with it?**

You certainly may, but there are several good reasons why you may wish to use the OSU Reporting System as well. First, EthicsPoint ensures that your report gets to the appropriate people. Also, reports can be filed anonymously if you wish, and all report information is secure and held in the strictest confidence.

**Q. Isn't this just a "Big Brother" program making everyone suspicious of everyone else?**

No - the OSU Reporting System concentrates on being a positive aspect of the overall OSU culture, and allows employees to partner with management to assure a safe, secure and ethical workplace. We encourage you to use the system to seek guidance on ethical dilemmas, provide positive suggestions, or communicate a concern. Effective communication is critical in today's workplace and this is a great tool to enhance that communication.

**Q. How is a report filed from a computer secure and not traceable back to me?**

EthicsPoint's system was built to protect the anonymity of the reporter. OSU is dedicated to this task and contractually bound not to seek the identity of any reporter.

- Reports placed at EthicsPoint are protected by the latest encryption technology.
- The EthicsPoint system prevents a reporter from being identified by our internal IT staff, should a report be sent from a workstation on our network.
- EthicsPoint® does not track or capture screen names or computer address (no cookies), to further protect the reporter's identity.

Reports are never emailed, faxed or mailed and are only made available to trained personnel.

**Q. Can a reporter identify himself if he desires?**

Yes. When filing a report, the system will ask if the reporter wishes to be identified for possible follow-up. OSU's distribution protocol will remain in effect to ensure that implicated parties are never made aware of the reporter's identity.

**Q. I am concerned that the information I provide through the OSU Reporting System will ultimately reveal my identity. How can you assure me that will not happen?**

The EthicsPoint system is designed to protect your anonymity. However, you as a reporting party need to ensure that the body of the report does not reveal your identity by accident, for example, "From my cube next to Jan Smith..." or "In my 33 years...".

**Q. Can students and the public participate by reporting through the OSU Reporting System?**

Yes. Any person may report questionable or unethical behavior, or offer a great suggestion for improvement.

**Q. How can a person report if they have no access to the internet?**

You can file a report from any computer that can access the internet. You can file from home. Many public locations, including the public library, have computers with internet access. If you

don't have access or are uncomfortable using a computer, you can call a toll-free hotline number, 866-204-8692, which is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

**Q. Is the telephone toll-free hot line confidential also?**

Yes. You will be asked to provide the same information that you would provide in an internet-based report and an interviewer will type your responses into the OSU Confidential Reporting System Web site. These reports have the same security and confidentiality measures applied to them during delivery.

**Q. Where do these reports go? Who can access them?**

Reports are entered directly on the EthicsPoint's secure server to prevent any possible breach in security. EthicsPoint makes these reports available only to specific individuals within OSU who are charged with evaluating the type of violation and location of the incident. Each of these report recipients has had training in keeping these reports in the utmost confidence. The EthicsPoint system and staff are trained and committed to ensure that no report is ever shared with implicated parties, their peers, or subordinates.

**Q. What if my boss or other managers are involved in a violation? Won't they get the report and start a cover-up?**

The EthicsPoint system and report distribution are designed so that no report is ever shared with implicated parties, their peers or their subordinates. This will help to eliminate cover-ups by any implicated individual.

**Q. I am aware of some individuals involved with unethical conduct, but it doesn't affect me. Why should I bother reporting it?**

OSU chooses to promote ethical behavior. All unethical conduct, at any level, ultimately hurts OSU and all employees, including you. If you know of any incidents of misconduct or ethical violations, consider it your duty to yourself and your coworkers to report it.

**Q. I am not sure what I have observed or heard is a violation of OSU policy, or involves unethical conduct, but it just does not look right to me. What should I do?**

File a report. The OSU Reporting System can help you prepare and file your report so it can be properly understood. We'd rather you reported a situation that turned out to be harmless than let possible unethical behavior go unchecked because you weren't sure.

**Q. What if I remember something important about the incident after I filed the report? Or what if OSU has further questions for me concerning my report?**

When you file a report at the web site or through the toll-free number, you receive a unique user name and are asked to choose a password. You can return to the system again either by internet or telephone and access the original report to answer questions posed by an OSU representative and add further information that will help resolve open issues. We strongly suggest that you return to the site after 72 hours to answer possible questions from an OSU investigator. You and OSU now have entered into a "confidential dialogue" where situations are not only identified but can be resolved, no matter how complex.

**Q. Are these follow-on reports as secure as the first one?**

All correspondences are held in the same strict confidence as the initial report, continuing under the umbrella of confidentiality.