

**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**  
**University of Cincinnati's Anonymous Reporting Hotline**

*The University of Cincinnati's Anonymous Reporting Hotline is NOT a 911 or Emergency Service. Reports submitted through the Anonymous Reporting Hotline may not receive an immediate response. If you require emergency assistance, please call 911.*

**1. What is the purpose of an Anonymous Reporting Hotline?**

The anonymous reporting hotline provides members of the University of Cincinnati (UC or university) community a formalized mechanism for reporting illegal or unethical acts or behavior that may be in violation of UC policy. Reports of such acts may be reported via telephone or via a secured web site and can be submitted anonymously or with the reporter's name attached. This anonymous reporting hotline is NOT intended to be a vehicle for reporting general complaints. The anonymous reporting hotline is also NOT to be used to report a matter involving student conduct. In accordance with the Student Code of Conduct, all student nonacademic misconduct shall be reported to the Office of University Judicial Affairs (OUJA) and all instances of student academic misconduct shall be reported to the college conduct administrator as well as to the OUJA.

**2. What is the difference between this Anonymous Reporting Hotline and UC is Listening?**

UC is Listening is intended for general complaints or comments whereas the Anonymous Reporting Hotline is intended to be a reporting mechanism for illegal or unethical acts or violations of university policy when an individual does not feel comfortable with existing reporting methods.

**3. Why is an Anonymous Reporting Hotline necessary?**

An anonymous reporting hotline is a key component of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX), which sets standards for corporate governance and control. Most colleges and universities in the United States have adopted components of SOX as "best practice." Most of our peer institutions have already implemented an anonymous reporting hotline mechanism. In addition, this type of mechanism is included as a best practice, as determined by NACUBO – the National Association of College and University Business Offices.

**4. Does the Anonymous Reporting Hotline replace existing reporting methods?**

The anonymous reporting hotline does not replace or supersede existing reporting methods on campus. Employees are encouraged to bring concerns to their supervisors or other campus entities, as appropriate. The anonymous reporting hotline provides an alternative for individuals who do not feel comfortable with existing reporting methods.

### **5. Can I make a truly anonymous report?**

Yes. The university has contracted with EthicsPoint, Inc. to manage our Anonymous Reporting Hotline. EthicsPoint is an outside vendor specializing in anonymous reporting line services. EthicsPoint provides the live operators, web interfaces, and the database tracking application to effectively manage our Anonymous Reporting Hotline. If you use the Anonymous Reporting Hotline and choose to remain anonymous, there will be no record of your name tracked in any of the media used by EthicsPoint to receive your complaint. The call center does not use caller ID and does not track phone numbers or IP web addresses. As a result, no one from the university, EthicsPoint, or anywhere else will know that you were the person who filed the complaint.

### **6. How does the Anonymous Reporting Hotline work?**

Anonymous reports can be made by phone or through the web. A publicized toll-free telephone number and web address have been established (See below) Individuals who choose to report an issue over the phone will be connected to a live operator at EthicsPoint trained to solicit and log the appropriate information. Individuals who choose to report an issue via the web will follow the same process except that a standardized web-based questionnaire will be completed in place of speaking with a live operator.

Toll free telephone number: 1-800-889-1547

To file a report via the web, one may go to the Internal Audit web site to access the link to the web based reporting mechanism:

[http://www.uc.edu/af/internal\\_audit/default.html](http://www.uc.edu/af/internal_audit/default.html)

Alternatively, one may go directly to the web based reporting mechanism by using the following web address:

<https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/media/en/gui/22314/index.html>

### **7. Where does my report go? Who at the university sees my report?**

All reports are made available to the university's Director of Internal Audit. In addition, reports are communicated to specific university officials based on the nature of the report. Reports are categorized by allegation category (e.g., "Accounting & Financial", "Research", "Personnel Misconduct", "Athletics", etc.) and particular allegation type (e.g., "theft", "conflict of interest", "human or animal research"). Each of these categories and types has a particular university official pre-identified to receive and handle such reports. For example, the athletic compliance director will receive reports about NCAA concerns. The university official handling the report would then share the report or parts of the report with others at the university who would need to see it for investigative purposes.

**Note:** Under the Ohio Public Records Act, the university is subject to disclosing information received through the Anonymous Reporting Hotline. As a result, the university can not provide assurances that all information submitted will be protected. Throughout the course of any investigation, the information submitted will be protected to the fullest extent possible in accordance with Ohio laws. No information received through the Anonymous Reporting Hotline will be disclosed without discussion and consent from Office of General Counsel.

### **8. Why would I identify myself in a report?**

Investigations are sometimes more effective if the investigator knows who the reporter is and is able to converse directly with the reporter to obtain information and clarification throughout the course of an investigation. The Anonymous Reporting Hotline provides a mechanism that enables investigators to post questions or comments to the reporter, but this approach is not as effective as a live conversation.

### **9. Will my identity be protected if I choose to disclose my name?**

Under the Ohio Public Records Act, the university is subject to disclosing information received through the Anonymous Reporting Hotline. As a result, the university can not provide assurances of identity protection to a reporter who chooses to self-identify. Throughout the course of any investigation, the identity of a reporter will be protected to the fullest extent possible in accordance with Ohio laws. No information received through the Anonymous Reporting Hotline will be disclosed without discussion and consent from Office of General Counsel.

### **10. How can I follow up on a report I've made?**

When you file a report, either by calling the toll-free number or by submitting a report online, you will receive a unique report identification key and a password. **You will need to retain these to follow up on a report previously filed.** To follow up on a report made over the phone, call the toll free number again and tell the interviewer that you are following up on a report. You will be asked for your unique report identification key and password. To follow up on a report over the internet, go to the university's reporting Web homepage, which can be reached through the Office of Internal Audit web site ([http://www.uc.edu/af/internal\\_audit/default.html](http://www.uc.edu/af/internal_audit/default.html)), click on the "Follow Up on Report" button, and enter your report identification key and password. This will take you to the report previously filed and a link to "Post a Follow-Up Note" or "Upload a File."

### **11. I have documentation to support my concern. What should I do with it?**

If your documentation is in an electronic format, you may upload it when you submit your report or at any time after that by using the report identification key and password provided to you when the initial report was filed. If the documentation can not be uploaded, you should indicate that in your initial report or by posting a follow-up note to

the report. The university official investigating the matter will post a follow-up comment providing guidance on how to submit the information. If you make a report by telephone, you should indicate to the operator that you have documentation that would help support the claim. The operator will provide guidance on how to submit the information.

**12. If I choose to report anonymously, is there a way for the investigator to obtain additional information or clarification from me that is essential to the investigation?**

You will be provided with a report identification key and password when you complete your report. You can use your report identification key and password via the telephone or web link to periodically check for questions or comments posted by the university official investigating the report. If you choose to do so, you can provide responses that will be posted in the Anonymous Reporting Hotline database for review by the investigator. All of this correspondence will take place within the control of the Anonymous Reporting Hotline, ensuring that your anonymity is protected.

**13. Can I submit additional information after I submit my initial report?**

The Anonymous Reporting Hotline gives you the ability to provide additional information at any time during the investigation. You will need your report identification key and password that you received when you submitted your initial report. You can submit the additional information using the telephone or the web link options. The university official investigating the report will be alerted that you have amended your report and will review any new information.