

ethical decision framework

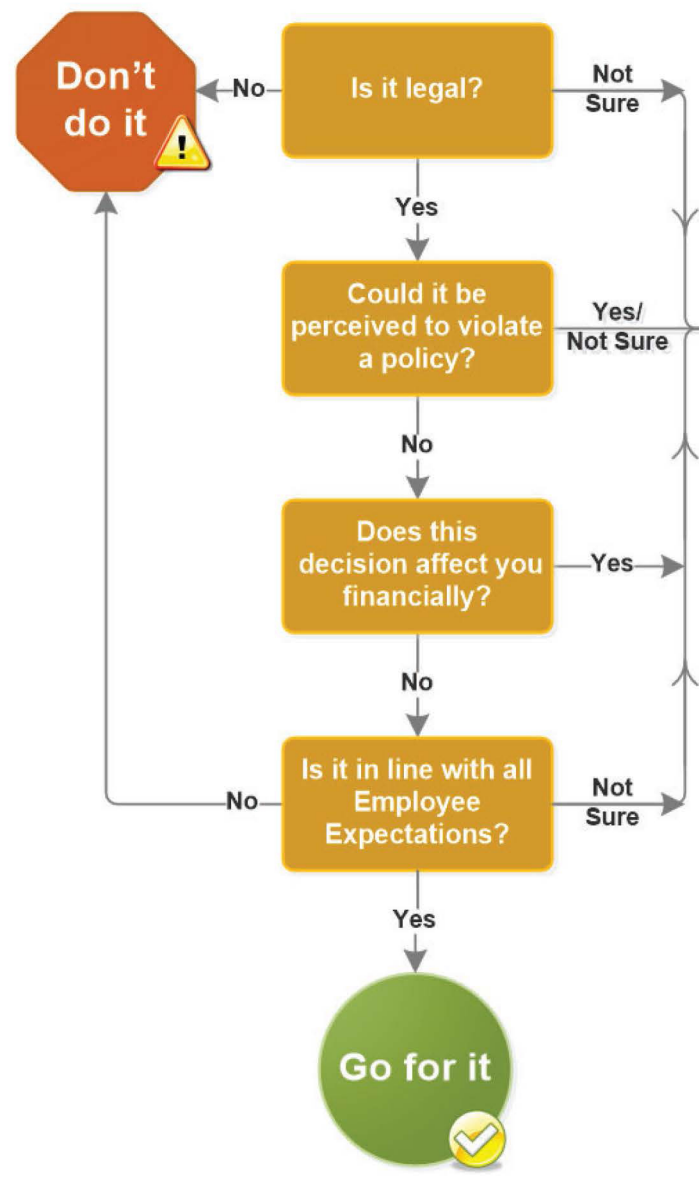
In a Sticky Situation?

If you are asked to do something that violates policy or doesn't feel right, you have options:

- Speak to a supervisor
- Contact a central office
- Notify the Integrity & Compliance Office (compliance.vcu.edu)
- Report your concern through the VCU Helpline (vcuhelpline.com)

Remember...

- ✓ All business decisions are ethical decisions. They are one and the same, and therefore should be evaluated using the same framework.
- ✓ Even though a decision may lead to a positive/beneficial outcome, if you did not follow required procedures or standards to achieve this result, it is not in line with VCU's expectations. In other words, the ends do not justify the means.
- ✓ All employees are encouraged to consult this tool when faced with a difficult decision. However, the ethical considerations outlined in this framework should be applied to all business activities.



There's No Harm in Asking

If you are unsure that a decision or action meets the expectations of the law, policies or governing documents (e.g., Code of Conduct), speak to your supervisor; consult a central office or the Integrity & Compliance Office; or ask a clarifying question through the [VCU Helpline](#).

Ethical Standards: Litmus Test

Answering "no" to one of these questions does not necessarily make the decision unethical, but it indicates that you should seek additional input before taking action.

- Respect:** Have you considered how this decision or action may negatively impact others?
- Honesty:** Does this decision demonstrate personal and professional integrity?
- Excellence:** Is this the best option for the university and its stakeholders? Do you feel confident that you could effectively explain or support your decision?
- Responsibility & Accountability:** Would you feel comfortable if your decision made the front page of the Richmond-Times Dispatch?
- Stewardship:** Is this the best use of university resources?
- Compliance:** Does this decision comply with the spirit of applicable laws, regulations and VCU policies?

