

Developing and Delivering Effective Ethics Education and Communications

1. Who is your audience?

To create effective ethics education and communications, you must begin with your audience. Knowing who you are addressing is critical to establishing appropriate objectives for your ethics education and communications and to ensuring that participants see themselves in them.

Consider who you will be addressing before building your materials and when deciding upon delivery methods. Think through the following questions:

- What work environments/experiences and personal perspectives do your participants bring with them?
- What ethics risks do they face in the work they perform?
- How do they encounter “ethical issues” in their day-to-day lives?
- What are the actual (or likely) demographics of the group?
- What is the actual (or likely) level of education of the group?
- What learning, physical, or other accessibility challenges might members of the group have?

2. How relevant and engaging is your content and delivery?

Ethics education and communications are most effective when they meet people where they are. Your audience should see themselves and their needs reflected in the content and in the delivery.

Questions to consider include:

- Are the topics you choose, the examples you create, and the questions you ask relevant to the work being performed? Do they reflect the experiences of your audience?
- Is your audience reflected in the content (e.g., names, images, examples, professions, language used)?
- Do you and other instructors understand the needs of the audience, and are you all able to effectively and credibly communicate with them?
- Do your delivery methods vary to accommodate different learning styles?
- Are the materials accessible?

- Do you provide materials in advance, especially for those using accessibility tools or those who learn better with an opportunity to pre-read?

When you build your content, build intentionally for accessibility and to engage your audience. Before you deliver your content, identify any individuals who may desire or require accessibility accommodations. This should never be an afterthought.

3. How effective is your program?

An effective ethics education and communications program relies as much on listening and learning as it does on talking and teaching. Seek input before you develop, and feedback after you deliver, ethics education and communications.

Sources of input and feedback could include:

- Needs assessment surveys of supervisors and employees;
- Informal discussions with groups of managers and groups of employees;
- Meetings with a Section 508 compliance coordinator to discuss the accessibility of materials;
- Post-education evaluations that assess content relevance, audience engagement, and accessibility; and
- Discussions with agency leaders and employees to evaluate whether the education and communications they receive support them in managing ethics risks.