Criterion Two—Integrity: Ethical and Responsible Conduct

The institution acts with integrity; its conduct is ethical and responsible.

Core Component 2.E.

The institution ensures that faculty, students, and staff acquire, discover, and apply knowledge responsibly.

Ball State University has gone to great lengths to ensure that knowledge and information are respected and are acquired, applied, and shared with responsibility. This commitment applies to all faculty, staff, and students. The Beneficence Pledge, which is provided to all members of the university community, includes the promise to "practice academic honesty" and to "model and uphold academic integrity, to honor their peers and earn the trust and respect from all members of the community."

Subcomponent 2.E.1.

The institution provides effective oversight and support services to ensure the integrity of research and scholarly practice conducted by its faculty, staff, and students.

Ball State's recently expanded Office of Research Integrity reflects the university's proactive stance to ensure alignment with the highest academic and ethical standards. This office's Responsible Conduct of Research web page, which includes links to the university's Responsible Conduct of Research Plan and the Research Misconduct Policy, states: "Adherence to ethical standards of practice and behavior in institutional activities is expected of all members of the Ball State University community, whether they be faculty, students, or staff members." This office also provides training for students and faculty, including Institutional Review Board Network (IRBN) assistance for those planning research projects involving people and animals. Various IRB forms are available online.

Faculty and staff are also made aware of proper protocols by university administrators. For instance, the orientation program for new employees includes an introduction to the safeguards required to maintain confidentiality. The university's *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* highlights the responsible uses of intellectual property, issues related to copyrights, and the privileges of technology users. For instance, pages 250–268 of the 2012–13 handbook include seven sections (called "parts") related exclusively to intellectual property and related issues.

Subcomponent 2.E.2.

Students are offered guidance in the ethical use of information resources.

All members of the Ball State community gain digital access to university resources and services through Ball State e-mail and password authentication. As students and employees are issued authentic credentials, they review information on privacy and responsibilities related to information technology use at Ball State.

Notices are routinely sent to all campus e-mail users urging them to protect passwords and to be aware of spyware, malware, and similar invasions of Ball State communications. E-mail messages from

"Security@bsu.edu" also remind users to connect to the university system via the "bsusecure" wireless network when accessing academic information, rather than using the less-secure guest status. Any university resources dealing with personal data is behind one or more password-protected walls. Ball State's intellectual archives and databases are also protected from outsiders. Two examples include:

- Digital access to Bracken Library resources involves a password-protected system.
- As faculty and academic advisors log onto the BSU@Work system or the newer Banner student information system, a privacy warning and the policy for viewing grades appears on the initial screen.

Subcomponent 2.E.3.

The institution has and enforces policies on academic honesty and integrity.

Ball State's policies addressing academic honesty and integrity are provided to members of the university community in the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook,* pages 345–354, and the Student Code, which includes the Student Academic Ethics Policy. The student policy states: "Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty by a student will not be tolerated, for it threatens the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity."

Students are informed of the university's academic ethical policies in a variety of ways, including:

- A standard clause appears in course syllabi outlining proper procedures and the impacts of dishonesty.
- American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines are used for many writing assignments and publications.
- Telecommunications majors sign a Student Academic Ethics Policy form at the beginning of each course in their major, as their class projects may be broadcast on campus or to audiences around the world.
- Most academic departments and programs rely on the Office of Sponsored Programs to help students learn about appropriate academic procedures for dealing with human subjects, animals, and areas involving conflicts of interest.

Stated policies in university communications address the enforcement aspects of dealing with knowledge as well. Both students and staff are aware of the ethical implications of their actions, including plagiarism and cheating. Individual instructors monitor classes and programs, while the *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook*, Section J, page 372, specifies that a unit administrator has oversight when dealing with breaches of university policies. Serious matters may be reviewed by a University Senate committee assigned to academic freedom and issues involving ethics.

Core Component Summary

Enforcement of academic integrity and ethical procedures is still evolving at Ball State. To date, most attention has been focused on possible violations by students. The *Faculty and Professional Personnel Handbook* fails to highlight many potential Code of Conduct and performance issues among faculty and staff members. It should be noted that the 2011 expansion of the Office of Research Integrity has resulted in dedicated attention for faculty in individual departments and programs. In addition to the sharing of information, this office also monitors the use of materials and other resources.