



Fraud and Corruption Control Strategy Statement

The Department of Education (the department) has a responsibility to ensure public resources are used appropriately to achieve its purpose to contribute to Australia's economic prosperity and social wellbeing. The department is committed to preventing, detecting, and effectively responding to fraud and corruption. To achieve this, the department relies on the collective effort of all staff, contractors, external service providers and the community.

What is fraud?

Fraud is defined as 'dishonestly obtaining a benefit, or causing a loss, by deception or other means'¹. Fraud is intentional and involves an intent to obtain a benefit which can either be tangible or intangible either for oneself or on behalf of a third party. It is not the result of carelessness, an accident, or an error. There are two types of fraud; internal and external fraud. Internal fraud is committed by officials (i.e. employees) or contractors whereas with external fraud, the fraud originates from outside the organisation and is committed by external parties such as clients, service providers, members of the public and organised criminal groups.

What is corruption?

There are four types of corrupt conduct under the *National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) Act 2022*.

A person engages in corrupt conduct if:

1. they are a public official and they [breach public trust](#)
2. they are a public official and they [abuse their office](#) as a public official
3. they are a public official or former public official and they [misuse information](#) they have gained in their capacity as a public official
4. they do something that [adversely affects a public official's](#) honest or impartial exercise of powers or performance of official duties. (Any person can engage in this type of corrupt conduct, even if they are not a public official themselves.)

¹ [Commonwealth Fraud Control Framework 2024](#)

The NACC investigation into Robodebt, Operation Myrtleford has also broadened the interpretation of corruption to encompass corrupt conduct which includes:

- any conduct of any person (whether or not a public official) that adversely affects, or that could adversely affect, either directly or indirectly:
 - i. the honest or impartial exercise of any public official's powers as a public official; or
 - ii. the honest or impartial performance of any public official's functions or duties as a public official
- any conduct of a public official that constitutes or involves a breach of public trust;
- any conduct of a public official that constitutes, involves or is engaged in for the purpose of abuse of the person's office as a public official;
- any conduct of a public official, or former public official, that constitutes or involves the misuse of information or documents acquired in the person's capacity as a public official.

Corruption undermines trust in the education system and the integrity of the programs we deliver. Preventing and addressing corruption is essential to maintaining fairness, transparency, and confidence in our work.

What are the consequences of fraud and corruption?

When acts of fraud or corruption are committed, the consequences can be far-reaching and severe on both an employee and organisational level. Individuals who commit fraud or engage in corrupt activities, can face consequences ranging from imprisonment, pecuniary penalties, civil or administrative sanctions, and employment sanctions ranging from reduction in classification to termination of employment.

At an organisational level, fraud and corruption matters can adversely impact the department's reputation and damage public and Parliamentary trust and confidence in the department and the APS at large.

What are your responsibilities?

Departmental Officials

All departmental officials have an ongoing responsibility to prevent, detect, and effectively respond to fraud and corruption as part of their day-to-day duties. All staff must report suspected fraudulent and corruption related activities to the Integrity and Fraud Team at fraud@education.gov.au as soon as practicable.

Contractors and Consultants

Most individuals working for a Commonwealth agency are considered staff members of that agency for the purposes of the NACC's jurisdiction. Only very limited exceptions apply. Contractors and consultants engaged by the department must complete a *Conflict-of-Interest Responsibilities Form* prior to undertaking their services for the department. This form acknowledges their requirement to comply with the department's *Fraud and Corruption Control Policy* and *Conflict of Interest Policy*. There may be instances where it is necessary for a contractor or consultant to undertake fraud and corruption awareness training. (e.g. if the contractor/consultant will have access to sensitive or personal data or have financial delegations).

External service providers and third-party providers are required to adhere to all contractual and/or legal obligations, program guidelines or conditions of funding that govern their relationship with the department. Failure to comply with these obligations may constitute fraud.

How do you report suspected fraud and corruption?

Suspected fraud and corruption can be reported to the department's Integrity and Fraud Team by:

- Emailing fraud@education.gov.au (templates for referrals are available on [the Fraud Resources Page intranet page](#)).
- Calling the Fraud Hotline (02) 6121 5450,
- Submitting an anonymous report through the [Whispli](#) anonymous reporting tool, or
- Writing to the Integrity and Fraud Team at PO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601.

The department also provides a Child Care Tip-off Line and email that can be used by parents, guardians, providers, their employees or the public to raise concerns about practices relating to the management of child-care subsidies.

A matter can be reported by:

- Calling 1800 664 231 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm (AEDT))
- Emailing tipoffline@education.gov.au

Providing as much information as possible in your report/referral will assist the department in assessing and investigating matters efficiently. If possible, please include the following information in your report:

- Who is involved? Include the name/s of the person/s or organisation/s, address/es and phone number/s, and any other contact details you may know.
- What fraud or corruption activity do you think or suspect has occurred? Include details regarding the activity such as how, when, and where it possibly occurred.
- How you came to be aware of the activity?

If you have supporting documentation, it would be beneficial to include this in your referral. You should not, however, conduct your own investigation or access departmental systems for the purposes of collating evidence as this may constitute unauthorised access.

Furthermore, you do not need to provide your contact details, but providing this information will allow the department to contact you if additional information is required to assist with the investigation.

What happens if you report suspected fraud or corruption?

The department will assess each allegation of suspected fraud or corruption to determine if the matter should be formally investigated. Not all allegations will progress to an investigation, but where allegations are substantiated, it may result in a range of outcomes and sanctions. This includes recovering overpaid funds, cancelling a service provider's registration, taking other action for breach of contract, and or pursuing criminal prosecution.

Safeguards for individuals reporting suspected fraud or corruption

Reports of suspected fraud and corruption – and any subsequent investigations – are handled confidentially.

If the information provided relates to disclosable conduct, rights and responsibilities under the *Public Interest Disclosure (PID) Act 2013* may be enlivened. The department has Authorised PID Officers trained to accept reports made under the PID Act and specifically authorised by the Secretary to handle requests of this nature. Additional information can be found on the [Commonwealth Ombudsman](#) website.

Privacy Notice

Your personal information is protected by law, under the [Privacy Act 1988](#), and is collected by the department for the purposes of investigating allegations of suspected fraud and corruption. We may disclose the information you provide to other areas within the department and other Commonwealth, state, or territory bodies (including law enforcement bodies) for appropriate assessment and or action. Your information may also be used by the department or given to other parties if it is required or authorised by law.

For more information about how the department manages personal information (including information on accessing or correcting information) and how to make a complaint, please view our full [Privacy Policy](#). You can also request a copy from the department by sending an email to privacy@education.gov.au.