

Framework for Ethical Business Decision-Making

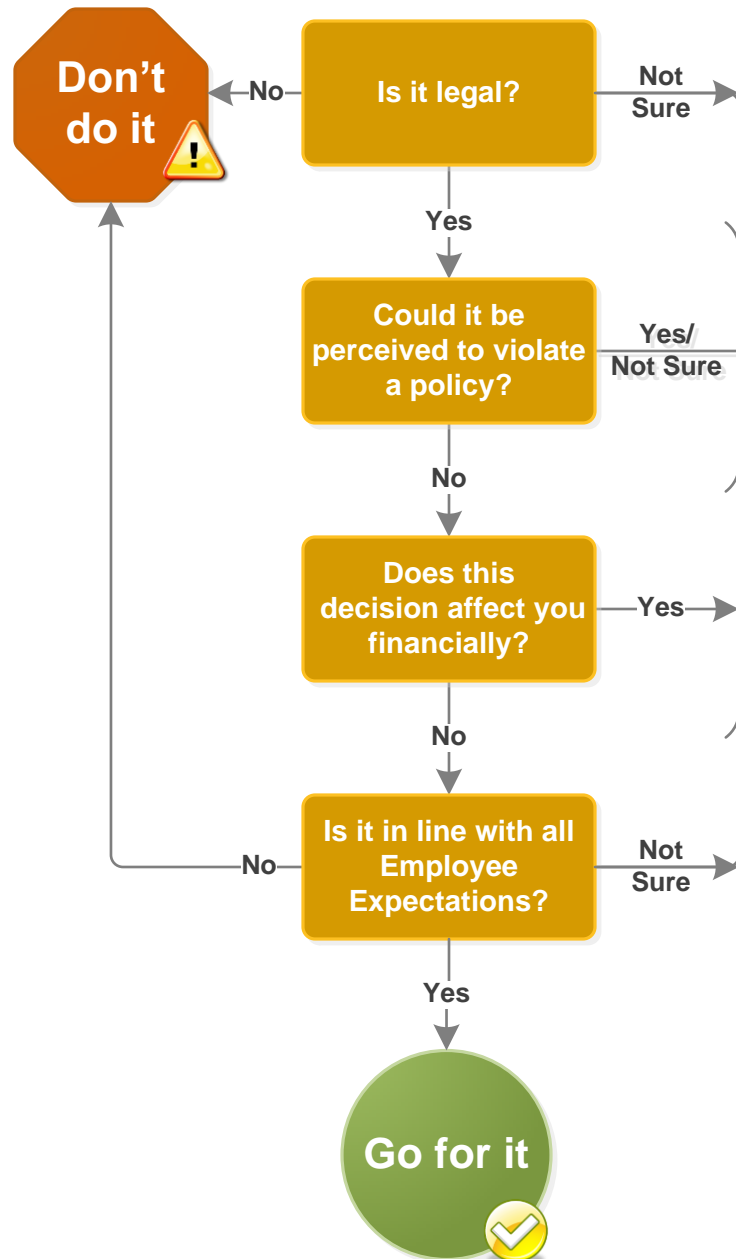
In a Sticky Situation?

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 in 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?

