



Ethical and Effective Policy Development for Implementing Random Drug Testing Within Higher Education Institutional Frameworks

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Abstract

Drug use among youth remains a pressing concern throughout the Philippines, carrying significant implications for student welfare and campus safety. Consequently, the City College of Calamba (CCC) is considering implementing random drug testing to comply with Republic Act No. 9165, the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. However, the ethical and practical challenges of such programs necessitate careful development to balance safety with respect for privacy, dignity, and trust. This study was designed to investigate stakeholder perceptions, concerns, and recommendations regarding the ethical implementation of random drug testing. A qualitative case study design was employed, using open-ended surveys distributed to 42 CCC stakeholders, including students, faculty, and staff, purposively selected for their roles and institutional involvement. Thematic analysis successfully identified several key patterns, with themes validated through reliability checks. Stakeholders recognized potential benefits, such as enhanced safety and deterrence, yet prominent concerns regarding privacy, confidentiality, emotional impact, and fairness emerged. Participants stressed the importance of ethical safeguards, transparency, and a rehabilitative rather than punitive approach. The proposed policy framework prioritizes informed consent, impartial selection, strict confidentiality, and support services. By focusing on information-rich participants, this study contributes to a vital stakeholder-informed policy framework for higher education. It addresses gaps in ethical implementation and aligns with national laws, offering practical insights for institutions seeking to balance safety with student rights. Ultimately, this research fosters trust and cooperation within the academic community, ensuring institutional values and legal mandates are carefully integrated to promote a secure, supportive, and drug-free environment.

Keywords: *Random Drug Testing, Ethical Implementation, Stakeholder Perspectives, Higher Education, Policy Framework*

INTRODUCTION

Drug use among the youth continues to be a national concern, with serious implications for student welfare, academic performance, and campus safety. In the Philippines, the government has implemented various preventive measures to address this problem, including the integration of random drug testing in schools and universities as mandated under Republic Act No. 9165, or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002. Recognizing its responsibility to uphold a drug-free learning environment, the City College of Calamba (CCC) is considering adopting random drug testing as a preventive and deterrent measure.

Although the primary aim of such measures is to promote student health and safety, their implementation must carefully consider the perceptions, concerns, and expectations of all stakeholders. In Europe ([Philippines: Mandatory College Drug Tests Imperil Students, 2022](#)), random drug testing in schools remains uncommon and is frequently regarded as a violation of students' privacy. While sporadic testing has been reported in countries such as Belgium, Hungary, Ireland, and the United Kingdom, these practices are neither widespread nor systematically applied ([DuPont et al., 2012](#)).

Recent studies in the Philippine context highlight that while drug testing is legally mandated,

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its practical application often faces challenges related to stigmatization and the potential for unintended harm if not implemented with a supportive framework (Lasco, 2023). Similar dilemmas are observed internationally; for instance, research on student drug testing in other developing nations emphasizes that the success of such programs depends heavily on process transparency and the availability of rehabilitation services, rather than solely on punitive measures (Alshehri et al., 2025).

Understanding how students, faculty, parents, and administrators view random drug testing is essential to ensure that any policy developed is fair, acceptable, and compliant with legal and ethical standards. Without this understanding, there is a risk of resistance, misunderstanding, or procedural missteps that could undermine the program's effectiveness. Implementing random drug testing in higher education institutions poses complex challenges that go beyond mere regulatory compliance. It raises sensitive issues related to privacy rights, informed consent, confidentiality, and protection from discrimination. Therefore, any policy must integrate ethical safeguards and evidence-based strategies to foster trust, transparency, and cooperation within the academic community.

Despite existing policies and legal mandates on random drug testing in educational institutions, limited studies have examined how higher education institutions can implement these measures ethically while balancing student welfare, privacy, confidentiality, and institutional safety. Most previous studies focused on legal compliance, prevalence of substance abuse, or effectiveness of drug testing programs, with limited emphasis on stakeholder-informed policy development in Philippine higher education settings.

Furthermore, there remains a lack of qualitative investigations exploring how students, faculty, and institutional personnel perceive the ethical implications of random drug testing and how these perspectives can inform policy formulation. Hence, this study addresses this gap by developing a stakeholder-informed framework for the ethical and effective implementation of random drug testing within a higher education institutional context.

Guided by these considerations, this study seeks to explore the following questions:

1. How do CCC stakeholders perceive the idea of implementing random drug testing among students?
2. What concerns, expectations, and suggestions do stakeholders express regarding the design and conduct of such a program?
3. How do stakeholders believe random drug testing can be implemented in a manner that is ethical, fair, and aligned with the college's mission?
4. What insights can stakeholders provide to inform the development of a policy for the implementation of random drug testing in CCC?

Through examining relevant legal mandates, ethical principles, and stakeholder perspectives, this research aims to develop a policy framework for the ethical and effective implementation of random drug testing at CCC—one that promotes a safe, drug-free campus while safeguarding the rights and dignity of all participants in the academic community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section reviews the literature on the legal, ethical, and institutional considerations involved in implementing random drug testing in higher education.

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 (RA 9165) serves as the primary legal framework for drug control and testing in the Philippines. It mandates both initial screening and confirmatory testing to ensure accurate and fair detection of drug use. Although the country has

numerous screening laboratories, only a limited number possess advanced technologies for confirmatory testing, revealing gaps in testing capacity.

Recent analytical advancements, including Liquid Chromatography-Tandem Mass Spectrometry (LC-MS/MS) and Liquid Chromatography-Quadrupole Time-of-Flight Mass Spectrometry (LC-QTOF/MS), provide greater sensitivity and improved detection of emerging psychoactive substances, highlighting the need for Philippine drug testing policies to align with global technological developments (Dioquino & Gerona, 2022). For the City College of Calamba (CCC), integrating updated testing methodologies and scientifically validated procedures is essential to ensure reliable results, minimize false positives, and establish a fair and transparent drug testing program.

Complementing this framework, [DepEd Order No. 40, s. 2017](#) promotes confidentiality, rehabilitation, and non-punitive approaches in random drug testing. Its principles, including unbiased student selection and strict chain-of-custody procedures, provide useful guidance for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). However, adaptation in HEIs requires recognition of student autonomy through direct consent procedures and student-centered support systems.

Similarly, [CHED Memorandum Order \(CMO\) No. 18, s. 2018](#) establishes guidelines for random drug testing in HEIs, emphasizing prevention, confidentiality, rehabilitation, compliance with the Data Privacy Act, and the use of DOH-accredited facilities. The policy also encourages stakeholder consultation and prohibits punitive action based solely on test results. Despite these safeguards, challenges remain in balancing institutional authority with student rights and ensuring consistent implementation across institutions.

Together, these policies provide a strong legal and ethical foundation for developing a scientifically sound, rights-based, and student-centered drug testing program in higher education institutions. Aligning institutional policies with these frameworks is essential in promoting campus safety while safeguarding student welfare, privacy, and dignity.

Policy Development in Higher Education

Drug use among college students poses significant risks to student well-being, institutional effectiveness, and community safety. However, many interventions fail to address the complex interaction between students' developmental experiences and contextual factors influencing substance use. The MyUse intervention, grounded in system dynamics and Contextual-Behavioral Science (CBS), emphasizes the importance of personalized, compassionate, and context-sensitive harm reduction strategies.

The study highlights the value of mindful decision-making, value-driven activities, individualized support, and credible real-time messaging tailored to students with varying drug use experiences (Vasilidou et al., 2024). These findings suggest that random drug testing policies should be integrated within broader student-centered interventions that prioritize education, empathy, and harm reduction rather than purely punitive enforcement.

In contrast, drug testing policies implemented in Philippine schools, particularly during the Duterte administration's war on drugs, were often characterized by punitive and surveillance-oriented approaches. Such policies frequently resulted in stigmatization, discrimination, student alienation, and increased institutional burdens, ultimately limiting their effectiveness despite strong political support (Lasco, 2023). These approaches also reflected broader societal attitudes that prioritized control and punishment over care and rehabilitation.

Given these concerns, the present study seeks to develop a more ethical, balanced, and stakeholder-informed approach to random drug testing at the City College of Calamba. By examining the perspectives and concerns of the academic community, the study aims to formulate a policy framework that promotes campus safety while safeguarding student dignity, privacy, and

trust. This approach positions drug testing as a preventive and supportive intervention that fosters transparency, cooperation, and student welfare rather than fear, exclusion, or punishment.

Ethical Principles and Global Best Practices

Workplace drug testing remains a widely used yet controversial practice intended to promote health and safety, particularly in high-risk industries such as construction, mining, and transportation. While alcohol testing can identify current impairment, drug testing often detects substances long after their effects have subsided, raising concerns regarding its accuracy in determining an individual's fitness for work. Evidence regarding the effectiveness of workplace drug testing in reducing substance use and improving safety outcomes remains limited and inconsistent.

Consequently, experts argue that drug testing should form part of a broader health and wellness strategy that also addresses factors such as stress, fatigue, and mental health (Bartle & Lee, 2023). Effective policies therefore integrate education, clear communication, early intervention, supervisor training, and support programs to foster well-being and productivity. These insights suggest that random drug testing policies in higher education institutions, including the City College of Calamba (CCC), should be ethically grounded, transparent, and integrated within broader student welfare initiatives.

The legal and ethical dimensions of workplace drug testing further highlight considerations relevant to academic institutions. Similar to employers balancing organizational safety with employee rights, higher education institutions must ensure that drug testing programs uphold student privacy, informed consent, confidentiality, and fairness. Ethical implementation requires transparent communication, consistent procedures, and sensitive handling of test results to strengthen trust and cooperation within the academic community. Moreover, adopting respectful, minimally invasive testing procedures may help reduce stigma and resistance while promoting a supportive, rather than punitive, environment (Doherty, 2025).

These concerns are similarly reflected in debates surrounding Mandatory Student Drug Testing (MSDT) in professional health education programs, including dental schools. While proponents argue that MSDT promotes public safety and professional accountability, critics question its deterrent effectiveness and raise concerns regarding civil liberties, privacy, and false positives (Gibson et al., 2019). Such tensions highlight the importance of developing balanced and evidence-based policies that protect student rights while addressing institutional safety concerns. Guided by these perspectives, the present study seeks to develop an ethical and stakeholder-informed framework for random drug testing at the City College of Calamba that promotes fairness, transparency, student welfare, and a supportive learning environment.

Impact and Effectiveness

The drug testing policy implemented in Philippine schools has been criticized for producing unintended harms that extend beyond its intended goal of promoting a drug-free environment. According to Lasco (2019), mandatory drug testing may contribute to student stigmatization, exposure to drug watch lists despite confidentiality policies, and the risk of false positives that could unfairly penalize innocent individuals. Such practices may create fear and alienation among students, potentially leading to absenteeism and school dropout, thereby undermining educational access and student welfare.

The policy also imposes financial and administrative burdens on educational institutions, diverting resources from potentially more effective interventions. Moreover, the approach tends to frame drug use in moralistic terms while overlooking the complex social, psychological, and contextual factors influencing substance use among youth. Consequently, more holistic strategies,

including counseling, preventive education, and support services, have been recommended as more humane and effective alternatives.

Similar concerns are reflected in broader studies on employer-led substance use interventions. A systematic review by [Akanbi et al. \(2020\)](#) found inconsistent evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions such as drug testing, employee education, and assistance programs, with no single approach consistently demonstrating strong outcomes.

Likewise, a [Cochrane \(2025\)](#) review reported inconclusive evidence on whether random drug and alcohol testing effectively prevents workplace injuries or improves safety, despite indications of potential deterrent effects from increased detection rates. These findings highlight the continuing debate regarding the actual effectiveness of random drug testing beyond detection and enforcement.

Taken together, these studies suggest that random drug testing should not function as a standalone intervention but rather as part of a broader campus safety and wellness framework. Integrating testing with counseling services, preventive education, mental health support, and continuous policy evaluation may help ensure that institutional policies remain ethical, evidence-based, and responsive to students' welfare and rights.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to investigate stakeholder perspectives regarding the ethical and effective implementation of random drug testing at the City College of Calamba (CCC). A qualitative approach was deemed appropriate because the study sought to explore participants' perceptions, experiences, concerns, and recommendations within the institution's real-life context.

According to [Creswell and Poth \(2018\)](#), qualitative case studies are particularly useful in examining complex social issues that require an in-depth understanding of human experiences and contextual factors. Through this design, the researchers captured diverse viewpoints on the balance among institutional safety, legal compliance, and the protection of individual rights.

The case study approach enabled the researchers to examine how various stakeholders—including students, faculty members, and administrative staff—perceive the implementation of random drug testing and its implications for student welfare, privacy, and institutional trust. By focusing on the specific context of CCC, the study generated context-sensitive insights that may guide the development of an ethically grounded and stakeholder-informed policy framework.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study consisted of forty-two (42) stakeholders from the City College of Calamba, including students, faculty members, and administrative personnel. The researchers employed purposive sampling, specifically an eligibility-based approach, to ensure that participants possessed adequate institutional knowledge and direct involvement in the academic environment where the proposed policy may be implemented.

To qualify for participation, individuals must currently be enrolled as students, serve as active faculty members, or work as administrative staff at the institution. Additionally, participants were required to have completed at least one academic semester at the institution to ensure familiarity with the institutional culture and policies. Participation was voluntary, and only those who willingly signed the informed consent form were included in the study.

The use of purposive sampling was appropriate because the study prioritized information-rich participants who could provide meaningful insights regarding the ethical, legal, and institutional dimensions of random drug testing. Rather than seeking statistical generalization, the

study focused on obtaining in-depth qualitative perspectives from stakeholders directly affected by the proposed policy implementation.

Data Collection Process

Data collection was conducted over four months in 2025 using open-ended survey questionnaires administered through Google Forms. The use of digital surveys allowed participants to express their views anonymously, thereby encouraging honest and reflective responses regarding a sensitive topic. Follow-up qualitative inquiries were also conducted to clarify emerging themes and deepen the analysis of stakeholder perspectives.

Participants in the follow-up inquiry sessions typically engaged in discussions lasting between thirty (30) and forty-five (45) minutes. These sessions enabled the researchers to probe responses further, clarify ambiguities, and achieve thematic saturation. All responses were kept confidential, and participants were told their identities would not be disclosed in the study.

Validation of the Instrument

To ensure the validity and appropriateness of the research instrument, the open-ended questionnaire underwent face and content validation by a panel of experts consisting of a registered guidance counselor, a legal practitioner, and a qualitative research specialist. Their recommendations focused on ensuring that the questions aligned with Republic Act No. 9165, ethical research standards, and the study's objectives.

A pilot test was also conducted among five (5) non-participating students to determine the clarity, comprehensibility, and neutrality of the questions. Feedback gathered during the pilot testing phase was used to refine the wording and structure of the questionnaire items to minimize ambiguity and potential response bias.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

To establish the rigor and trustworthiness of the findings, the study adopted [Lincoln and Guba's \(1985\)](#) framework for qualitative research. Credibility was achieved through member checking, in which selected participants reviewed the preliminary themes to verify that the interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives.

Transferability was supported through a thick description of the institutional context, participant characteristics, and research procedures, allowing readers to assess the applicability of the findings to similar educational settings. Dependability was ensured by maintaining an audit trail that documented all stages of data analysis and theme development. Furthermore, confirmability was established through reflexivity, in which the researchers acknowledged potential biases and ensured that interpretations remained grounded in participants' responses.

Data Treatment and Analysis

All qualitative data gathered from the participants were analyzed using [Braun and Clarke's \(2006\)](#) six-phase thematic analysis framework. The process involved familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report.

Thematic analysis enabled the researchers to systematically identify recurring patterns, stakeholder concerns, expectations, and recommendations related to the ethical implementation of random drug testing. Microsoft Excel was utilized to organize, code, and categorize responses to facilitate accurate theme generation and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations

Prior to the study, ethical clearance was obtained from the Institutional Review Board/Ethics

Review Committee of the City College of Calamba. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, the voluntary nature of their participation, the confidentiality of their responses, and their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.

To protect the privacy and dignity of the participants, all data were anonymized and stored securely. Only the researchers had access to the collected information, and all responses were used solely for academic and research purposes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Stakeholder Perceptions of Random Drug Testing Implementation at CCC

Table 1 highlights stakeholders' mixed perspectives on the implementation of random drug testing at CCC. Many participants viewed it positively, emphasizing its potential to promote safety, discipline, accountability, academic focus, and a drug-free institutional image. Stakeholders believed the program could help deter drug use and strengthen CCC's reputation within the community.

Despite these perceived benefits, participants also expressed significant concerns regarding privacy, trust, stigma, stress, and the possibility of unfair treatment. Practical issues such as financial and resource limitations were likewise identified. Importantly, many stakeholders stressed that drug testing should adopt a rehabilitative rather than punitive approach by integrating counseling and support services for students with positive results.

These findings suggest that any random drug testing policy at CCC should balance safety objectives with ethical safeguards. Policies must ensure informed consent, confidentiality, fairness, transparent communication, and accessible mental health and counseling services. Proper resource allocation and grievance mechanisms are also necessary to sustain stakeholder trust and institutional accountability.

The findings align with the guidelines of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, which emphasize rehabilitation, fairness, informed consent, and confidentiality in drug testing practices. ASAM cautions against stigma, misuse of results, and purely punitive measures, recommending that positive findings be linked to treatment and support rather than exclusion ([American Society of Addiction Medicine \[ASAM\], 2019](#)). Together, these insights underscore the need for an evidence-based, rights-respecting, and support-oriented drug testing policy at CCC.

Table 1. Stakeholder Perceptions of Random Drug Testing Implementation at CCC

Codes/ Categories	Verbatim Responses	No. It Occurs	No. of Participants who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Safety and discipline	"It can create a safer and more disciplined environment, encourage positive behavior, and discourage drug use." / "For safety measures." / "To ensure the safety inside the campus." / "Helps maintain a	48	37	Safety as a Priority	Stakeholders see random drug testing as a proactive step to keep the campus safe and orderly, reducing the risks posed by drug-related behavior.

	positive and secure school environment." / "Everyone will be safe, not only the students but also the employees working in the facility."				
Deterrence of drug use	"Random drug testing could discourage our students from using drugs due to fear of having consequences." / "Might make students think twice before trying drugs." / "Scaring students away from drugs." / "Promotes accountability and deters drug use." / "It can prevent curiosity of trying dangerous drugs."	44	35	Drug Use Prevention	Viewed as an effective deterrent to drug experimentation or continued use, encouraging students to focus on academics and avoid risky behavior.
Accountability and responsibility	"Promotes discipline, responsibility, and accountability." / "Stakeholders believe it could lead students to be on the right path." / "Helps encourage responsibility among students." / "It can prove students are well-behaved."	32	27	Promoting Accountability	Seen as fostering self-discipline and moral responsibility, aligning student conduct with institutional values.
Positive institutional image	"Contributes to the image of the institution." / "It will prove CCC students are well-mannered and deserving city scholars." / "Protects the	15	12	Institutional Reputation	Implementation is linked to reinforcing CCC's public image as a drug-free, values-driven academic institution.

	school's name."				
Privacy concerns	"It might invade privacy, give wrong results, and create mistrust." / "May feel unfair to some." / "Could violate an individual's privacy." / "False positives can damage a student's reputation." / "It is expensive, has privacy issues, and can cause stress for some."	39	30	Privacy and Trust Issues	Concerns about confidentiality breaches, stigmatization, and the erosion of trust between students and the institution.
Emotional and psychological impact	"It could cause stress, fear, and a feeling of not being trusted." / "Might create stigma or embarrassment." / "Could lead to overthinking." / "Can cause anxiety and reduced comfort in school."	35	28	Emotional Well-being	Recognizes the potential psychological effects, including anxiety, fear, and a negative shift in how students feel about their school environment.
Cost and resource concerns	"It can also cost money and may feel unfair to some." / "The program should be free for students." / "It is expensive and has logistical concerns."	12	10	Financial and Logistical Challenges	Practical considerations such as funding, fairness in cost distribution, and program sustainability.
Need for fairness and ethics	"It should be implemented in a fair, ethical, and respectful way." / "Must safeguard dignity and rights." / "Should comply with laws and ethical standards."	18	14	Ethical Implementation	Emphasis on transparency, respect for individual rights, and ethical safeguards in policy execution.
Support and rehabilitation	"It can help find people who need support." / "Allows early intervention and rehabilitation."	14	11	Early Intervention	Focuses on identifying students at risk and providing help, treatment,

/ "Helps those who need treatment rather than punishment."	or counseling instead of purely punitive measures.
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Stakeholder Concerns, Expectations, and Suggestions for Program Design and Implementation

Table 2 reveals that CCC stakeholders strongly emphasize ethical safeguards, fairness, and transparency in the implementation of random drug testing. The protection of sensitive information emerged as the primary concern, with participants stressing strict confidentiality to prevent privacy violations, stigma, and misuse of test results. Stakeholders also highlighted the importance of informed consent, emphasizing the need for explicit written permission from students and, when necessary, their parents. Fairness and non-discrimination were likewise identified as essential to ensure equitable treatment of all participants.

In addition to ethical concerns, stakeholders underscored practical considerations such as clear communication, adequate resources, feasibility, and test reliability. Transparent guidelines and open communication were viewed as necessary for building trust, while reliable testing procedures were considered important to minimize false positives, discrimination, reputational harm, and emotional distress. These findings indicate that successful implementation requires not only technical efficiency but also strong ethical and psychosocial safeguards.

The findings align with the study by [Falzon et al. \(2024\)](#), which emphasized that the effectiveness of Drug Checking Services (DCS) depends on ethical safeguards, operational transparency, stakeholder trust, and the use of accessible, trusted systems. Consistent with CCC stakeholders' perspectives, the study highlighted the importance of confidentiality, open communication, fairness, and efficient use of available resources. Both studies suggest that the success of drug-related policies relies not only on operational effectiveness but also on ethical integrity and stakeholder confidence.

Table 2. Stakeholder Concerns, Expectations, and Suggestions for Program Design and Implementation

Codes/ Categories	Verbatim Responses	No. It Occurs	No. of participants Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Privacy and Confidentiality Concerns	"Possible privacy violations... misuse of results." / "There might be wrong results... lack of coordination" / "Strict confidentiality protocols" / "Keep results private and limit access to authorized personnel."	34	29	Protection of Sensitive Information	Stakeholders are highly concerned about the risk of privacy breaches, stigmatization, and misuse of test results, stressing the importance of secure handling, limited access, and strict

					confidentiality policies.
Consent and Ethical Safeguards	“Obtaining written consent” / “They want the consent form to be clear” / “Parental consent before testing” / “Informed consent from both students and parents.”	28	25	Informed Consent as a Prerequisite	Participants emphasize the necessity of obtaining explicit, informed consent prior to testing to ensure ethical compliance, respect rights, and avoid legal disputes.
Fairness and Equal Treatment	“Equal treatment for all students” / “No favoritism or discrimination” / “Equal treatment”	26	23	Equity in Program Implementation	Stakeholders expect unbiased application of testing policies, ensuring fairness, non-discrimination, and equal opportunity for all participants.
Transparency and Communication	“Clear guidelines and honest updates” / “Explain the process clearly to students and parents” / “Transparent protocols.”	24	21	Clarity and Openness	Calls for detailed, understandable information about testing procedures, results handling, and consequences to foster trust and cooperation.
Logistical and Financial Concerns	“High costs” / “Possible delays in schedule” / “Logistical challenges”	14	12	Feasibility and Resource Management	Concerns about funding, scheduling, and resource allocation could hinder the smooth implementation of the program.
Risk of Discrimination and	“Risk of discrimination” / “Student	19	16	Social and Emotional Impact	Stakeholders warn that students who

Stigmatization	stigmatization” / “Impact on reputation”				test positive may face social exclusion, reputational damage, and mistrust between students and school authorities.
False Positives and Test Accuracy	“False positive results” / “Inaccurate outcomes” / “Possible wrong test results”	17	15	Reliability of Test Results	Worries about inaccurate results leading to wrongful accusations, emotional harm, and legal or ethical repercussions.

Stakeholder Perspectives on Ethical, Fair, and Mission-Aligned Implementation

Table 3 indicates that CCC stakeholders strongly associate the ethical implementation of random drug testing with the protection of individual rights, transparency, and student welfare. Privacy and dignity emerged as major concerns, with participants emphasizing confidentiality, respectful treatment, and the safeguarding of sensitive information. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of equality and non-discrimination, insisting that the selection process must be genuinely random and uniformly applied to avoid bias or targeting. Informed consent was repeatedly highlighted as an essential legal and ethical requirement, alongside the need for clear procedures, open communication, and accountability to strengthen trust in the program.

Participants further favored supportive over punitive interventions, emphasizing counseling, rehabilitation, and educational approaches that align with CCC’s mission to foster a safe and nurturing environment. Concerns regarding test accuracy and reliability were also evident, particularly the need to prevent false positives that could result in reputational damage or emotional distress. These findings suggest that stakeholder acceptance of random drug testing depends not only on its preventive purpose but also on the ethical and humane manner of its implementation.

The findings are consistent with [Jordan \(2019\)](#), who reported strong support for Mandatory Random Student Drug Testing (MRSDT) among students, parents, and school personnel in a rural Southeast Georgia school district. While the Georgia study highlighted support for drug testing as a preventive strategy, CCC stakeholders placed stronger emphasis on the ethical conditions necessary for its acceptance, including privacy protection, fairness, informed consent, transparency, and rehabilitative support. Both studies demonstrate that stakeholder support for drug testing programs depends not only on their perceived effectiveness but also on trust, fairness, and alignment with student welfare and institutional values.

Table 3. Stakeholder Perspectives on Ethical, Fair, and Mission-Aligned Implementation of Random Drug Testing

Codes/ Categories	Verbatim Responses	No. It Occurs	No. of participants Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Respect for privacy and dignity	“Ethical means protecting privacy, ensuring confidentiality, and treating students with dignity.” / “Respect privacy and dignity and apply equality to everyone.”	42	38	Protection of Rights and Privacy	Stakeholders consistently emphasize that ethical implementation requires safeguarding personal information, maintaining confidentiality, and treating all students respectfully.
Equal treatment and unbiased selection	“Fair means applying the process equally to all students without discrimination or bias.” / “If it is random, make sure it is truly random.”	35	33	Equality and Non-discrimination	Fairness is defined as unbiased selection, equal treatment of all students, and the avoidance of favoritism or targeting specific groups.
Informed consent	“Having consent for all participants before testing.” / “Parental consent is needed.”	18	16	Informed Consent	The necessity of obtaining informed consent—either from students or their parents—is viewed as a core ethical safeguard.
Transparency and clear procedures	“Policy should be guided by transparency, fairness, and respect for individual rights.” / “Clear communication of procedures and consequences.”	27	24	Transparency and Accountability	Stakeholders stress open communication, clear guidelines, and accountability to ensure trust in the program.
Supportive,	“Offer counseling,	39	36	Support over	Most

not punitive approach	rehabilitation, and educational interventions instead of punishment." / "Focus on recovery and reintegration."			Punishment	participants believe the program should prioritize guidance, counseling, and rehabilitation to help students make better choices rather than imposing solely disciplinary measures.
Alignment with student welfare and mission	"Policy should align with student well-being and college values." / "The goal is to help, not shame or isolate students."	21	19	Student Welfare Orientation	Implementation should be consistent with CCC's mission, promoting student growth and safety rather than fear or stigma.
Accuracy and reliability of testing	"Ensure accuracy of test results to avoid false positives."	7	7	Test Accuracy and Integrity	Ethical practice requires the use of reliable testing methods to protect students from wrongful accusations.

Policy Insights Derived from Stakeholder Perspectives

Table 4 reveals a strong consensus among CCC stakeholders that the ethical implementation of random drug testing must prioritize student rights, fairness, and welfare. Privacy and confidentiality emerged as key concerns, with participants emphasizing the need to protect test results to prevent stigma and maintain trust within the academic community. Stakeholders also stressed fairness and equality, emphasizing that the process should be impartial, non-discriminatory, and applied uniformly to all students.

Participants further advocated for a prevention-oriented approach that emphasizes rehabilitation, education, and support rather than punitive measures. They also identified the importance of clearly defined roles among administrators, faculty, and staff, as well as regular policy review, continuous training, and transparent communication to ensure accountability and sustained stakeholder acceptance.

These findings align with the study of [Alshehri et al. \(2025\)](#), which found that although university students generally possess adequate knowledge about substance abuse, their attitudes toward it remain varied, with some perceiving potential benefits in certain contexts. Similar to the present study, the findings highlight the need for rights-based and prevention-focused interventions that promote awareness, trust, education, and rehabilitation. Collectively, these

insights suggest that effective substance abuse prevention in higher education requires ethically grounded, student-centered, and trust-oriented policies that encourage long-term positive behavioral change.

Table 4. Policy Insights Derived from Stakeholder Perspectives

Codes / Categories	Verbatim Responses (Examples)	No. It Occurs	No. of participants Who Responded	Themes	Description of Themes
Privacy & Confidentiality	"Of course, everything should be private...", "The results should be known only by you and the student...", "Keep records confidential."	27	25	Protection of Student Privacy	Strong emphasis on maintaining the confidentiality of drug testing results to avoid stigma, protect dignity, and maintain trust.
Fairness & Equality	"Fairness, equality, transparency...", "Equal treatment for all...", "Ensure fairness in implementation."	31	28	Equitable Implementation	Stakeholders want unbiased and non-discriminatory processes, with rules applied equally to all students.
Prevention over Punishment	"Focus on support and protection over punishment...", "Rehabilitation instead of punishment...", "Awareness programs on illegal drugs."	19	17	Support-Oriented Approach	Drug testing should be used as an intervention and educational tool, not as a mechanism for exclusion or discipline.
Roles & Responsibilities	"Administrators oversee...", "Faculty guide students...", "Support staff handles logistics and confidentiality."	23	21	Collaborative Role Allocation	Clear delineation of roles among administrators, faculty, and staff to ensure smooth, ethical, and effective policy execution.
Policy Sustainability	"Regular policy reviews...", "Continuous training...", "Update policies"	26	24	Continuous Policy Improvement	Recommendations to keep the policy adaptive, regularly reviewed, and

	based on new laws and needs.”				responsive to legal, social, and technological changes.
Transparency & Communication	“Clearly communicate policy...”, “Open feedback channels...”, “Build trust through clear communication.”	21	20	Transparent Communication	Ensuring all stakeholders understand the policy, procedures, and consequences through consistent, open communication.
Safety & Well-being	“Ensure safety in the workplace...”, “Promote a safe learning environment...”, “Health and safety over punishment.”	18	17	Student Welfare & Safety	Balancing drug prevention measures with the overall physical and emotional safety of students.

Proposed Policy Framework for the Ethical and Effective Implementation of Random Drug Testing at CCC

The proposed policy framework for random drug testing at the City College of Calamba (CCC) aligns closely with international best practices, such as Saudi Arabia’s rights-conscious approach to mandatory testing for government employees. Both emphasize the need to ensure safety and performance while safeguarding individual dignity, privacy, and opportunities for rehabilitation. In CCC’s case, the framework integrates legal mandates from Republic Act No. 9165 and the Data Privacy Act of 2012 with stakeholder insights, ensuring that testing is fair, transparent, non-discriminatory, and coupled with counseling and reintegration support.

This mirrors the Saudi model, which stresses clear procedures, confidentiality safeguards, and harmonization with legislation to address privacy concerns and social stigma (Badran, 2024). In both contexts, trust is built through open communication, impartial selection processes, and strict data protection—underscoring that effective and ethical drug testing requires balancing institutional safety goals with the protection of individual rights.

Proposed Policy Framework for the Ethical and Effective Implementation of Random Drug Testing at the City College of Calamba (CCC)

Policy Objectives

1. Promote a safe, drug-free academic environment that supports student well-being and learning.
2. Uphold student rights to privacy, fairness, and due process in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and Republic Act No. 9165.
3. Use drug testing primarily as a preventive, rehabilitative, and educational measure, rather than for punishment or exclusion.

Guiding Principles

1. Confidentiality – All test results will be handled strictly by authorized personnel and will not be disclosed without consent.
2. Fairness and Equality – Random selection will be conducted using unbiased procedures, ensuring equal treatment of all students.
3. Informed Consent – Students (and parents/guardians for minors) will be fully informed about the purpose, process, and implications of testing.
4. Student Welfare First – Interventions will focus on counseling, rehabilitation, and awareness-building rather than punitive sanctions.
5. Transparency and Accountability – Clear communication of procedures, rights, and responsibilities will be ensured at all stages.

Implementation Structure

1. Roles and Responsibilities
 - a. Administrators – Oversee policy execution, coordinate with accredited drug testing centers, and ensure compliance with legal and ethical standards.
 - b. Faculty – Support student awareness initiatives, provide guidance and referrals when necessary.
 - c. Guidance and Counseling Office – Handle confidential results, coordinate counseling/rehabilitation programs, and maintain records securely.
 - d. Support Staff – Assist in logistical arrangements, ensuring secure handling of documentation and communication.

Testing Process

1. Random Selection – Conducted using a secure and impartial system (e.g., computer-generated lists).
2. Pre-Testing Orientation – Briefing on purpose, procedures, rights, and confidentiality safeguards.
3. Testing Administration – Partner with a Department of Health-accredited testing facility for sample collection and analysis.
4. Result Handling – Delivered directly and confidentially to the Guidance and Counseling Office; no public disclosure.
5. Follow-up Procedures –
 - a. Negative Results – No further action needed except documentation.
 - b. Positive Results – Immediate confidential counseling, referral for confirmatory testing, and non-punitive intervention plans.

Safeguards and Ethical Provisions

1. Strict Data Privacy Compliance – Secure storage of records, limited access, anonymized reporting for institutional monitoring.
2. No Academic Penalty – Positive results will not affect grades, enrollment, or graduation status; interventions will focus on rehabilitation.
3. Appeal Mechanism – Students may request a re-test or file a formal appeal if they contest the results.

Communication and Awareness

1. Conduct regular information drives to educate the CCC community about the policy's purpose, process, and safeguards.

2. Provide feedback channels (e.g., suggestion boxes, online forms) for continuous policy improvement.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Review

1. Annual Policy Review – Assess implementation effectiveness, stakeholder satisfaction, and legal compliance.
2. Stakeholder Involvement – Gather input from students, faculty, staff, and parents to guide updates.
3. Continuous Training – Regular capacity-building for personnel involved in testing and counseling.

Expected Outcomes

1. Strengthened trust between students and the institution through fair, transparent, and compassionate policy implementation.
2. Enhanced campus safety and student well-being through preventive and supportive interventions.
3. Compliance with national laws and ethical standards without compromising the dignity and rights of students.

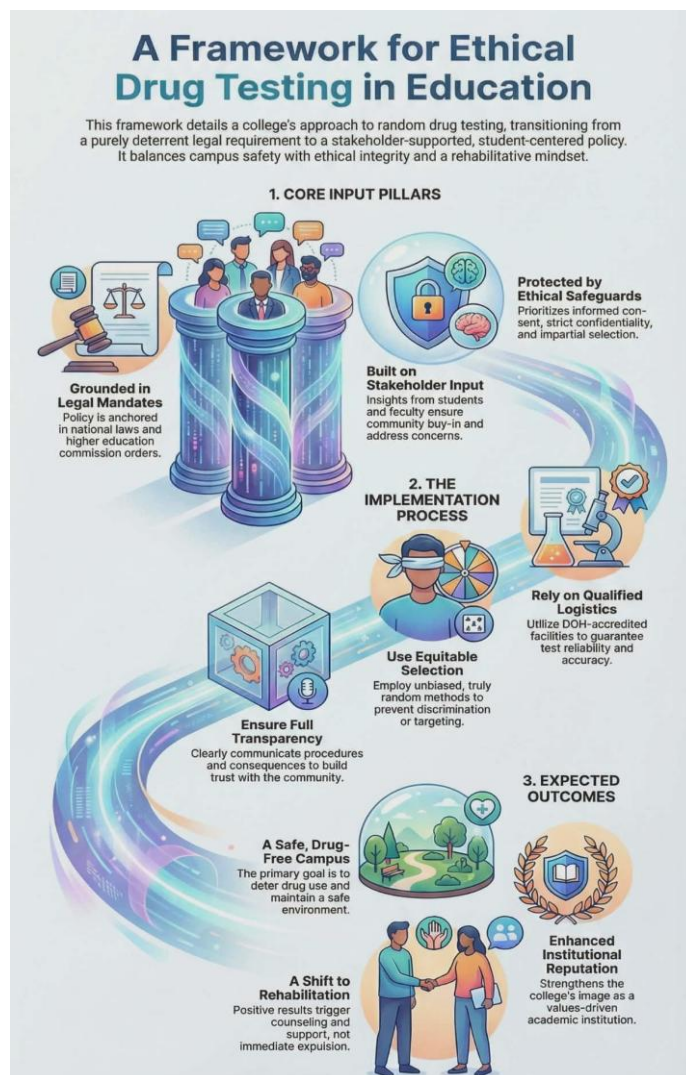


Figure 1. Framework for Ethical Drug Testing Implementation

Figure 1 outlines a three-stage "Framework for Ethical Drug Testing in Education," detailing a shift from strictly punitive measures to a student-centered, rehabilitative approach. The journey begins with Core Input Pillars, which ground the policy in legal mandates while incorporating stakeholder feedback and ethical safeguards, such as informed consent and confidentiality.

The Implementation Process emphasizes fairness through equitable, random selection and logistical reliability via accredited facilities, all while maintaining transparency to build community trust. Ultimately, the framework aims for three Expected Outcomes: a safe, drug-free campus; an enhanced institutional reputation; and a shift toward rehabilitation, in which positive test results trigger counseling and support rather than immediate expulsion.

Proposed Action Plan for the Policy Development on the Ethical and Effective Implementation of Random Drug Testing

The proposed action plan for developing a random drug testing policy at CCC adopts a systematic, participatory, and legally compliant framework. It begins with the formation of a Policy Development Committee to lead the process, followed by extensive stakeholder consultations with students, parents, faculty, and staff. A thorough review of relevant laws and ethical standards ensures full alignment with Republic Act No. 9165, the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and the institution's core values.

Insights from these consultations and legal reviews will inform the drafting, validation, and approval of the policy, with clear implementation protocols and personnel training to ensure professional and ethical execution. A campus-wide awareness campaign will prepare stakeholders for the policy, culminating in a pilot run before full-scale implementation, with continuous monitoring and evaluation to maintain its relevance, effectiveness, and trustworthiness in fostering a safe, drug-free learning environment.

The experience of Nationwide Children's Hospital, as discussed by Pfaff et al. (2022), offers valuable parallels for CCC's initiative. Both institutions anchor their policies in broad stakeholder input, procedural clarity, and privacy safeguards, while balancing substance abuse prevention with the protection of individual rights. The hospital's practices—such as cost control, confirmatory testing to avoid false positives, and selective testing based on risk—illustrate evidence-based safeguards that CCC can integrate to ensure fairness and credibility.

Likewise, their use of transparent protocols and targeted awareness efforts mirrors CCC's planned consultations, training, and campus-wide information drives. While Nationwide Children's highlights challenges such as privacy concerns, debates over testing for certain legal substances, and the need for long-term evaluation, CCC's pilot implementation and continuous monitoring directly address these issues. Together, these approaches underscore that sustainable and ethical drug testing policies must strategically blend institutional safety goals, legal compliance, and community trust-building to achieve lasting impact.

Table 5. Proposed Action Plan for the Policy Development on the Ethical and Effective Implementation of Random Drug Testing

Objective	Activities	Responsible Unit/Person	Timeline	Expected Output
1. Establish a Policy Development Committee	Identify and appoint representatives from administration, faculty, student body, legal counsel, guidance office, and health services.	Office of the College President, VP for Academic Affairs	Month 1	Formal creation of the Random Drug Testing Policy Development Committee

2.	Conduct Stakeholder Consultations	Organize focus group discussions and surveys among students, faculty, parents, and administrative staff to gather perceptions, concerns, and recommendations.	Policy Development Committee, Guidance Office	Month 1–2	Consolidated stakeholder feedback report
3.	Review Legal and Ethical Guidelines	Study Republic Act No. 9165, CHED and DepEd guidelines, Data Privacy Act of 2012, and relevant jurisprudence	Legal Counsel, Policy Committee	Month 2	Compliance checklist and legal reference document
4.	Draft Policy Framework	Prepare a draft policy incorporating stakeholder input, legal requirements, and ethical safeguards.	Policy Committee	Month 3	Draft Policy on Random Drug Testing
5.	Conduct Validation and Feedback Sessions	Present draft policy to key stakeholders for review and comments; integrate suggested revisions	Policy Committee, Student Council, Faculty Association	Month 3–4	Finalized policy draft with documented revisions
6.	Secure Administrative and Board Approval	Submit the final draft to the College Board of Trustees/Administration for approval.	Policy Committee, Office of the College President	Month 4	Approved Random Drug Testing Policy
7.	Develop Implementation Protocols	Prepare operational guidelines: random selection process, testing procedures, confidentiality measures, counseling support, and sanctions (if any)	Guidance Office, Health Services, Legal Counsel	Month 4–5	Detailed Implementation Protocol Manual
8.	Capacity Building and Training	Train administrators, faculty, and involved personnel on procedures, ethical handling, and communication strategies	Guidance Office, Human Resources	Month 5	Trained the implementation team
9.	Conduct Information and Awareness Campaign	Roll out orientation sessions, posters, and online materials to inform students and	Policy Committee, Student Affairs Office	Month 5–6	Increased awareness and stakeholder readiness

	staff about the policy and safeguards.			
10. Pilot Implementation	Conduct an initial round of random drug testing with a small sample to test procedures.	Policy Committee, Health Services	Month 6–7	Pilot test report and recommendations
11. Full Implementation	Roll out the policy across the student population	Policy Committee, Health Services	Month 8 onwards	Policy fully operational
12. Monitoring and Evaluation	Collect data on policy effectiveness, challenges, and compliance; review annually.	Policy Committee, QA Office	Annual	Annual Policy Review Report

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to develop an ethical and effective policy framework for implementing random drug testing at the City College of Calamba by examining stakeholders' perceptions, concerns, expectations, and recommendations. The findings revealed that stakeholders generally recognize the potential benefits of random drug testing in promoting campus safety, discipline, and drug prevention. However, participants consistently emphasized that the success and acceptability of such initiatives depend largely on the presence of ethical safeguards, transparent procedures, and rehabilitative support systems.

The study further demonstrated that stakeholders strongly value the protection of privacy, confidentiality, fairness, informed consent, and equal treatment in the implementation process. Participants expressed concern regarding the possible emotional, psychological, and social consequences of testing, particularly in cases involving false positives, stigmatization, or misuse of results. Consequently, stakeholders advocated for a student-centered, restorative approach that prioritizes counseling, intervention, rehabilitation, and educational support over punitive sanctions.

The proposed policy framework developed from the findings integrates legal mandates under Republic Act No. 9165 with ethical principles and stakeholder-informed recommendations. The framework emphasizes transparency, systematic randomness, confidentiality protocols, rehabilitative interventions, and continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure that institutional safety objectives are balanced with the protection of student dignity and rights.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on ethical governance and student welfare in higher education institutions by demonstrating the importance of stakeholder-informed policy development in sensitive institutional programs. The findings reinforce restorative and student-centered approaches to policy implementation, highlighting that preventive interventions become more effective when grounded in transparency, fairness, ethical safeguards, and institutional trust. Furthermore, the study expands current discussions on random drug testing within Philippine higher education by contextualizing ethical implementation within local institutional realities and stakeholder expectations.

In practical terms, the study offers a policy framework to guide higher education institutions in designing ethically grounded, legally compliant drug testing programs that prioritize both campus safety and student welfare. By integrating rehabilitation-oriented strategies and rights-based safeguards, institutions can foster trust, cooperation, and long-term positive behavioral outcomes among students.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

While this study provides valuable insights into stakeholder perceptions regarding the implementation of random drug testing at the City College of Calamba, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study utilized purposive sampling involving forty-two (42) participants, which, although appropriate for qualitative inquiry and thematic saturation, may limit the transferability of findings to other higher education institutions with different institutional cultures and demographic characteristics.

Second, the findings were derived from self-reported perceptions and experiences, which personal biases, social desirability bias, or varying levels of awareness of the legal and operational dimensions of random drug testing may influence. Third, the study focused exclusively on a single higher education institution, thereby limiting the extent to which the results may represent the perspectives of stakeholders in other institutional or regional contexts.

Future studies may consider employing multi-institutional qualitative or mixed-methods approaches with larger participant groups to further validate the findings and examine variations across institutional settings. Longitudinal research may also be conducted to assess the long-term effects of policy implementation on campus safety, student well-being, and institutional trust. Additionally, future investigations may explore the effectiveness of rehabilitative interventions, counseling programs, and ethical safeguards in strengthening preventive drug education and student support systems in higher education institutions.

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