



# TEXAS TECH™

## Operating Policy and Procedure

### **OP 10.20: Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy**

**DATE:** November 30, 2023

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to provide guidelines on Texas Tech University's (TTU) and the Texas Tech University System's (TTUS) conflict of interest policies and to protect the ethical and civic responsibilities of TTU and its mission. While this OP is not meant to take the place of any existing policies, in the event of a conflict between this policy and any other OP relating to conflicts of interest or commitment, this OP shall prevail.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed every two years after publication by the Office of the President with substantive revisions presented to the President.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE**

#### **1. Policy Statement**

- a. Employees of Texas Tech University ("institution" or "TTU") are entrusted with protecting the safety and welfare of the public's trust. It is state law that the institution's employees may not have direct or indirect interests, including financial and other interests; engage in business transactions or professional activities; or incur any obligation of any nature that is in substantial conflict with the proper discharge of the employee's duties to the institution or the public interest. Employees shall avoid acts that are improper or give the appearance of impropriety. The principles and guidelines contained in this policy shall apply to the institution's employees, regardless of rank or position. (See [Texas Government Code Chapter 572](#) and Section 03.01, *Regents' Rules*.)
- b. All employees are expected to (1) abide by the institution's conflict of interest and commitment policies and standards; (2) fully and continually disclose professional and relevant personal activities and relationships that create a conflict of interest or commitment; (3) remedy conflicts of interest or commitment and/or comply with any management or monitoring plan prescribed by the institution; (4) remain aware of the potential for conflicts of interest and commitment; and (5) take initiative to manage, disclose, or resolve conflicts of interest or commitment as appropriate.
- c. All senior administrators have the responsibility to understand and implement this policy including, as necessary, the adoption of specific procedures for their respective schools and departments in furtherance of and in accordance with this policy.

#### **2. Definitions**

- a. *Benefit:* A benefit is anything reasonably regarded as pecuniary gain or pecuniary advantage, including benefit to any other person in whose welfare an institution employee has a direct

and substantial interest. (Section 03.01.4, *Regents' Rules*.) Pecuniary gain or advantage includes monetary, financial, or economic gain or advantage.

- b. *Business*: Any company or corporation, any partnership, sole proprietorship, firm, franchise, association, organization, holding company, joint stock company, receivership, trust (business, real estate, estate planning, or otherwise), enterprise, or any other legal entity whether organized for-profit or not-for-profit, including any entity controlled by, controlling, or under common control with any such entity, but excluding TTUS or any of its constituent entities.
- c. *Conflict of Commitment*: A conflict of commitment refers to a situation where an employee engages in external activities, either paid or unpaid, that interfere with his/her obligation and responsibilities to the institution. Employees should evaluate and arrange their external interests in order to avoid conflicts of commitment that would compromise their ability to carry out their obligations to the institution.
- d. *Conflict of Interest*: A conflict of interest refers to a situation in which an employee's financial, professional, or other personal considerations may directly or indirectly affect, or have the appearance of affecting, the employee's judgment in exercising any duty or responsibility, including the conduct or reporting of research, owed to the institution.
- e. *Consensual Relationship*: A consensual relationship is a mutually acceptable, intimate, romantic or sexual relationship between two or more Employees and/or students.
- f. *Employee*: An employee is anyone who receives a W-2 from the institution, including temporary, part-time, or full-time faculty, residents, and staff who receive payment from the institution.
- g. *Family Member*: For purposes of this policy, it includes the employee's:
  - Spouse, stepchildren, spouse's parents, children's spouses, stepparents, ex-stepchildren, and ex-spouses;
  - Spouse's siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, sibling's spouse, step-grandparents, and grandchild's spouses;
  - Parent or child;
  - Siblings, grandparents, and grandchildren;
  - Great-grandparents, great-grandchildren, uncle, aunt, nephew, and niece; and
  - Household members and domestic partners.

See [OP 74.17, Disclosure of Significant Business or Financial Interests That May Represent Conflicts of Interest](#), relating to research conflicts of interest regarding the definition of family member for purposes of that policy.

- h. *Financial Interest*: A financial interest includes, but is not limited to:
- Anything of monetary value including, but not limited to, salary or other payments for services, fees, honoraria, gifts, or other in-kind compensation, whether for consulting, membership on a board of directors or advisory board, or any other purpose such as partial, interim, or milestone payments.
  - Intellectual property rights including, but not limited to, patents, copyrights, and royalty income or the right to receive future royalties under a patent or other intellectual property rights, whether pursuant to a license or otherwise.
  - Ownership and equity interests or entitlement to such interests in a publicly or non-publicly traded business including, but not limited to, stock, stock options, partnership interests, and convertible debt. It does not include interests in publicly traded diversified mutual funds or similar investment vehicles where the individual investor has no direct control over the selection of holdings.

What must be disclosed as either a significant or material financial interest will be governed by the particular policy governing that area.

- i. *Health Care Vendor*: A health care vendor is any individual or company that sells or markets health care services or items to the institution and/or its patients, including, but not limited to, pharmaceutical companies and their representatives, device or durable medical equipment (DME) manufacturers and their representatives, and equipment and/or service providers and their representatives.
- j. *Material Financial Interest*: Pursuant to Section 03.04.2, *Regents' Rules*, and [Texas Government Code § 572.005](#), a financial interest is presumed to be material if it entails:
- Any ownership or investment interest in a business (including stock, options, a partnership interest, or any other ownership or investment interest) valued at more than \$10,000, except equity in a publicly traded company amounting to less than 10 percent ownership interest in the company;
  - A controlling interest in a business;
  - Receipt of non-dividend compensation (including salary, consulting fees, royalty payments, or other remuneration) of more than \$10,000 in any 12-month period in the past three years, or the expectation of such compensation in the future;
  - Any ownership interest, exclusive of personal residence and furnishings, in real property, personal property, intellectual property, or any other interest valued at \$10,000 or more;
  - A position of real or apparent authority in an outside entity such as director, officer, trustee, partner, agent, controlling shareholder, shareholder with more than 10 percent voting interest, or a direct or indirect participating interest in any shares, stock or otherwise, regardless of whether voting rights are included, in more than 10 percent of the profits, proceeds, or capital gains of the entity involved; or

- Any position as an employee of the entity involved.
- k. *Outside Employment*: Pursuant to Section 03.07.1, *Regents' Rules*, outside employment means any compensated service or employment by an entity, other than the TTU System, of an institution employee.
- l. *Significant Business or Financial Interest*: On occasion, there may be a reference to significant financial interest as opposed to a material financial interest. In those instances, see section 3.g as well as [OP 74.17, Disclosure of Significant Business or Financial Interests That May Represent Conflicts of Interest](#).

### 3. Conflict of Interest Guidelines

Conflicts of interest can arise under many circumstances. Employees shall not use their public offices for private gain and shall act impartially, not giving any preferential treatment to any private or public organization or individual (Section 03.01.2.c and d, *Regents' Rules*).

Employees should not:

- Accept other appointments or any employment or compensation that could reasonably be expected to impair their independent judgment in the performance of official duties; or
- Have personal investments that could reasonably be expected to create a substantial conflict between the employees' private interest and the public interest.

See [Texas Government Code § 572.051\(a\)\(3\) and \(4\)](#).

#### a. University Administration

The administration of the institution can present the potential for conflicts of interest. Employees with administrative responsibilities must take particular care to avoid relationships in which financial interests or personal interests conflict with the institution's interests and create the potential for inappropriate factors to be considered in administrative decisions. In particular, those who have institutional duties involving the procurement, exchange, or sale of goods, services, or other assets; the negotiation or formation of contracts or other commitments affecting the assets or interests of the institution; the making of hiring decisions; the handling of confidential or privileged information; the provision of patient or client services; the conduct of sponsored research and the handling of any research results or resulting transfer of technology; or the rendition of professional advice to the institution must be particularly conscious of potential conflicts of interest or the appearance of conflicts of interest.

#### b. Business Relationships

In general, when employees or their family members have financial interests in a business or are involved in a business as an owner, operator, or executive officer, they must be alert to the possibility that a conflict of interest may arise if the business has a relationship with the institution. If the enterprise does business with the institution or proposes to do business with the institution, the employee is required to disclose that fact. Employees may not review, approve, or administratively control contracts or business relationships when the contract or

business relationship is between the institution and a business in which the employee or his/her family member has a material financial interest.

This section is not intended to apply to the adoption of textbooks, software, or other teaching aids written by faculty members or their family members for use in their own course of instruction, which is addressed in [OP 30.18, The Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Related Materials](#).

c. Use of Private Consultants

Any employee who has actual knowledge that a family member is seeking a consulting relationship with the institution shall disclose the relationship to the department seeking the consultant's services and the institution's procurement and/or contracting department.

Likewise, entities or individuals who seek to provide consulting services to the institution shall be required to disclose any family member relationship to the institution and the department receiving the services.

Approval of consulting agreements must be in accordance with Section 07.12, *Regents' Rules*.

d. Benefits, Gifts, and Honoraria

(1) General Concept

No benefits, gifts, or accommodations of any nature, including unrestricted grants, may be solicited, offered, or accepted by the institution or its employees when to do so would place them in a prejudicial or compromising position, interfere in any way with the impartial discharge of their official duties to the institution, interfere with the exercise of their official powers, result in performance of official duties in favor of another, or reflect adversely on their integrity or the institution (see Section 03.01.1.a and e, and Section 03.01.4.)

All gifts given in support of an institutional mission must be directed through the Office of Institutional Advancement.

There are limited situations where employees may accept gifts and benefits without violating conflict of interest rules. These include acceptance of:

- Gifts or other benefits from family, friends, and business relationships unrelated to their official status with institution and not offered in exchange for official action or decision (see Section 03.01.4.d, *Regents' Rules*);
- A fee prescribed by law to be received by public servants or any other benefit to which the employee is lawfully entitled for which they give legitimate consideration in a capacity other than as a public servant;
- A gift, award, or memento from a lobbyist who is required to make reports under [Texas Government Code, Chapter 305](#) (see Section 03.01.4.b, *Regents' Rules*);
- Plaques and similar recognition awards; and

- Items having a value of less than \$50, not including cash or negotiable instruments (see Section 03.01.4.b.(4), *Regents' Rules*).

However, even in the situations set forth above, the employee may be required to disclose such gift or benefit as required by federal or state law or institutional policy.

Furthermore, and notwithstanding the \$50 limit above, because of certain federal laws that more closely regulate allowable activities between health care providers and health care vendors, health care providers and their staff may not accept gifts of benefits of any amount from health care vendors (see [42 U.S.C. § 1301 et seq.](#)).

An employee who receives an unsolicited benefit that he or she is prohibited from accepting may donate the benefit to a governmental entity that has the authority to accept the gift or may donate the benefit to a recognized tax-exempt charitable organization formed for educational, religious, or scientific purposes (see Section 03.01.4.b, *Regents' Rules*).

## (2) Food, Lodging, Transportation, and Entertainment

Generally, employees may accept food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment from those who may be interested in or become interested in a contract, purchase, payment, claim, decision, or transaction involving the exercise of that employee's discretion, only when the person or representative of the entity providing the food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment is present at the time the food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment is received or enjoyed by the employee (see [OP 10.11, Ethics Policy](#), and Section 03.01.1.c, *Regents' Rules*). Any such acceptance of food, lodging, transportation, or entertainment must be for the benefit of the institution.

Employees who file annual disclosure statements with the Texas Ethics Commission pursuant to [Texas Government Code § 572.021](#) or institutional policy are required to report any such benefits valued at over \$250 received in a year, in the aggregate. Employees who do not file an annual disclosure statement must report such benefits to their immediate supervisor.

Employees may never accept gifts or entertainment from health care vendors and may only accept food, lodging, and transportation from health care vendors under limited circumstances (see [42 U.S.C. § 1301 et seq.](#)).

## (3) Honoraria

Employees may not solicit, accept, or agree to accept an honorarium in consideration for services they would not have been asked to provide but for their official position or duties as an employee of the institution. This prohibition includes a request for or acceptance of a payment made to a third party if made in exchange for such services. This provision does not prohibit an employee from accepting payment for providing services if the individual was asked to provide the service or services because of his or her expertise and not because of his or her official status as a TTU employee. Employees may accept the direct provision of or reimbursement for expenses for transportation and lodging incurred in connection with a speaking engagement at a conference or similar event. Meals provided as a part of the event or reimbursement for actual expenses for meals may also be accepted. Participation in the event by the

employee must be more than perfunctory. Legitimate and significant services must have been provided for the payment received (see Section 03.01.4.f, *Regents' Rules* and [Texas Penal Code § 36.07](#)).

e. Use and Appropriation of Institution Assets

Employees shall protect and conserve the institution's property and shall not use it for anything other than authorized activities (see Section 03.01.2, *Regents' Rules*).

The institution possesses both tangible and intangible assets that are state property. These assets include buildings, personnel, equipment, patents, copyrights, technology, trademarks, work products, confidential and privileged information, as well as the institution's reputation and prestige. As custodians of these assets, employees owe a fiduciary duty to the institution to act in accordance with applicable institutional policies and procedures regarding the proper expenditure of the institution's funds, as well as the use and control of institutional assets. Employees are always expected to protect the best interests of the institution pertaining to its assets.

Conduct constituting the misappropriation or unauthorized use of the institution's assets in connection with any external activity is prohibited, including implying sponsorship or endorsement by the institution or otherwise trading on the reputation or goodwill of the institution. For purposes of this policy, "external activity" is not intended to prohibit incidental personal use of university library facilities or office equipment, including standard computer equipment provided by the university to the employee. Mere identification of the institution as one's employer and of one's position at the institution is permitted, provided that such identification is not used to imply the institution's sponsorship or endorsement.

f. Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Related Materials

The university encourages faculty members to publish textbooks and other professional works. There is no prohibition against the use of such textbooks in classes taught by the faculty member or author, provided the textbook has been printed by a recognized and reputable publishing house at its own risk and expense, made available for open sale, and approved for such use by a textbook committee appointed by the department or area head (see [OP 30.18, The Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Related Materials](#)).

g. Research Activities

Conflicts of interest in research involve situations in which financial, professional, or other personal considerations may compromise or have the appearance of compromising an individual's judgment in the design, conduct, or reporting of research. The bias that may result from such conflicts of interest may affect not only the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data but also the hiring of staff, procurement of materials, subcontracting, clinical referrals, sharing of results, choice of protocol, statistical methods, use of human participants, or otherwise influence the course or outcome of a research project.

Employees of the institution may not review, approve, or administratively control contracts, grants, clinical trials, or other research collaborations when such contract, grant, clinical trial, or other collaboration pertains to a research project involving the institution and a business or intellectual property in which the employee or a family member has a significant financial interest as defined by the institution's policy ([OP 74.17, Disclosure of Significant Business or](#)



[Financial Interests That May Represent Conflicts of Interest](#)) when the employee or family member is an employee or owner of the business and directly involved with activities pertaining to the research project.

Absent compelling circumstances, employees may not conduct or control research if they have a significant business or financial interest in the sponsor of the research or any technology that could be affected by the outcome of the research. This presumption against research by financially interested employees may be rebutted by compelling circumstances that are reviewed in advance by the appropriate research conflict of interest committee or other appropriate review authority.

No research with human subjects that involves a conflict of interest may receive final approval from the Institutional Review Board until the conflict of interest is addressed under applicable policy (see [OP 74.09, Protection of Human Subjects in Research](#)).

For research regulated by federal or state agencies, there may be conflict of interest requirements that apply to the sponsor of the study and/or the investigators. Employees of the institution shall comply with all applicable regulatory requirements pertaining to conflict of interest whether the employee is the investigator or the sponsor or both.

Texas Tech University encourages research as a part of its core mission and anticipates that some research will result in innovations of potential commercial value. This policy is not intended to alter the policies and procedures that create specific incentives for creators of innovations of commercial potential to share in the revenue realized from such innovations (see Chapter 10, *Regents' Rules*).

Every employee participating or involved in research on behalf of the institution is responsible for learning and complying with all applicable policies and procedures.

#### h. Health Care Vendor Conflicts of Interest

Conflicts of interest in healthcare industry sponsored activities involve situations in which financial, professional, or other personal considerations may compromise or have the appearance of compromising an individual's judgment in the provision of patient care, procurement, or other professional activities. The bias that may result from such conflicts of interest may affect procurement of equipment, clinical referrals, choice of treatment, or otherwise influence the provision of patient care or the execution of one's professional duties. As such, employees shall not accept gifts or other benefits from health care vendors, except as allowed by the institution's policies (see [42 U.S.C. § 1301 et seq.](#)).

#### i. Intellectual Property Rights

While it is the policy of the TTUS Board of Regents to encourage scholarly activity without regard to potential gains from royalties and other forms of income, employees are subject to their obligations and those of TTUS under grants, contracts, and research agreements with governmental agencies and sponsors. Additionally, all intellectual property will be handled in accordance with the institution's policies to avoid conflicts of interests (see Chapter 10, *Regents' Rules*).



j. Academic Supervisory, Teaching, or Evaluative Relationships

Employees shall avoid academic supervisory, teaching, or evaluative relationships with staff or other employees that pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest. If questions arise as to the propriety of such relationships, the department chair or appropriate dean or vice president shall develop a management plan (see [OP 32.33, Faculty, Staff, and Student Conflict of Interest](#)).

Employees must not direct or serve on committees that evaluate other employees where such service would pose a conflict of interest. Such committees include periodic staff evaluations, promotion, or other employment decisions or actions and annual, third-year, or tenure evaluations.

k. Activities Related to Students

It is the institution's policy that employees with direct teaching, training, supervisory, advisory, or evaluative responsibility over students recognize and respect the ethical and professional boundaries that must exist in such situations.

An employee may not assign students, postdoctoral fellows, or other trainees to institution projects sponsored by any business if the employee or his/her family member has a material financial interest in the business. An employee may not assign students or permit students to participate in any consulting relationship in which the employee or a family member has a material financial interest.

An immediate supervisor in a non-institution employment relationship should not direct a student's research nor permit the enrollment of the student in her/his courses or other organized instructional activity, except for a research or teaching assistantship or a situation in which a student serves as a grader for another course taught by an employee.

Employees must not direct or serve on committees that evaluate a family member. Such committees include thesis, dissertation, or preliminary, comprehensive, or qualifying examination committees, or other periodic evaluations. Students should not enroll in courses offered by their parents, spouses, or others with whom they have a consensual relationship.

Deans and department chairs have the responsibility for protecting the interests of students, postdoctoral fellows, and trainees who may be directly or indirectly involved in a conflict of interest situation related to an employee or family member with a material financial interest in the situation. Students, postdoctoral fellows, and other trainees should not be permitted to participate in consulting activities if the terms and conditions of those activities would prevent them from meeting applicable degree or training requirements. Students, postdoctoral fellows, and other trainees involved in any conflict of interest situation should be informed of the conflict of interest, the existence of a management plan, and that their concerns, if any, can be discussed with the appropriate institutional official.

Faculty shall not charge a fee for tutoring any student enrolled in the faculty member's classes or engage in other activities that present the appearance of a conflict of interest (see [OP 32.06, Faculty Responsibility](#)).

#### l. Consensual Relationships – Faculty and Students

Consensual relationships are prohibited between faculty and:

- Students in the faculty member’s class;
- Students with whom the faculty member has a supervisory or instructional connection; or
- Students with whom the faculty member is in a position of perceived authority.

Should such a relationship develop, the faculty member has the obligation to disclose the existence of the relationship to his or her immediate supervisor, cease the relationship, and cooperate in making alternative arrangements for teaching, training, advising, or supervising the student involved. Pre-existing consensual relationships of this nature shall be disclosed to and managed by the faculty member’s chair, dean, and Provost, as applicable (see [OP 32.33, Faculty, Staff, and Student Conflict of Interest](#)).

#### m. Employment Relationships and Activities Related to Family Members

Employees shall avoid employment, supervisory, or evaluative relationships with other employees or prospective employees that pose actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Whenever an appointment is made, either on a full- or part-time basis, it shall be made on the basis of the qualifications and suitability of the appointee, subject to applicable statutes and the institution’s policies (see Section 03.01.8, *Regents’ Rules*).

No family member related to an administrator shall be eligible for initial appointment to a position over which that administrator has appointment authority, regardless of the source of funds from which the position’s salary is to be paid, unless the Board of Regents approves such appointment and the administrator has no supervisory authority over the family member (see Section 03.01.8, *Regents’ Rules*).

No employee may approve, recommend, participate, or otherwise be involved in the appointment, reappointment, promotion, salary, supervision, or other employment action of a family member (see Section 03.01.8, *Regents’ Rules*, and [OP 70.08, Nepotism](#)).

### 4. Conflict of Commitment Guidelines

A conflict of commitment relates to an individual’s distribution of effort between employment or faculty appointment at the institution and commitment to external business activities or employment, external professional activities, or personal activities. It is possible to have a conflict of commitment even if the individual does not receive compensation for the external activity. External activities may include outside employment, involvement with professional societies, participation related to review panels, professional meetings, community service, conferences, consulting, other professional activities, and business activities related to outside entities including start-up companies.

It is the policy of the institution that all full-time employees shall devote their primary professional activities, time, and energy to their position for the institution. Faculty employees with appointments of less than 12 months shall devote their primary professional activities, time, and energy to their position for the institution during the period of their appointment. Part-time employees shall devote their primary professional activities, time, and energy to their position while performing duties for the institution. An employee’s primary responsibility is the full and

complete execution of all assigned duties, the fulfillment of professional obligations not ordinarily reduced to written assignment, and maintenance of current professional skills.

Outside employment must be compatible with the interests of the institution and TTUS and of such a nature that it will not detract from the effectiveness and performance of the employee (see Section 03.07.1, *Regents' Rules*, and [OP 70.15, Multiple and Other Employment](#)).

An employee shall not engage in any external activity that the employee might reasonably expect would require or induce him/her to disclose confidential information acquired by reason of his/her employment at the institution (see Section 03.01.1.(b), *Regents' Rules*).

An employee shall not engage in any external activity that could reasonably be expected to impair the employee's independent judgment in the performance of his/her official duties for the institution (see Section 03.01.1.(c), *Regents' Rules*).

Although a specific workweek may not be defined for full-time exempt employees, whether faculty or staff, it is expected that such positions constitute a full-time obligation during the period of their appointment and that, with the exceptions explicitly permitted by the institution's policies on external activities, they will not engage in other employment (see Section 03.07.2, *Regents' Rules*).

All employees shall disclose and discuss with their supervisor any external activities that could create a conflict of commitment or the appearance of a conflict of commitment to ensure proper management of any potential conflict.

External activities must be arranged so as not to interfere with the employee's commitments to the institution. External activities must not discredit the institution nor compromise any intellectual property of the institution. Employees should periodically re-examine the nature and extent of their external activities and conscientiously avoid engaging in activities that constitute conflicts of commitment.

Employees who are members of their school's income plan are required to follow the plan bylaws regarding income-generating activity.

External activities of employees must not detract from primary responsibilities and must not require such extensive absence so as to cause the employee to neglect his/her institutional obligations during the period of their appointment. In the case of faculty, such obligations include, but are not limited to, instructional obligations, research obligations, and availability to students and colleagues.

Individual schools and departments may implement more specific procedures and require additional information in furtherance of this policy (see [OP 70.15, Multiple and Other Employment](#)).

## 5. Disclosure

### a. Duty to Disclose Internally

In order to identify and review actual or perceived conflicts of interest or commitment, employees must disclose in advance all external activities and financial interests that create or have the appearance of creating conflicts of interest or commitment to their supervisor or the

appropriate institutional officials as outlined in policy. The supervisor or the appropriate institutional officials will review the disclosures to determine whether a conflict of interest or commitment exists and what conditions or restrictions, if any, should be imposed in order to manage, reduce, or eliminate the conflict of interest or commitment. The supervisor or the appropriate institutional official shall document any such disclosure and/or related decisions.

Such disclosures shall be sufficiently detailed and timely as to allow accurate and objective evaluation prior to making commitments or initiating activities that create conflicts of interest or commitment. Each employee has an obligation to cooperate fully in the review of the pertinent facts and circumstances. Individual schools and departments may implement more specific procedures and require additional information in furtherance of this policy.

Certain activities on behalf of the institution may involve more specific procedures with respect to disclosure of conflicts of interest or commitment because of governmental or legal requirements. Anyone involved with sponsored research or the development and licensing of intellectual property under the auspices of the institution is responsible for complying with all applicable procedures.

b. Duty to Disclose Externally

Employees shall comply with financial disclosure requirements of any governmental, accreditation, or other self-regulatory agency.

Additionally, disclosures of actual or perceived conflicts of interest or commitment shall be made to publications and journal editors when research manuscripts are submitted and to the audience during any oral presentation of research.

The Office of the President is available as a resource for questions involving the institution's policies and procedures and for guidance on any issues related to the disclosure process.

c. Annual Disclosure Process

In addition to the duty of advance disclosure discussed above, executive administrators, as defined in Section 03.04, *Regents' Rules*, and others, as required by policy, shall provide a written disclosure of situations or relationships that create or have the appearance of creating a conflict of interest or commitment upon initial employment and annually thereafter. The President shall identify those who must annually disclose who must include faculty and staff in student financial aid, procurement, contracting, commercialization/technology, and regulatory oversight committees dealing with commercial sponsors. Individuals who must disclose must also provide updated disclosures throughout the year if changes in circumstances arise that either (1) create a new conflict of interest or commitment or (2) change or eliminate a conflict of interest or commitment previously disclosed. While the disclosure statements will be considered confidential, the information may be released in accordance with and as required by federal, state, or local law or court order.

## 6. Conflict Committees

a. TTUS Institutional Conflict of Interest Committee

In the event of an institutional conflict of interest involving any component of TTUS, an *ad hoc* Conflict of Interest Committee shall be convened by the TTUS General Counsel.

(1) Duties and Responsibilities

The committee is responsible for reviewing all conflict of interest cases involving the institution as a party.

This committee shall:

- Conduct a thorough review of each case brought before it;
- Approve or deny the proposed activity and develop an appropriate management plan to address any conflicts; and
- Report annually to the Board of Regents Audit Committee through the Office of Audit Services, summarizing the matters considered during the year by the committee and their resolution(s).

(2) Composition

The TTUS General Counsel shall appoint members with expertise relevant to the matter under review by the committee.

b. The Institution's Conflicts of Interest/Commitment Committee (Non-Research)

(1) Duties and Responsibilities

The President shall establish a standing Conflicts of Interest Committee. This committee shall:

- Serve as a resource on individual conflict of interest or commitment matters not otherwise addressed by the institution's research conflict of interest committee ([OP 74.17, Disclosure of Significant Business or Financial Interests That May Represent Conflicts of Interest](#)) or other established review procedures;
- Conduct a thorough review of conflict of interest or commitment matters brought before it;
- Approve or deny the proposed activity and develop an appropriate management plan to address any conflicts; and
- Report annually to the Board of Regents Audit Committee through the Office of Audit Services, summarizing the matters considered during the year by the committee and their resolution(s).

The committee shall also maintain an ongoing awareness of procedures, practices, and standards and laws with regard to conflicts of interest with a view to assuring consistency with the terms of this policy. It shall carry on whatever dialogue is necessary with deans and directors or administrative officers to ensure that its knowledge is sufficiently current and complete. It shall also ensure that a proper balance is maintained between confidentiality and its operations and standards.

## (2) Composition

This committee shall consist of representatives appointed by the President in consultation with the Faculty Senate with respect to faculty matters or in consultation with other relevant bodies regarding other matters from relevant areas across the institution, such as faculty, legal, finance, administration, or compliance. The President shall appoint the chair of the committee. The committee shall appoint at least one member with specialized knowledge in any area under review by the committee.

**7. Oversight and Resources**

The President shall ensure education is provided to new employees and that there are annual communication and/or awareness activities.

Employees may find additional information regarding conflicts of interest for state employees and/or obtain an opinion from the [Texas Ethics Commission](#).

Employees should report any violations of this policy or related conflicts of interest policies through the TTUS Compliance Hotline, either toll free at 1.866.294.9352 or online at [https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report\\_custom.asp?clientid=12414](https://secure.ethicspoint.com/domain/en/report_custom.asp?clientid=12414).

**8. References**

## a. Texas Statutes

- [Texas Government Code 572](#)
- [Texas Penal Code § 36.07](#)

b. *Regents' Rules*

- Chapter 03, *Regents' Rules*
  - Chapter 10, *Regents' Rules*
- <https://www.texastech.edu/board-of-regents/regents-rules.php>

c. [Conflict of Interest and Ethics Code](#)

## d. TTU Conflict of Interest OPs

[OP 10.11, Ethics Policy](#)

[OP 30.18, The Adoption and Sale of Textbooks and Related Materials](#)

[OP 32.07, Other Employment, Faculty Consulting, and Public Offices](#)

[OP 32.25, Tutoring for Payment](#)

[OP 32.33, Faculty, Staff, and Student Conflict of Interest](#)

[OP 34.03, Student Grade Appeal](#)

[OP 64.07, Graduate Student Appeals](#)

- [OP 70.10, Non-faculty Employee Complaint Procedures](#)
- [OP 70.15, Multiple and Other Employment](#)
- [OP 70.31, Employee Conduct, Coaching, Corrective Action, and Termination](#)
- [OP 72.03, Conflicts of Interest Relating to Purchasing, Payments, and Contracts](#)
- [OP 72.17, Procurement of Independent Contractors](#)
- [OP 74.02, Conduct of Research and Scholarly Activity](#)
- [OP 74.04, Intellectual Property Rights](#)
- [OP 74.08, Allegations of Misconduct in Research, Scholarly, or Creative Activity](#)
- [OP 74.17, Disclosure of Significant Business or Financial Interests That May Represent Conflicts of Interest](#)
- e. [Operating Policies and Procedures Website](#)
- f. [Faculty Handbook Website](#)
- g. Federal Regulations
  - [National Institutes of Health Financial Conflict of Interest Regulations](#)
  - [National Science Foundation Conflict of Interest Policies for Grantees](#)
  - [USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture Federal Assistance Policy Guide](#)