



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY™

Operating Policy and Procedure

**OP 32.33: Faculty, Staff, and Student Conflict of Interest**

**DATE:** September 18, 2018

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to ensure that the integrity of faculty/student roles is protected from conflict of interest.

**REVIEW:** This OP will be reviewed in February of even-numbered years by the Dean of the Graduate School and the Senior Vice Provost with substantive revisions forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President (PSVP)

**POLICY/PROCEDURE**

**1. Background**

Texas Tech University has the responsibility to protect the integrity of the roles of the faculty and students during the period of graduate or undergraduate enrollment in any university offering and involvement in other evaluation processes of the university.

**2. Criteria**

Faculty must avoid academic supervisory, teaching, or evaluative relationships with students, staff, or other faculty that pose significant conflicts of interest from the standpoint of personal or professional connections. Such connections might include husband/wife or other affectional liaisons, supervisor/employee relationships, or parent/child relationships. The appearance of conflict of interest should be avoided; the department chair should be consulted if questions arise.

**3. Procedure**

- a. Spouses, parents, or those involved in other affectional relationships must not direct or serve on committees that evaluate their partners, children, or other close relatives. Such committees include thesis, dissertation, or preliminary, comprehensive, or qualifying examination committees, periodic staff evaluations, or annual, three-year, or tenure evaluations.
- b. Students should not enroll in courses offered by their parents, spouses, or partners in affectional liaisons.
- c. An immediate supervisor in an employment relationship (except for a research or teaching assistantship or a situation in which a student serves as a grader for another course taught by a faculty member) should not direct a student's research nor permit the enrollment of the supervisee in her/his courses or other organized instructional activity.

#### 4. **Exceptions**

- a. No member of the faculty who has held rank higher than instructor normally is eligible to pursue a graduate degree at Texas Tech; exceptions require prior approval of the dean of the appropriate college/school.
- b. Any exceptions should be approved and monitored by the chair of the faculty member's unit, unless the chair is involved; in case of involvement, the chair must refer the decision to the dean. If the dean is involved, the exception decision must be referred to the PSVP.

#### 5. **Appeals**

- a. Faculty and Staff

In unusual circumstances, an appeal can be submitted to a committee consisting of the department chair, a representative of Human Resources, dean or dean's representative, and Senior Vice Provost. This committee shall submit its recommendations to the PSVP who shall have final decision authority for exceptions.

- b. Graduate Student

In unusual circumstances, an appeal can be submitted to a committee consisting of the Graduate Dean or Associate Graduate Dean, Associate Vice President for Research, Senior Vice Provost, one additional faculty member from the Student Affairs Subcommittee of the Graduate Council chosen by lot, and the student representative to the Graduate Council. This committee shall have final decision authority for exceptions.

- c. Undergraduate Student

In unusual circumstances, an appeal can be submitted to a committee consisting of the faculty member's dean, Senior Vice Provost, student's dean (if different from faculty member's dean), Student Association president, Dean of Students, and the chair of the faculty member's department. This committee shall have final decision authority for exceptions.

- d. If a person is involved in an appeal, that person may not serve on the hearing panel named in sections 5.a or 5.b of this OP.