Conflicts of Interest (COI)

Find answers to:
• Am I affected by “Conflict of Interest” policies?
• How do I request approval?
• How do I disclose information?
• Who do I contact if I have more questions?

A “conflict of interest” is a significant outside interest that might interfere (or be perceived to interfere) with your job performance.

A “conflict of commitment” is usually an issue of time commitment to an outside activity (or activities) that interferes with the employee’s ability to do their UT job.

You may be affected by more than one type of “conflict of interest” policy.
• HOP 5-2011 Conflict of Interest, Conflict of Commitment, and Outside Activities
• HOP 7-1210 Promoting Objectivity in Research by Managing, Reducing, or Eliminating Conflicts of Interest

Important Deadlines

January 1 – December 31
• Faculty & Staff: Submit requests for prior approval and disclosures as they arise during the current calendar year.
• Approvers: Review requests for prior approval and take action as needed.

January 1 – March 31
• Faculty & Staff: Complete and certify disclosures for previous calendar year.
• Approvers: Review requests for prior approval and take action as needed.

Resources

Provoost Office (faculty)
www.utexas.edu/provost
512-471-4363

Human Resources (staff)
www.utexas.edu/hr
512-475-7200

Legal Affairs
www.utexas.edu/vp/irla
512-471-1241

University Policy Office
policies.utexas.edu
512-471-0594

Compliance and Ethics Hotline
reportlineweb.com/utaustin
877-507-7321

Faculty: contact Provost’s Office
Phone: 512-471-4363
Email: evpp_coi@austin.utexas.edu

Staff: contact Human Resources
Phone: 512-475-7200
Email: hrs.sws@austin.utexas.edu

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FAQ

• Am I allowed to have employment outside of the university?
  Yes, but you and the university must determine whether or not the employment is or could be a potential conflict of interest or conflict of commitment. You may need to request approval and develop a management plan before starting the outside activity.

• How do I get prior approval?
  Faculty and Exempt staff complete a request form in the Outside Activity Portal (OAP). Non-exempt staff may need to fill out an Outside Employment Form on the HR website: http://www.utexas.edu/hr/forms/

• What activities don’t require prior approval?
  Certain activities are considered “pre-approved” because they contribute to the mission of the university. You can find examples of these activities in the policy.

• How do I know if I’m an approver?
  For the purposes of this policy, you are considered an approver if you are a dean, associate dean, chair, supervisor, manager, or are typically in the chain of approval.

University employees may not have outside activities that are in significant conflict with performing their job responsibilities. Although we may have other outside activities, our job at the university is our primary responsibility. In an effort to increase transparency, we are required to disclose any activity that may be in conflict or perceived to be in conflict with our regular job duties in UT System’s Outside Activity Portal (OAP). Depending on your situation, there may be other steps to take before starting an outside activity.

There are many different ways you can have a conflict of interest at the university:

• Outside employment or other compensated activity
• Substantial interest in a business entity
• Service on outside boards
• Gifts of $250 or more (including travel or fees paid for by a third party)
• Other outside activities (paid or unpaid) that might reasonably appear to create a conflict of interest or conflict of commitment

Unmanaged conflicts of interest and conflicts of commitment are not allowed by any employee. When in doubt whether an activity should be disclosed, disclose the activity.

UT System’s Outside Activity Portal (OAP)

The OAP allows employees to make disclosures, request prior approvals, enter management plans, and more. The disclosure process is based on the calendar year, not the academic year.

The OAP can be accessed by going to: http://outsideactivity.utsystem.edu. Approvers may need to access the OAP, even if they do not have anything to disclose themselves, in order to approve requests from their employees.

A document called “Tool Tip Training” is a user manual designed by UT System to help people use the OAP. You can find this document and many others on the Provost Office’s website: www.utexas.edu/provost.

For more information: http://www.utexas.edu/provost/policies/coi | Access to the OAP: http://outsideactivity.utsystem.edu