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**Status** Final

**Policy Type** [Executive Vice President & Provost](#)

**Contact Office** [Executive Vice President and Provost \(Office of the\)](#)

**Oversight Executive**

Executive Vice President and Provost

**Applies To** Academic Division.

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## **Reason for Policy**

The University of Virginia recognizes conflicts of interest may arise between faculty members' professional responsibilities and personal interests. This policy outlines measures to manage or eliminate potential conflicts of interest and describes situations that are prohibited.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **Conflict of Interest**

#### **Description**

A situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity.

## **Policy Statement**

Faculty members are public officials whose professional activities may create situations in which their private or personal interests are potentially in opposition to their official responsibilities. A faculty member must be sensitive to the potential for conflict of interest situations and act in a manner to minimize their effects. Certain conflicts of interest are forbidden, while others must be disclosed to the faculty member's immediate supervisor or respective oversight office.

**1. Conflicts Involving Family Members:**

As a matter of state law and University policy, it is the responsibility of faculty members to avoid being in a position of authority over a family member who also is employed by the University (for specific details, see [Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act](#)). For the purposes of this policy, a family member is defined as a spouse, parent, child, or sibling.

While a faculty member and their family member may both be employed by the University, the faculty member must not be in a position to exercise any control over the employment conditions and activities (such as initial appointment, evaluation, retention, promotion, tenure, salary, leave of absence, grievance advantage) of the family member and is prohibited from influencing those activities.

As a matter of sound judgment and professional ethics, faculty members also have a responsibility to avoid being placed in a position of authority - by virtue of their specific teaching, research, or administrative assignments - over family members who are students at the University. Any apparent or actual conflict between a faculty member's professional responsibilities and personal interests in terms of their dealings with students should be reported to their immediate supervisor.

In October 2021, the University adopted [PROV-033: Restrictions on Certain Romantic or Sexual Relationships at the University](#), which provides policy on amorous relationships between faculty and students.

**2. Conflicts in Faculty Professional Obligations:**

Faculty members must acknowledge potential personal or professional conflicts of interest related to their professional activities. In addition to personal or familial relationships described above, professional collaborations or departmental standing may affect a faculty member's ability to make impartial evaluations and judgments. Faculty members must disclose potential conflicts or recuse themselves from contributing to evaluations or decisions in cases where, because of their own interests or their personal or professional relationships, they have a special stake in the outcome. Examples include voting on the promotion of a close collaborator or serving on a selection committee for an award for which a mentee is eligible. While completing administrative or other professional responsibilities, faculty members are responsible for reporting potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate chair, unit head, or dean.

**3. Financial Conflicts:**

The [Conflict of Interests Act](#) also contains pertinent financial provisions related to procurement and contracts. The technical details of these and other financial conflicts of interest situations are set forth in the [Virginia Public Procurement Act, Ethics in Public Contracting](#) and explained further in [FIN-054: Employee Obligation to Report Potential Conflicts of Interest](#) and UVA Finance's [Conflict of Interest guidance](#). These resources should be consulted by all faculty members who may be involved in any such situation. Questions regarding the application of these policies to faculty members' work, as well as reports of incentive offers, free goods and services, gifts, and coupons should be reported to [Procurement Services](#).

**4. Research Conflicts:**

Faculty members engaged in research or sponsored programs are responsible for maintaining objectivity and reporting potential conflicts of interest that may bias – or appear to bias – their research. In addition to the statutes and financial policy referenced above, [RES-005: Financial Conflicts of Interest for Research Investigators](#) and [RES-011: Investigator Eligibility Requirements and Responsibilities Related to Sponsored Programs](#) provide more information on the requirements for managing and reporting potential conflicts related to research.

**5. Use of University Resources:**

Faculty members may also encounter conflicts of interest related to the use of University resources. It is

the responsibility of faculty members to ensure they understand and abide by acceptable use policies and avoid potential conflicts of interest as described in [PRM-011: Use of Working Time and University Equipment for Personal or Commercial Purposes](#) and [IRM-002: Acceptable Use of the University's Information Technology Resources](#).

#### 6. **Compliance with Policy:**

Failure to abide by the conflict of interest principles described above can have serious consequences. Violations of the employment-based restrictions contained in the State Conflict of Interests Act may lead to civil - and if willful, criminal - penalties, as well as termination from state employment. Breaches of professional ethics standards may also prompt disciplinary action. Faculty members should also be aware of – and comply with – any conflict of interest policies specific to their school or unit.

Questions about this policy should be directed to the [Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost](#).

### **Procedures**

Deans and department chairs are responsible for reporting any violation of this policy to the unit responsible for managing the specific type of conflict. Any member of the University community who becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest can also report to the responsible unit.

### **Related Information**

[FIN-054: Employee Obligation to Report Potential Conflicts of Interest](#)  
[IRM-002: Acceptable Use of the University's Information Technology Resources](#)  
[PRM-011: Use of Working Time and University Equipment for Personal or Commercial Purposes](#)  
[PROV-009: Faculty Holding Appointments at Other Institutions or Organizations](#)  
[PROV-033: Restrictions on Certain Romantic or Sexual Relationships at the University](#)  
[RES-005: Financial Conflicts of Interest for Research Investigators](#)  
[RES-011: Investigator Eligibility Requirements and Responsibilities Related to Sponsored Programs](#)  
[Policy on Disciplinary Suspension or Termination of Academic Faculty](#)

[Faculty Senate Handbook](#)  
[University Code of Ethics](#)  
[University Conflict of Interest Overview from UVA Compliance](#)  
UVA Finance's [Conflict of Interest guidance](#)

[Virginia State and Local Government Conflict of Interests Act](#)  
[Virginia Public Procurement Act, Ethics in Public Contracting](#)

Medical Center employees are responsible for knowing and complying with Medical Center Policy: [Vendors, Sales and Service Representatives at the Medical Center](#) and Health System Policy [BEH-002: Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment](#).

**Major Category** [Executive Vice President & Provost Policies](#)

**Next Scheduled Review** Friday, July 30, 2027

**Supersedes Policy Text** Conflict of Interest, Faculty

**Approved By** Executive Vice President and Provost

**Approved Date** Tuesday, July 30, 2024