



Policy on Conflict of Commitment: Faculty

Scope

This Policy applies to all schools and divisions and all faculty members at Tufts University.

Purpose

It is both appropriate and desirable that many Tufts faculty members be involved in professional and other outside activities, in consulting, guest lecturing at other institutions, and serving in professional and community organizations. Such activities extend the faculty member's professional competence, enrich the teaching such person can provide at Tufts, and contribute to the advancement of the profession.

Occasionally, however, questions arise about the extent of such involvement or the appropriateness of certain activities. This Policy is provided to assist individual faculty members in identifying (and, if possible, avoiding) possible problems in this area.

This Policy is consistent with and is in addition to relevant federal and state law and University policies listed below and with other relevant University policies not listed here. Academic or administrative division, department or units may require further disclosure and conflict of commitment management than mandated by this Policy as may be deemed appropriate by such division, department or unit and its supervising administrator.

Policy Statement

This section of the Policy applies to faculty members and pertains to the period of their University contracts (nine-month, twelve-month, or other).

Faculty members with 50% or more appointments at the University owe their primary professional commitment to the University. Accordingly, a commensurate commitment of time and intellectual energy should be used to support and enhance the mission of the University. Other part-time faculty members owe time and effort commitments to the University commensurate with their appointments.

So long as part-time faculty members fulfill their obligations to the University, the way in which they spend the balance of their time (and the way in which faculty members on less-than-full-year contracts spend their non-contract time) is not a proper concern of the University, so long as those activities do not conflict with their University obligations and do not reflect unfavorably on the University.

These provisions are general in nature and are intended to apply to the entire University. Individual schools may wish to develop more specific guidelines to take into account their particular circumstances of their school or profession, as long as such specific guidelines do not conflict with this Policy. Where necessary, questions may be referred to FCOI @ Tufts.edu.



1. The principal professional commitment of full-time faculty members is to the University. It is recognized that University-related educational, research, service and related activities are such that it is both unfeasible and undesirable to attempt to establish narrow time and location regulations on how faculty members fulfill these responsibilities.
2. The University encourages outside professional activity on the part of faculty members when it furthers their professional development, and especially when it enhances their teaching and research capabilities. It is expected, however, that faculty members will arrange any external activities they may engage in so as not to interfere with their primary commitment.
3. Faculty members must inform the dean of their school before engaging in any significant outside professional activity and disclose such activity in the Conflict of Interest Questionnaire in accordance with the University's Policies on Conflict of Interest. Activities may be significant even though they involve comparatively little time. A single guest lecture or a one-time consulting visit would not normally be considered significant, but a lecture series or an on-going consulting relationship would be. Where there is a disagreement about the propriety of an activity, subject to the review of the applicable Conflict of Interest Review Committee, the dean and the faculty member involved shall make their best efforts to arrive at a resolution consistent with the mission of the school. The dean will make the final determination, however, given the dean's ultimate responsibility to the university for the performance of the school.
4. As a rule, faculty members should not take on substantial teaching or other commitments in another educational institution. Exceptions would include guest lecturing, participating in invited seminars, and similar activities.
5. Faculty members should not engage in external activities that are not consistent with good professional practices; that impose restrictions on the freedom to publish University-based work or assigns intellectual property rights in work being done at the University; or that involve any significant use of University facilities, materials, services, personnel, or restricted University information without specific advance written permission from the University and, where needed, appropriate compensation.
6. For a full-time faculty member, no more than 20% of one's total professional effort during the normal working hours of a five-day week may be directed to the outside work. The intent of this guideline is to avoid situations where the time or creative energy a faculty member devotes to extramural activities compromises the amount or quality of his or her participation in the instructional, scholarly, or administrative work of the university. This 20% carve out will not apply to part-time faculty members.

Activities consistent with guidelines that do not require advance permission from the dean, but may need to be disclosed in the Conflict of Interest Questionnaire:

- Acceptance of royalties for published scholarly works or other writings, or of honoraria for commissioned papers and occasional lectures;
- Service on committees or boards of organizations, public or private, which does not conflict with University obligations. The payment of honoraria or reimbursement of expenses in these cases should not be an issue;
- Occasional consulting with outside organizations or clients, provided that it does not conflict with his or her obligations to the University or the practice or policy restrictions of the school or college involved.



Activities which need to be disclosed in the Conflict of Interest Questionnaire and examined on a case-by-case basis and approved in advance by the school dean:

- Service as a principal consultant or director of an outside concern;
- Service as a consultant to a firm which in turn sponsors the faculty member's work, or related work at the University;
- Relationships that might enable (or appear to enable) the faculty member to influence the University's dealings with an outside organization in ways leading to personal gain or other conflicts of interest;
- Activities that appear to conflict with University policies governing research funded by an external agency and with funds administered by the University;
- Activities which directly or indirectly involve students in anything other than their normal academic pursuits.

Activities which are probably unacceptable:

- Service involving executive responsibility for an outside concern working in areas related to the faculty member's professional activities;
- Situations where a research or service activity that could and ordinarily would be carried on within the University is conducted elsewhere to the disadvantage of the University and its legitimate interests.

Violations

Violations of this Policy as determined by the appropriate dean, director, supervisor, or Conflict of Interest Committee are considered misconduct on the part of a faculty member and may be subject to institutional sanctions up to and including termination of appointment in accordance with applicable disciplinary procedures.

Violations include but are not limited to situations in which:

- a. A faculty member knows of a situation that places such person in a potential or actual conflict of interest or conflict of commitment but fails to disclose it fully, according to the Questionnaire or the policies of such person's division, department or unit; and
- b. A faculty member discloses a potential or actual conflict of interest or commitment but fails to abide fully by the required plan for avoiding or managing the conflict.

Disputes and Appeals

When a faculty disputes any action or decision related to a potential conflict of interest or conflict of commitment, existing University policies for disputes of faculty will be used. Disputes with decisions or actions taken by an established Conflict of Interest Committee for those projects for which the Committee is responsible must be through the processes established by the Committee. If a school or administrative division, department or unit develops additional procedures for handling disputes or appeals regarding any action or decision taken with respect to a faculty member's



conflict of interest or conflict of commitment, the additional procedures must coordinate with and may not substitute for existing University policies for handling disputes.

Retaliation

Any act of retaliation or reprisal against an individual for reporting in good faith a potential institutional conflict of interest or a violation of this Policy shall be a violation of this Policy. Any use of this Policy to report in bad faith an alleged potential institutional conflict of interest shall be a violation of this Policy. Such violations will be dealt with through regular administrative processes for violations of University policies.

Revision

The University reserves the right to change this Policy from time to time. Proposed changes will normally be developed by those responsible for the policy with appropriate stakeholders. The approval entities have sole authority to approve changes to this Policy. Conflict of Interest Protocol may be modified, from time to time, by the Conflict of Interest Steering Committee.

Questions

Please contact fcoi@tufts.edu.

Approval Entity(ies)

Provost's Office
Executive Vice President
Office of University Counsel
Academic Council
Office of the President

Effective Date

Established, February 22, 1984, revised April 2010, revised January 2021 (to be consistent with the Conflict of Interest Policies)

Executive Sponsor(s)

Michael Howard, Executive Vice President
Mary R. Jeka, General Counsel

Review Cycle

Annually or as determined by the Conflict of Interest Steering Committee

Related Policies

Conflict of Interest Policy: Financial and Personal
Conflict of Interest Policy: Research
Conflict of Interest Policy: Institutional
Conflict of Interest Policy: Review Protocol
Conflict of Commitment Policy: Non-Faculty Employees