



## Operating Policy and Procedure

**SOM OP:** 40.13, **Conflict of Interest Policy in Medical Education Program**

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this School of Medicine (SOM) Policy and Procedure is to identify and manage conflicts that may arise in the context of educational activities.

**REVIEW:** This SOM Policy and Procedure will be reviewed within each odd-numbered fiscal year by the Student Affairs Committee (SAC). Revisions will be forwarded to the Office of the Accreditation for publication.

### **POLICY/PROCEDURE:**

#### **1. General.**

This School of Medicine (SOM) requires all faculty, regardless of title or status, and staff to conduct educational activities and keep the learning environment free from real or perceived bias that could arise from a conflict of interest in the assessment or promotion of students. This policy applies to faculty, regardless of title or status, staff, and students at TTUHSC SOM. SOM OP 40.13 provides additional policy/procedure guidance alongside policy expectations outlined in TTUHSC OP 10.05: Conflict of Interest and Commitment Policy.

#### **2. Definitions.**

##### Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest refers to a situation in which an TTUHSC SOM 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.

A conflict of interest arises when an Employee's personal, financial, or professional interests have the potential to compromise their objectivity, judgment, or decision-making in matters related to delivery or execution of the medical education program. A conflict of interest may be present when an Employee:

1. Has a personal, social, or familial relationship with the student;
2. Has a business or financial relationship with the student or the student's immediate family;
3. Has provided health care services to the student or the student's immediate family;
4. Has graded the student in a course for which the course grade is the subject of a pending adverse action or remediation plan; or
5. Serves as the student's academic coach, advisor; or has another significant relationship with the student.

### 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.

### Family Member

For purposes of this policy, it includes the Employee's:

- Spouse, step-children, spouse's parents, children's spouses and step-parents (1st degree within the 1st degree of affinity - marriage);
- Spouse's siblings, grandparents, grandchildren, sibling's spouse, step-grandparents and grandchild's spouses (1st degree within the 2nd degree of affinity – marriage);
- Parent, or child (1st degree within the 3rd degree of consanguinity – blood);
- Siblings, grandparents and grandchildren (2nd degree of consanguinity – blood);
- Great-grandparents, great-grandchildren, uncle, aunt, nephew and niece (3rd degree of consanguinity – blood); and
- Household members.

## **2. Procedures.**

### Responsibilities of Faculty, Resident/Fellow Trainee, or Staff Member (aka "Employee")

If an Employee believes they are involved in or responsible for a graded educational activity or an academic progression or disciplinary administrative activity where a real or perceived conflict of interest exists (or could exist), it is the Employee's responsibility to notify, in writing, at least one of the following individuals: Course Director; leader or supervisor of the learning activity; Student Affairs or Academic Affairs Dean of the student's educational campus that said conflict exists. Written notification from the Employee should cite the identified area(s) of conflict of interest with respect to the individual's responsibilities associated with the student's graded educational activity, academic progression or disciplinary administrative activity. The following areas are recognized for an Employee to cite as potential conflict of interest: Evaluation/Assessment of a student; Promotion or Progression decisions in the medical degree program; Disciplinary actions or decisions in the medical degree program; Academic or career advising in the medical degree program.

### Responsibilities of the Student

If a student believes they are required by the SOM to participate in a graded educational activity or an academic progression or disciplinary administrative activity where a real or perceived conflict of interest exists (or could exist), it is the student's responsibility to notify, in writing, at least one of the following individuals: Course Director; leader or supervisor of the learning activity; Student Affairs or Academic Affairs Dean of the student's educational campus that said conflict exists. Written notification from the student must cite the identified area(s) of conflict of interest with respect to the conflicted faculty or staff member's responsibilities associated with that student's graded educational activity, academic progression or disciplinary administrative

activity. The following areas are recognized for a student to cite as potential conflict of interest: Evaluation/Assessment of a student; Promotion or Progression decisions in the medical degree program; Disciplinary actions or decisions in the medical degree program; Academic or career advising in the medical degree program.

#### Review and Disposition of Conflicts of Interest

Conflict of interest submissions from Employees or students will be reviewed and dispositioned within ten (10) business days by a minimum of three of the following five SOM educational leadership members: Senior Associate Dean of Academic Affairs; Associate Dean for Student Affairs; senior Student Affairs/Medical Educational personnel representing the Amarillo, Covenant Branch, and Odessa campuses. If the Employee identified in the conflict of interest submission is one of the above SOM educational leadership members, that individual will be recused from deliberation and dispositioning regarding that conflict of interest submission.

If, following review, a conflict of interest is affirmed options that may be pursued to manage the conflict of interest include: reassignment of the student for the graded educational activity or of the grading supervisor; recusal of the Employee from the academic progression or disciplinary administrative activity; reassignment of the student to an alternate career advising Employee.

Once rendered, the decision regarding the conflict of interest submission is final. There is no appeal beyond this process.