

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Conflict of Interest
<b>Original Approval Date:</b>	07-14-22
<b>Approving Officer/Committee:</b>	SOM Executive Committee
<b>Revision Dates and Notes:</b>	None
<b>Related LCME Element(s) (if any):</b>	1.2, 12.5

### A. Policy

This policy defines dual relationships in order to avoid any potential conflict of interest and to ensure the most constructive and supportive learning atmosphere for our students. The following LCME Elements were considered in the drafting of this policy:

*LCME Element 1.2: A medical school has in place and follows effective policies and procedures applicable to board members, faculty members, and any other individuals who participate in decision-making affecting the medical education program to avoid the impact of conflicts of interest in the operation of the medical education program, its associated clinical facilities, and any related enterprises.*

*LCME Element 12.5: The health professionals who provide health services, including psychiatric/psychological counseling, to a medical student have no involvement in the academic assessment or promotion of the medical student receiving those services. A medical school ensures that medical student health records are maintained in accordance with legal requirements for security, privacy, confidentiality, and accessibility.*

Conflicts of interest can pose problems for the student, as well as affecting the learning environment for the entire health care team. These conflicts of interest include but are not limited to:

- consensual relationships
- familial relationships
- healthcare or psychological provider-grading faculty/patient-student health care relationships
- financial relationships (including direct supervisor of employment)
- friendships or working relationships with any involved party that might affect objectivity

Therefore, faculty, staff, residents, fellows, and committee members must avoid such dual relationships with students. If such a relationship does exist, faculty, residents, fellows, and committee members will make appropriate arrangements to avoid any conflict of interest. If the status of a person with a relationship with a student changes (ie one becomes a medical student or graduates and becomes a resident) then all COI rules apply immediately with the change of status.

Additionally, preserving the integrity and objectivity of instruction and assessment (including examinations through the NBME) is paramount. Faculty, staff, residents, fellows, and committee members must not have, or appear to have, interests that conflict with the best interests of a student. Any such conflicts must be disclosed and resolved immediately.

Faculty, staff, residents, fellows, and committee members who have provided medical or psychological services for a medical student or has a personal or familial relationship will not have involvement in the academic assessment or promotion of the medical student receiving those services.

## **B. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to medical students, faculty, staff, residents, fellows, and committee members who may have relationships that extend beyond the standard learner/teacher relationship. It is important to define these relationships and establish policy with regards to managing them in order to avoid conflicts of interest and to establish and maintain a constructive and supportive learning environment.

## **C. Scope**

LSU Health Shreveport School of Medicine (LSUH SOM) is committed to ensuring that students are taught, assessed, and advised by faculty members, fellows, residents, or committee members whose primary interest is the student's educational development. This policy sets forth the process for avoiding potential conflicts of interest by ensuring that any faculty member, staff, fellow, resident, or committee member with a possible conflict of interest recuses themselves from participation in any actions related to the transaction or matter where a conflict may exist.

LSUH SOM will provide faculty members, staff, fellows, residents, and committee members with regular education related to conflict of interest, reporting relationships, and guidance for mitigating potential COIs.

## **D. Definitions**

A conflict of interest (COI) is defined as a relationship in which an individual may have competing interests or loyalties that have the potential to undermine their ability to act in an impartial manner.

Existing rules of LSU Health Shreveport (PM-11) and State of Louisiana (Code of Ethics) define COIs as they relate to industry, government agencies, individuals, and other enterprises to prevent private financial gain for themselves or family members.

This policy builds upon these existing rules to help students, faculty, staff, residents, and fellows avoid and manage COIs that may arise in supervisory relationships that could unduly impact

student grading in required activities, academic advancement, the awarding of special awards such as scholarships or other special recognition, and physician-patient relationships.

#### **D. Procedure/Process**

LSUHS faculty, gratis faculty, staff, fellows, residents, committee members, and students are expected to report each instance in which a relationship may cause a real or potential COI.

Faculty, gratis faculty, staff, fellows, residents, and committee members will be required to immediately report to the module or clerkship director any conflict of interest with the student they have an evaluative capacity for the student or supervise educational activities that result in evaluation or assessment. A different instructor should then be assigned to the student to eliminate the conflict of interest. An attestation statement will be included at the top of the student evaluation. This attestation will be required to ensure that only evaluators without a conflict of interest will contribute to the student's evaluation.

Students attest to the understanding of this policy during orientation to medical school and prior to starting their clerkships. If a student realizes they have been assigned a role with faculty, staff, gratis faculty, fellow, or resident that is prohibited by a current or prior healthcare or psychological provider, financial (direct supervisor of employment), or familial/intimate relationship, the student should notify the module or clerkship director, or Office of Academic Affairs and ask to be reassigned.

At the beginning of all relevant committee meetings, all committee members must disclose any conflict of interest and should recuse themselves from the discussion and the vote. This must be reflected in the committee minutes.

If any potential conflicts of interest involving supervision of testing including NBME related testing should be immediately reported to the Office of Academic Affairs. If any intentional conflicts are discovered, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs will take steps to eliminate potential conflict of interest.

Appeals on decisions related to the presence of relevant conflict(s) of interest are made to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs whose decision is final.

Violations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Students and educators who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

#### **E. Related Policies/Forms**

Student-Teacher Consensual Relationship Policy (Faculty Handbook – Section 11.6)

#### **F. Revision History**