



# UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA

**Policy ID:** ADM-HUM-21 Minor Revision 10 Status: C

**Title:** Conflict of Interest and Business Ethics

**Description:** To establish the meaning of conflict of interest and business ethics.

**Category:** Human Resources

**Applies to:** Staff, Faculty

**Contact:** [Human Resources](#)

**Purpose:** The University expects employees to conduct business according to the highest ethical standards of conduct.

**Policy Statement:** The State Ethics Commission was established under Article XXIX of the Oklahoma Constitution. The Commission is charged with promulgating rules of ethical conduct of state officials and employees, including civil penalties for violations of such rules. State officers and employees are to comply with the Ethics Commission 'Rules' (74 O.S. Appendix Title 257). While statements below will give some general interpretations, the Ethics Commission 'Rules' are always controlling over any statement made in this handbook or by any member of administration. The 'Rules' deal with prohibitions against political activities, financial disclosure, conflicts of interest, penalties, and enforcement. Therefore, employees are compelled to stay abreast of and in compliance with current Ethics Commissions 'Rules,' which can be accessed at [Rules](#).

## In General

Employees are expected to devote their best efforts to the interests of UCO. Business dealings that appear to create a conflict between the interests of the University and an employee are unacceptable. UCO recognizes the right of employees to engage in activities outside of their employment that are of a private nature and unrelated to University business. However, the employee must disclose any possible conflicts so that UCO may assess and prevent potential conflicts of interest from arising. A potential or actual conflict of interest occurs whenever an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for the employee or an immediate family member (i.e., spouse or significant other, children, parents, siblings) as a result UCO's business dealings.

Although it is not possible to specify every action that might create a conflict of interest, this sets forth those that most frequently present problems. If an employee has any question whether an action or proposed course of conduct could create a conflict of interest, he or she should immediately contact Employee Relations and Development in the Offices of Human Resources. The purpose of this policy statement is to protect employees from any conflict of interest that might arise. A violation of this policy will result in immediate and appropriate corrective disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination, and could be subject to civil penalties for violations of Ethics Commission Rules.

## Outside Employment

Employees are required to obtain approval from their supervisor before participating in outside work activities. Approval will be granted unless the activity conflicts with the University's interest. Any tasks or activities associated with outside employment should not be performed during scheduled work time for the University, nor should University resources be used.

In general, outside work activities are not allowed when they:

- Prevent the employee from fully performing work for which he or she is employed at the University, including overtime assignments;

- Involve organizations that do or seek to do business with the University, including actual or potential vendors or customers; or
- Violate provisions of law or the University’s policies or rules.

From time to time, University employees may be required to work beyond their normally scheduled hours. Employees must perform this work when requested. In cases of conflict with any outside activity, the employee's obligations to the University must be given priority. Employees are hired and continue in the University of Central Oklahoma's employ with the understanding that the University is their primary employer and that other employment or commercial involvement that conflicts with the business interests of the University is strictly prohibited.

#### **Acceptance of Gifts**

No employee may solicit or accept gifts of significant value (i.e., in excess of \$100.00) or lavish entertainment or other benefits from potential and actual customers, vendors, suppliers, or competitors. Special care must be taken to avoid even the impression of a conflict of interest. An employee may entertain potential or actual customers if such entertainment is consistent with accepted business practices, does not violate any law or generally accepted ethical standards and the public disclosure of facts will not embarrass the University. Any questions regarding this should be addressed to Employee Relations and Development in the Offices of Human Resources.

#### **Reporting Potential Conflicts**

An employee must promptly disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest to his or her supervisor. Approval will not be given unless the relationship will not interfere with the employee's duties or will not damage the University’s relationship.

#### **Confidential Nature of Work**

All University records and information relating to the University of Central Oklahoma or its employees, students, or customers are confidential and employees must treat all matters accordingly. No University or University-related information, including without limitation, documents, notes, files, records, oral information, computer files, or similar materials (except in the ordinary course of performing duties on behalf of the University) may be destroyed or removed from the University's premises without permission from the University.

Additionally, the contents of the University's records or information otherwise obtained in regard to business may not be disclosed to anyone, except where required for a business purpose. Employees must not disclose any confidential information, purposefully or inadvertently through casual conversation, to any unauthorized person inside or outside the University. Employees who are unsure about the confidential nature of specific information should ask their supervisor for clarification. Employees are subject to appropriate corrective disciplinary action, up to and including termination, for knowingly or unknowingly revealing information of a confidential nature.

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#### **Glossary of Terms:**

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**Legal Citation:** Article XXIX of the Oklahoma Constitution

74 O.S. Appendix Title 257 et. seq

**Campus Links:** [Ethics Commission](#)

**FAQs:**

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