



MEDICAL SCHOOL POLICY

Conflicts of Interest in Advising & Advancement

Senior Leader: Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education

Responsible University Officer: Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Medical Education

Policy Owner: Assistant Dean, Student Affairs Twin Cities
Associate Dean, Student Services & Academic Affairs - DU

Policy Contact: Director, Student Affairs

POLICY STATEMENT

This policy establishes guidelines addressing potential Conflicts of Interest (COI) in the Faculty Advising Program and for decisions of advancement & graduation made by the scholastic standing committee.

In addition, this policy includes an attestation about COIs that Faculty Advisors and members of the scholastic standing committee must review and agree to on an annual basis. (See *Appendix 1*).

Scope

This policy applies to the following parties, in carrying out their official duties in academic and career advising, advancement, and/or graduation:

- a. Faculty Advisors in the Faculty Advising Program
- b. Faculty members of scholastic standing committees (inclusive of any sub- or ad hoc committees)

What Constitutes a Conflict of Interest (COI)

COIs may occur when an individual's primary responsibility to a student in an official capacity is compromised, influenced, or could be perceived to be influenced, by prior or current actions or relationships involving the student, whether through formal or informal means. These COI's have the potential to bias professional judgment and objectivity. COIs may include, but are not limited to, instances where a Faculty Advisor or scholastic standing committee member:

- Has previous or current involvement in providing health and/or psychiatric services to a student or their CLOSE relatives (See *Definitions*). Individuals are expected to be familiar with the UMMS' [Separation of Academic Roles in Providing Healthcare](#) policy
- Is a CLOSE relative or is close personal friends with the student (See *Definitions*)
- Has had a notable negative experience/interaction with the student (eg. has been subject to previous disciplinary actions or complaints involving the student)
- Has a pressing financial and/or political interest with, or relating to, the student or the student's CLOSE relatives
- Stands to benefit in some manner (eg. financial or political benefits, receiving favors) from the success or failure of the student
- Has other formal academic roles that may bias, or may be perceived to bias, the Faculty Advisor's or scholastic standing committee member's professional judgment and objectivity. Holding multiple roles does not necessarily constitute a COI for purposes of this policy. However, Faculty Advisors and scholastic standing committee members must be cognizant of the potential for a COI to occur, or to be perceived to occur. In instances where: 1) a COI exists; 2) there is a high likelihood of a COI existing; or 3) there is the potential for a COI to be perceived to exist, Faculty Advisors and scholastic standing committee members must take appropriate steps to

resolve the COI. This includes recusing themselves from specific role-related activities or reassigning the student to another Faculty Advisor

REASON FOR POLICY

This policy and its associated attestation process is intended to remove, as much as possible, bias in the Faculty Advising Program as well as decisions of advancement and graduation made by the scholastic standing committee. While it is acknowledged that it may not be possible to remove all bias, the goal is to manage bias to the extent possible.

This policy also ensures the medical school meets LCME Accreditation requirements as follows:

Element 1.2: CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICIES. “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.”

Element 11.1: ACADEMIC ADVISING. “A medical school has an effective system of academic advising in place for medical students that integrates the efforts of faculty members, course and clerkship directors, and student affairs staff with its counseling and tutorial services and ensures that medical students can obtain academic counseling from individuals who have no role in making assessment or promotion decisions about them.”

Element 12.5: NON-INVOLVEMENT OF PROVIDERS OF STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES IN STUDENT ASSESSMENT/LOCATION OF STUDENT HEALTH RECORDS. “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.”

PROCEDURES

Responsibilities for Reporting COIs

Students:

- a. Medical students who believe a COI exists with their Faculty Advisor can submit a request for reassignment to the Dean of Students on their respective campus
- b. Perceived COIs in a scholastic standing committee case can be challenged in accordance with the procedures outlined in the [Scholastic Standing Committee](#) policy
- c. MSPE Preparation: The MSPE for each student is completed by that student's Faculty Advisor at the time the MSPE is being prepared. In instances of actual or perceived COI a student may request a different advisor to complete their MSPE. Students will reach out to the Dean of Students on their respective campus to request such reassignment

Faculty Advisors & Scholastic Standing Committee Members:

- a. Must make such COIs known to the appropriate Dean of Students on their respective campus immediately or as soon as is reasonably possible
- b. For Faculty Advisors, must recuse from any further activities involving the student pending reassignment or resolution
- c. For scholastic standing committee members, must follow the procedures on recusals as outlined in the [Scholastic Standing Committee](#) policy

Non-Retaliation

In order to protect the rights and freedoms of students who believe a COI exists and who request recusals or reassignments, the UMMS strongly enforces the University's non-retaliation policy. No student shall experience retaliation for claims of a COI, or requests for recusals or reassignment. Students may report suspected retaliation to the Dean of Students on their campus. Reports of suspected retaliation will be promptly reviewed and investigated. Violations may result in appropriate administrative action.

COI Non-Compliance

- a. Failure to comply with this policy will result in removal as a Faculty Advisor or scholastic standing committee member
- b. Violations may be grounds for disciplinary action by the UMMS Dean or applicable supervisor

ADDITIONAL CONTACTS

| Subject | Contact | Phone | Fax/Email |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Primary Contact | Name | Phone | Fax/Email |
| Director, Accreditation & CQI | Joseph Oppedisano | 612-624-4114 | joppedis@umn.edu |

DEFINITIONS

Close Relative

For purposes of this policy, close relatives refers to parents, siblings, spouse, grandparents, aunts/uncles, or cousins, including in-law and step relationships

Personal Friend

For purposes of this policy, a close personal friendship exists when the desire to further the private interests of a student precludes the ability to objectively and fairly exercise an official duty or function.

HISTORY

Reviewed and Approved: Senior Associate Dean, UME, March 2024

APPENDIX 1

University of Minnesota Medical School (UMMS) Faculty Advisors and committee members will be notified annually to confirm agreement with the following attestation.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA MEDICAL SCHOOL CONFLICT OF INTEREST ATTESTATION

As a UMMS Faculty Advisor or member of a scholastic standing committee, I attest that:

- I am not advising (for Faculty Advisors) or reviewing a scholastic standing committee case (for scholastic standing committee members) for a student or their CLOSE relative to whom I currently or previously provide(d) health and/or psychiatric services
- I am not a CLOSE relative or close personal friends with my advisees (for Faculty Advisors) or with any students brought before the scholastic standing committee (for scholastic standing committee members)
- I have not had a notable negative experience/interaction (eg. been subject to previous disciplinary actions or complaints involving the student) with a student I advise (for Faculty Advisors) or for a student whose case is being reviewed by the scholastic standing committee (for scholastic standing committee members) in a manner that creates a conflict of interest
- I do not advise (for Faculty Advisors) or have had any students brought before the scholastic standing committee (for scholastic standing committee members) with whom I have a pressing financial and/or political interest where I stand to benefit in some manner from the success or failure of the student
- Any other formal roles I have do not unduly bias, or may be perceived to bias, my professional judgment and objectivity as a Faculty Advisor or member of the scholastic standing committee. (Holding multiple roles does not necessarily constitute a COI for purposes of this policy)

I further attest that:

- I am familiar with, and in compliance with, the UMMS' [Conflict of Interest in Advising & Advancement policy](#)
- If I am aware of any current conflicts of interest, before completing this attestation, I must contact the Dean of Students on my campus and make the conflict fully known
- Perceived or actual conflicts of interest may preclude me from participating in ANY roles that are deemed to be contributing to the conflicts of interest, as determined by the designated medical school officer(s)
- If I become aware of any conflicts of interest in the course of my roles as a Faculty Advisor or member of a scholastic standing committee I must immediately make such conflicts fully known to the Dean of Students on my campus and recuse myself from further advising of the student or scholastic standing committee involvement in the student's case
- I understand the medical school will take any and all appropriate actions deemed necessary to resolve any actual or perceived conflicts of interest. This includes reassigning students or removing me from any and all roles contributing to the conflict of interest
- Non-compliance with any of the conditions outlined in the [Conflict of Interest in Advising & Advancement policy](#) will result in removal as a Faculty Advisor or scholastic standing committee member and that violations may be grounds for disciplinary action by the UMMS Dean or applicable supervisor