

<b>Policy Title:</b> Addressing Conflicts of Interest in Student Assessment	<b>Curricular Structure:</b> All Medical Students in Legacy and ASCEND
<b>Approved By:</b> Executive Oversight Committee (EOC)	<b>Approval Dates:</b> 8/4/2023 7/12/2024

## RELEVANT LCME STANDARDS:

- 1.2 Conflict of Interest
- 11.1 Academic Advising and Academic Counseling
- 12.5 Non-Involvement of Providers of Student Health Services in Student Assessment/Location of Student Health Records

## POLICY:

This policy seeks to mitigate the impact that dual relationships or adverse actions between students and faculty, non-faculty instructors, and residents who directly play a role in assessment, remediation, or promotion of students. The goal of this policy is to ensure that those who directly assess students do so without conflict of interest that may compromise the objectivity and integrity of the student assessment or promotion process. This policy defines dual relationships or adverse actions involving a student that constitute a conflict of interest (COI) to include, but are not limited to current or prior:

- Significant personal or social relationships
- Familial relationships
- Provider-patient (health/mental health care) relationships
- Assigned role as academic or career and professional advisor
- Direct financial or business relationship (e.g. start-up company)
- Faculty role in adverse action against a student, including filing a professionalism concern
- Student filing of mistreatment report involving faculty, non-faculty instructors, or residents

If a relationship or history of adverse action is known, faculty, non-faculty instructors, and residents will make arrangements with the course, module, or clerkship director to avoid any conflict of interest during teaching and evaluation periods. At a minimum, they will not complete an evaluation or provide summative assessment of any student with whom a conflict of interest is known. At any point in time, a student assigned to a course, module, clerkship, elective, or other educational activity with an evaluator who has a conflict of interest (or conversely the educator) may request and will be granted an alternative assignment. Should uncertainty arise regarding COI with a student, it is the expectation that the instructor will take responsibility to disclose the COI to the relevant course, module, clerkship director or appropriate administrative leader (e.g. committee lead, assistant or associate dean).

## PROCEDURE:

### Preclerkship Courses

#### *Faculty, Non-Faculty Instructors, Residents:*

1. In advance of each course in Year 1 and 2, the Office of Curricular Affairs notifies each educator of this policy and provides the roster of students assigned.
2. It is the responsibility of the faculty to review the roster and disclose a conflict of interest (COI) through the [COI in Assessment Reportable Form](#). The specific type of relationship/COI does not need to be disclosed. Once this form is submitted, the Office of Curricular Affairs is notified. The team then reports the COI to the course or module director and coordinator who will reassign the student to a different educator.

#### *Students:*

1. Prior to each course in Years 1 and 2, the Office of Curricular Affairs notifies students of the roster of faculty who may assess students in a small group and/or have a clinical role.
2. Students can “opt out” of that faculty member’s small group through the [COI in Assessment Reportable Form](#). The Office of Curricular Affairs is notified of the form.
3. The student will be reassigned without disclosing the reason for reassignment to the faculty.

### Clinical Rotations

#### *Faculty, Non-Faculty Instructors, Residents:*

1. Faculty and residents are made aware of all clerkship students and notified four weeks prior to the start of each module by the clerkship coordinator. The clerkship coordinator will send the standardized COI communication to the faculty.
  - a. Faculty will be provided with a roster of students. If a faculty realizes that they have a conflict of interest with a student who may be assigned to them, that faculty member is responsible for notifying the course or clerkship director and coordinator about the potential conflict via email.
  - b. The clerkship coordinator will then ensure that the faculty member or resident is not in a preceptor or evaluation role.
  - c. The specific type of relationship/COI does not need to be disclosed. If there are any reported COI, the Coordinator or Clerkship Director will complete the [COI in Assessment Reportable Form](#). The Office of Curricular Affairs is notified of the form.
2. All clerkship evaluation forms have an item that asks the evaluator if a potential conflict of interest may exist. If the evaluator checks “yes” then the clerkship director will nullify the evaluation and it will not be included in any assessment or grade.

#### *Students:*

1. Medical students in clinical rotations are made aware of faculty and other educators assigned to teach in the clerkships four weeks prior to the start of the module by the clerkship coordinator. The clerkship coordinator will send the standardized COI communication to the clerkship students.
  - a. Students will be provided with a roster of all educators who will teach in the clerkship for the academic year. If a student is assigned a role with an individual faculty member that is prohibited by a current or prior clinical or familial/intimate relationship with that faculty member, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the course or clerkship director via email.
  - b. The clerkship coordinator will then ensure that the student is not placed with the faculty member or resident in a preceptor or evaluation role.
  - c. The reason given for the reassignment is duality of interest; the nature of the specific duality of interest circumstance need not be identified.
  - d. If there are any reported COI, the Coordinator or Clerkship Director will complete the [COI in Assessment Reportable Form](#) . Once this form is submitted, an email is [curricular.affairs@mssm.edu](mailto:curricular.affairs@mssm.edu).