

# UVM Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment

## Sample Responses

*All disclosures must be acknowledged and responded to. This provides some sample responses for those conflicts that are most common. If the activity or interest does not create a conflict, you may respond with one of these templates that best fits the situation. If it does pose a conflict, the conflict must be eliminated either through a management plan or, if a management plan is not an option, through disallowance.*

**IMPORTANT:** For all disclosures that pose an actual, potential, or perceived conflict, do not handle these on your own. According to UVM Policy, you are required to consult with one of the following:

[The Office of General Counsel](#)  
[The Office of the Vice President for Research](#)  
[The Office of Compliance Services](#)

If none of these templates work for the disclosure, you may also contact any of the above offices for guidance.

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## OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES OR OWNERSHIP:

If the employee discloses that they are a board member or employee at a for-profit or non-profit company or institution or ownership or other financial interest in a company and it does not appear that these commitments will prevent the employee from fulfilling their responsibilities to UVM<sup>1</sup>.

If this activity will prevent the employee from fulfilling their responsibilities to UVM, a management plan is required. If a management plan cannot be executed, the activity must be disallowed.

*Consult with the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Vice President for Research, or the Office of Compliance Services.*

Dear [Employee Name],

Thank you disclosing that [you, your spouse, your son, your father-in-law] are/is [serving on the board/an employee] of [Outside Entity] ("Outside Entity") AND/OR that [you, your family member (specify – i.e., wife, son, mother-in-law)] have/has an ownership or other financial interest in Outside Entity. Please confirm your weekly estimated time requirement for work on behalf of this outside activity. If you plan to sign a contract with the Outside Entity, please provide a copy to help ensure that any conflict of interest or conflict of commitment is properly managed.

As part of serving on this board, please be aware of [UVM's policy](#) on use of the school's name, trademarks, and logos.

In addition, if Outside Entity has any contracts or business dealings with UVM, now or while you are [serving on the board/employed], [and/or] [while you have an ownership interest], you should recuse yourself from participating in any discussions or decisions related to such contract. You should also disclose this relationship in any publications and presentations.

Finally, if UVM is contemplating entering into a contract or business relationship with [Outside Entity], you may not participate in that decision on behalf of UVM.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

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<sup>1</sup> The LCOM Faculty Handbook prohibits outside commitments of more than an additional .2 FTE (i.e., 8 hours per week).

**FAMILY RELATIONSHIP:**

If the employee discloses that a member of their family also works at UVM.

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that your [family member – specify, i.e., husband, partner, niece, grandfather] is now working at UVM.

You may not make a decision in your UVM role that would directly benefit a Family Member. Review UVM's [Nepotism Policy](#) for those actions that you are prohibited from undertaking as it relates to your family member.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

## CONSULTING:

If the employee discloses that they are consulting or providing other similar services for an outside entity, and it does not appear as if this consulting will interfere with the employee's UVM duties.

If this consulting will interfere with the employee's UVM duties, a management plan is needed. If a management plan cannot be executed, the consulting will be disallowed.

*Consult with the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Vice President for Research, or the Office of Compliance Services.*

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that you will be acting as a consultant for [Outside Entity], and that this work will involve [description of services].

UVM approves this consulting activity if (1) you make clear in writing to [outside entity] that you are an employee of UVM, and (2) the consulting arrangement is subject to the policies and procedures of UVM, including UVM's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) and [Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment Policy](#). You should also disclose this relationship in any publications and presentations.

As part of serving in this role, please be aware of UVM's [Trademarks Policy](#). This policy provides information on the use of UVM's name, trademarks and logos.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

## HIRING UVM STUDENTS FOR NON-UVM WORK:

If the employee discloses that they are advising or teaching a UVM student and has or intends to hire the student to conduct non-UVM personal work for the employee.

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that you [have hired/intend to hire] a UVM student to work for you on non-UVM related work, and that you teach and/or advise this student.

Because of the importance of avoiding perceived or real conflicts of interest, we recommend that you avoid hiring students to work for you on non-UVM related work if you are teaching and/or advising them. If you do [hire/continue to employ] this student, you should take steps to avoid the appearance of a conflict.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

## GIFTS AND LIKE-KIND EXCHANGES:

If an employee discloses that a UVM contractor or collaborator has given or intends to give a gift to the employee.

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that you [have received/are receiving] gifts with a value of approximately [\$] from [company name/organization], a company doing business with UVM ("Vendor").

Under UVM policy, you may receive nominal gifts from Vendors that work with UVM. Because this gift is more than nominal, you are not permitted to accept the gift. You must either inform the Vendor that you may not accept the gift and return it or inform the Vendor that you will share the gift with all the members of your department. Please notify me within 3 business days whether you will be returning the gift or sharing it with your department.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

**FACULTY or STAFF AFFILIATION WITH ANOTHER UNIVERSITY:**

If the employee discloses that they have an affiliation or other similar agreement, including an employment relationship, with another institution or university and it does not appear that this activity will interfere with their ability to fulfil their duties to UVM.

If this activity will interfere with their ability to fulfill their duties to UVM, a management plan is required. If a management plan cannot be executed, the activity must be disallowed.

*Consult with the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the Vice President for Research, or the Office of Compliance Services.*

**FACULTY TEMPLATE:**

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that you are affiliated with/employed by [company name] ("Outside Institution"). UVM approves this affiliation with the Outside Institution provided that (1) you make clear in writing to the Outside Institution that you are a full-time faculty member and employee of UVM, and (2) the affiliation is subject to the policies and procedures of UVM, including UVM's [Intellectual Property Policy](#) and [Conflict of Interest/Conflict of Commitment Policy](#) as well as UVM's [Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards](#) which contains a section on protecting university assets and the appropriate use of university resources. Also, please disclose this relationship in any publications and presentations.

As part of serving in this role, please be aware of UVM's [Trademark Policy](#) which provides details on the use of the school's name, trademarks, and logos.

*[If research at the Outside Institution is disclosed include the following]*

With respect to the proposed research at or with the Outside Institution, none of your time should be charged to a grant managed by the Outside Institution. Please contact [Sponsored Project Administration](#) for further guidance.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]

**STAFF TEMPLATE:**

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing that you are affiliated with/employed by [company name] ("Outside Institution"). UVM approves this affiliation with the Outside Institution provided that the other institution knows that you also work at UVM and that you follow existing policies and procedures of UVM, including UVM's [Trademark Policy](#) which provides details on the use of the school's name, trademarks, and logos and UVM's [Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards](#) which contains a section on protecting university assets and the appropriate use of university resources.

Sincerely,  
[Reviewer]

**FACULTY TEACHING A FAMILY MEMBER:**

If a student enrolls in a course that is taught by a family member, this poses a conflict that needs to be eliminated or managed. To eliminate the conflict, if the class is required for their degree, the student must enroll in another section taught by a non-family member. If that is not an option, the student may only take the course if there is another faculty member available to grade the work or, if there is a TA assigned to the course, the TA may do the initial grading, but these evaluations must be reviewed by the chair/program director who will have the authority to make changes to the assigned grades. If either of these scenarios do not apply, you should contact your department reviewer. Department reviewers can always contact the Office of Compliance & Privacy Services with questions. Use this email template to manage the conflict.

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing your relationship with [student name] and confirming that (1) this course is required for the student to complete their degree, and (2) there are no other options to satisfy this degree requirement.

UVM approves this activity as long as you recuse yourself from evaluating/grading this student's work. To manage this conflict [choose either a or b],

- this student's work will be evaluated by [enter name of faculty member] OR
- the TA will grade this student's work and [enter name of chair/program director] will review the grading history and confirm/propose changes to the grade if warranted.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]



## **FACULTY ASSIGNING OWN BOOK TO STUDENTS:**

**If the faculty member is assigning a book to their class and, by doing so, the faculty member obtains remuneration.**

Dear [Employee Name]:

Thank you for disclosing your relationship with [Company] that involves [writing/collaborating/editing/audio or video recording] textbooks.

UVM approves this activity as long as you do not solely make a decision regarding the purchase of the textbook/video that you have worked on. In order to reduce the risk of a real or perceived conflict, if you wish to purchase or assign one of these textbooks, you must (1) obtain pre-approval from your Dean and then (2) you must disclose this to the class that is assigned the textbook.

Sincerely,

[Reviewer]