



CONFLICTS OF INTEREST, CONFLICTS OF COMMITMENT, AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

I. Policy Statement and Purpose

The University System of Georgia (“USG”) and Fort Valley State University (“FVSU” and “University”) is committed to the highest ethical and professional standards of conduct in pursuit of its mission to create knowledge. This includes fundamental values of transparency and objectivity. All FVSU employees are required to be honest, fair, and impartial in dealings with, and on behalf of, the USG. In accordance with state law, it is essential to the proper operation of government that public employees be independent and impartial and that public office not be used for private gain other than that allowed by law and that there be public confidence in the integrity of government (O.C.G.A. § 45-10-21). Board policy requires employees to avoid actual and apparent conflicts of interest.

FVSU adopts the USG/Board of Regents (BOR) Policy on Conflicts of Interest, Conflicts of Commitment, and Outside Activities. In accordance with Board of Regents Policy [8.2.18.2 Conflict of Interest, Conflicts of Commitment, and Outside Activities](#), an apparent conflict of interest exists when a reasonable person would conclude from the circumstances that the employee’s ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by a personal, financial, or business interest. An apparent conflict of interest can exist even in the absence of an actual or legal conflict of interest.

Each USG institution is required to establish procedures where employees can disclose potential or apparent conflicts of interest. USG institution employees should follow the procedures established at FVSU to disclose potential or apparent conflicts of interest.

II. Applicability and Effective Date

All employees of Fort Valley State University. Effective date is January 17, 2025.

III. Definitions

“Compensation” is defined as any payment, deferred payment, equity, or deferred equity provided in exchange for the expectation that the faculty member will perform work or services for the benefit of the outside payer. Compensation does not include standard Honoraria.

“Honoraria” are defined as any payments given for professional or voluntary services that are rendered nominally without charge, and any payments in recognition of these services typically forbids a price to be set. See BOR 8.2.18.4 Gratuities for guidance on accepting expense reimbursement from outside parties.

“Faculty Primary Responsibilities” are defined as teaching, research, clinical practice, service, administrative duties, and other appropriate duties assigned by the institution to the faculty member.

“Faculty Secondary Responsibilities” are defined as professional activities or affiliations traditionally undertaken by faculty outside of the immediate institution employment context but where the faculty member represents the institution and his or her affiliation to it. Secondary Responsibilities may or may not entail the receipt of Honoraria, remuneration, or the reimbursement of expenses.

“Outside Consulting” is defined as any activity for Compensation other than Primary Responsibilities or Secondary Responsibilities that a faculty member may engage in that, (1) is based upon professional knowledge, experience, and abilities of the faculty member that relate to the faculty member’s expertise or responsibilities as a FVSU faculty member, and (2) is performed for any business, self-employment, or public or private entity other than his or her institution.

“Faculty” is defined in accordance with [Section 3.2 Faculties](#), and includes full-time research and extension personnel and duly certified librarians on the basis of comparable training.

“Outside Activity” is any paid or unpaid activity engaged in by a FVSU employee outside of FVSU. Outside Activities may include consulting, speaking, conducting research, participating in civic or charitable organizations, practicing a profession, teaching, managing or participating in a business, or holding a job with another employer.

“Reportable Outside Activity” is any Outside Activity that could create an actual or apparent Conflict of Interest or Conflict of Commitment which must be reported as set forth in this policy.

IV. Conflicts of Interest and Apparent Conflicts of Interest

Each FVSU employee shall make every reasonable effort to avoid actual or apparent conflicts of interests. An apparent conflict exists when a reasonable person would

conclude from the circumstances that the employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by a personal, financial, or business interest. An apparent conflict can exist even in the absence of a legal conflict of interest. FVSU employees are referred to State of Georgia Conflict of Interest Statutes O.C.G.A. § 45-10-20 through § 45-10-92 and BOR policies governing professional and outside activities.

Each FVSU employee has an ongoing responsibility to report and fully disclose any personal, professional, or financial interest, relationship, or activity that has the potential to create an actual or apparent conflict of interest with respect to the employee's FVSU duties.

FVSU employees should disclose potential, actual or apparent conflicts of interest for approval to their supervisor in writing. Disclosure shall be made at the time the outside employment commences. Nevertheless, an employee can initiate or update their disclosure form [FVSU Disclosure Form for Outside Activities and Conflicts of Interest](#) through Dynamic Forms. Each employee will receive a reminder to complete their required annual disclosure in November of every year.

a. Conflicts of Interest- Research and Institutional

FVSU recognizes the benefits of collaboration and commercialization with the private sector and other third-party entities that supports the FVSU mission. The resulting relationships and agreements, however, must not undermine the public's trust, compromise the integrity of the FVSU mission, or inappropriately influence teaching, research, and service activities. Under no circumstances should a grant, gift, contract or other funding be accepted that limits the ability of FVSU employees to conduct or report the results of research in accordance with applicable scientific, medical, professional, and ethical standards.

V. Conflicts of Commitment

Conflict of Commitment occurs whenever a FVSU employee's outside consulting or other activities, whether paid or unpaid, have the potential to interfere with their primary duties including teaching, research, time with students, or other service and administrative obligations to FVSU.

Thus, a FVSU employee shall not engage in any occupation, pursuit, or endeavor that will interfere with the regular and punctual discharge of that employee's official duties. A Conflict of Commitment is a type of Conflict of Interest that involves time allocation.

VI. Outside Activities

FVSU employees must obtain written authorization prior to engaging in compensated outside activities that relate to the employee's expertise or responsibilities as a FVSU employee. Such activities include consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in

business, professional, or service enterprises. Outside activities should not interfere with an employee's obligations and responsibilities to FVSU. The first step in properly addressing a potential conflict of interest is disclosure.

VII. Process and Procedures

a. Disclosure and reporting of Actual or Apparent Conflicts of Interest, Commitments, and Outside Activities

Employees should make every reasonable effort to avoid actual or apparent Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment from Outside Activities that interfere with or appear to interfere with their obligations to FVSU. Such apparent and actual conflicts must be disclosed to FVSU as set forth herein.

Each FVSU employee with a work commitment of 30 or more hours per week (.75 or >FTE), and faculty members on contracts of nine months or more must obtain written approval prior to engaging in compensated outside activities that relate to the employee's expertise or responsibilities as a FVSU employee. Such activities include consulting, teaching, speaking, and participating in business, professional, or service enterprises. Each FVSU employee, with a work commitment of less than 30 hours per week (.75 FTE or <), and faculty members on a contract term of less than nine months a year do not need written approval in advance of engaging in compensated outside activities so long as the outside activity does not create a conflict of interest or otherwise violate FVSU or USG policy.

Except as authorized for eligible faculty members, annual leave must be used by FVSU employees for compensated Outside Activities during normal working hours consistent with the FVSU's and USG's policies regarding Outside Activities and procedures governing the use of annual leave. Staff must take annual leave for Outside Activities that occur during the staff member's work hours consistent with the FVSU's policy regarding the use of annual leave. Staff and twelve-month faculty may not receive compensation, including reimbursement for expenses, for Outside Activities that take place during work hours unless annual leave has been taken. Ten-month faculty members must receive permission from their department chair, dean, and the Provost in order to receive any compensation for any Outside Activities that take place during their ten-month academic year commitment.

Employees wishing to engage in an Outside Activity must disclose that activity to their supervisor in writing and receive approval before engaging in the activity. Staff must receive permission from their supervisor and Vice President; faculty must receive approval from their chair, dean, and Provost. The appropriate Vice President and Provost shall serve as the President's designees for final approval of the Outside Activity.

Employees should also disclose an Outside Activity if they are uncertain if the activity is a Reportable Outside Activity. If the University determines that a Conflict

of Interest or Conflict of Commitment exists for an employee, it may implement a plan to manage that conflict. The employee's supervisor/chair, in his or her sole discretion, may determine that a Conflict of Interest or Conflict of Commitment creates too much risk or cannot be adequately managed. As such, it may limit the employee's activity or prohibit the employee from engaging in the Outside Activity while employed at FVSU. All faculty and staff must make or update an annual disclosure of all of their ongoing Outside Activity. An employee may not use FVSU personnel, equipment, facilities, or materials in performing Outside Activities without prior approval, unless the employee is a faculty member engaged in Fort Valley State University Research Activities. Consistent with BOR policy 8.2.18.2, the employee must have prior approval for use of the University's personnel, facilities, equipment, and materials and an agreed plan for reimbursing the University for such use at rates equivalent to those charged to outside groups or persons if engaged in an Outside Activity. Faculty and staff are also subject to the following:

- Employees may not use the University name, marks, or logos for marketing purposes.
- Employees may not use official stationery of the University or give as a consulting address any University building or department name when participating in Outside Activities.
- Employees may identify their University status when rendering service to an organization outside of the University, but may not speak, act, or make representations on behalf of the University, or express institutional endorsement in relation to the Outside Activity.

b. Reportable Outside Activities that Present Real or Apparent Conflicts of Interest and Conflicts of Commitment

Outside Activities that are Reportable Outside Activities must be disclosed because they generally involve:

1. transactions with the University System of Georgia that confer a financial benefit to you or someone in your immediate family, or to a business entity in which you or your immediate family own a material interest;
2. public office or running for public office;
3. outside engagements in which you use your academic or professional expertise that are not in fulfillment of your work duties with the University; or
4. a position with an outside organization that involves a fiduciary or quasi-fiduciary duty, such as being an officer or a board member of the organization.

Outside Activities that do not need to be disclosed and are not Reportable Outside Activities generally involve:

1. volunteer activities with no fiduciary or quasi-fiduciary duties;
2. outside engagement in an activity that is not related to your academic or professional expertise; and
3. activity performed in fulfillment of your obligations to the University for service and research.

c. Procedures for Approval of Outside Activities

1. Employees may engage in Outside Activities at the discretion of their department chairs or immediate supervisors using this [form](#) and the approval of those in the chain of supervision as set forth in VII (c)(2) and VII (c)(3) below. Approval of Outside Activities may be revoked by those in the chain of supervision at any time if it is determined that the Outside Activity interferes with the employee's duties at FVSU or interferes with its mission.
2. Faculty Members shall disclose all Outside Activities to their department chair prior to engaging in the activity. If approved by the chair, the disclosure shall be sent to the faculty member's dean for approval. If approved by the dean, the disclosure shall be sent to the Provost's Office for approval as the President's designee.
3. Staff shall disclose all Outside Activities to their immediate supervisor. If approved by the immediate supervisor, the disclosure shall be sent to the division Vice President or equivalent for approval as the President's designee.
4. In addition to disclosing Outside Activities prior to engaging in them, all faculty and exempt staff shall make an annual disclosure of Outside Activities. This annual disclosure shall be made at every year in November. Annual disclosures shall be reviewed in the manners set forth in subsections VII (c)(2) and VII (c)(3).
5. Direct reports of the President and those with a title of Vice President or equivalent must obtain approval from the President, whose authority cannot be delegated, using procedures established by the Chancellor by submitting this [form](#) through the President's Office to the USG Office of Legal Ethics and Compliance at the email and telephone number provided below. Any concerns will be noted and provided to the President to address. Final approval for Reportable Outside Activities for the President's direct reports and those with a title of Vice President or higher will be made by the President.
6. The President must obtain approval to participate in Reportable Outside Activities by completing and submitting this [form](#) to the USG Office of Legal Ethics and Compliance at the email and telephone number provided below. The USG Office of Legal Ethics and Compliance will review the information in consultation with the USG Office of Legal Affairs and will note any concerns. Final approval for Reportable

Outside Activities for the President will be made by the Chancellor or the Chancellor's designee.

USG Office of Ethics and Compliance
USG-compliance@USG.edu
(404) 962-3034

VIII. Failure to Disclose

An employee's failure to comply with this policy, including failure to accurately and timely disclose all Outside Activities, is grounds for disciplinary action, including the possibility of suspension and dismissal. For faculty members, lack of adherence to this policy is considered neglect of duty and is grounds for disciplinary action, including the possibility of suspension and dismissal.

Responsible Parties and Contact Information

Party	Responsibility	Phone/Email/URL
Office of Legal and Government Affairs	To respond to policy questions and to ensure compliance occurs. To audit compliance with policy	478-825-4350 Forms and Policies
Office of Human Resources	To ensure policy is communicated to employees and that compliance occurs. To retain all forms submitted by employees.	478-825-6301 Human Resource Forms

Appendices (Internal Documents, Forms, and Web Links)

- Forms
 - [FVSU Review form for Outside Activities](#)
 - [Direct Reports of USG Presidents and VPs](#)
 - [USG Presidents](#)
- [BOR Policy Manual 8.2.18.2](#)
- [HRAP Conflicts of Interest](#)

Related Documents and Resources (External)

- Conflict of Interest Statutes O.C.G.A. §45-10-20 through §45-10-70

History

Version	Date	Notes
	December 02, 2016	Revised

	January 17, 2025	Revised pursuant to latest USG policy updates. Section number references revised. Revised reporting forms.
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