AD77 Engaging in Outside Professional Activities (Conflict of Commitment) - College of Education Guidelines
(These guidelines do not supersede University Policy AD77)

A potential conflict of commitment occurs when a faculty or staff member’s external relationships or activities interfere with (in actuality or in appearance) the employees’ primary professional obligation and commitment to the University. These external activities can compete with the employee’s obligations to the university either in time or effort and may be either paid or unpaid. Full-time faculty and staff members owe their primary allegiance to Penn State, and their primary commitment of time and intellectual energies should be to Penn State.

University policy AD77 states, “University employees are prohibited from teaching at another institution in a manner inconsistent with their College's Guidelines for the Implementation of AD77 unless prior written approval is obtained from the Budget Administrator (Department Head) and Budget Executive (Dean). Courses (resident or online) taught at another institution must not compete with coursework offered by the University. For purposes of this Policy, there is no distinction between resident or online teaching.”

To be consistent with University policy AD77, and to assist College faculty and staff, the examples below should help you in deciding when you need to seek prior approval.

Examples of activities that would not require pre-approval by the Budget Administrator (Department Head) and Budget Executive (Dean):

- Occasional guest lectures and seminars at another institution.
- Serving on Doctoral or Master’s committee at another institution, when any compensation is only for travel expenses and perhaps a small honorarium ($1,000 or less).
- Outside teaching that is not for academic credit, including professional licensing, etc.
- Outside teaching for credit, whether onsite or distance teaching, that is not in the general area of expertise of your appointment at Penn State.
- Outside teaching by part-time academic faculty.

Activities that will require pre-approval due to a potential conflict of commitment situation (before contract is signed or specific arrangements are made) are generally those situations in which:

1) An employee assumes executive responsibilities for an outside organization not related to faculty or staff member’s University responsibilities that may impact or divert his or her attention away from University responsibilities;
2) Research is conducted outside the University that ordinarily would be carried on within the University;
3) Outside teaching by faculty members, whether onsite or distance teaching, is in or related to the same discipline as their area of teaching at Penn State.

Examples of activities requiring pre-approval by the Budget Administrator and Budget Executive:

- Service on outside boards not related to faculty or staff member’s University responsibilities regardless of whether compensation is received. (Full-time faculty are expected to maintain a significant physical presence on campus throughout each semester they are compensated by Penn State).
• Teaching or research appointments (more than one day) that include intellectual property agreement;
• Teaching for credit during the academic year at another institution, domestic or international (likely to not be approved unless on an unpaid leave or it is part of an approved sabbatical plan);
• Tenured/tenure-line faculty teaching a summer credit course at another institution;
• Summer teaching by teaching faculty (likely to be approved if it doesn’t interfere with teaching obligations at Penn State);
• Teaching by part-time faculty (likely to be approved if it doesn’t interfere with teaching obligations at Penn State);
• Chairing Ph.D. committees at another institution, domestic or international;
• Holding a professional appointment at another institution, domestic or international (such as honorary chair);
• More than one-day workshops or short course.

Example of academic activity that will not be approved:

• Tenure at another institution of higher education (except if a faculty member holds a visiting rank at that institution, or if a faculty member holds emeritus status at another institution).

The use of university facilities, resources, and equipment for external activities and functions not associated with a faculty member’s University responsibilities is not allowed. In rare circumstances, an exception may be made through the pre-approval process.

Examples of such University goods and services include:

• Use of University research funding;
• Use of funding allocated for asynchronous or distance learning programs;
• Use of University paid time within the employment period (other than during sabbaticals ACG15);
• Assistance of University-employed support staff;
• Use of University telecommunication services (beyond ordinary telephone services);
• Use of University computer or computer services that is not related to a faculty member’s College of Education responsibilities;
• Use of University instructional design or media production services;
• Access to and use of University research equipment and facilities, or production facilities.

It is the responsibility of the employee to bring to the budget administrator’s (department head’s) attention the possibility of a potential conflict of commitment. It is then the responsibility of the budget administrator to work with faculty and staff members to identify, manage, or eliminate potential conflicts.

Pre-Approval process:

1) Employee will seek the guidance of his or her budget administer (department head) if there is any reasonable doubt as to whether an activity may constitute a potential or appearance of a conflict of commitment, or if there is a question about whether an activity is permitted under guidelines and policy;
2) If deemed a conflict, the employee must disclose in writing to the budget administrator (department head);
3) In consultation with the Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs or designee and the Human Resource Strategic Partner, the budget administrator (department head) will respond to the employee’s request, in writing;
4) If permission is granted to engage in the activity, permission is granted only for the activity requested. Permission is not granted for all instances moving forward;
5) If the employee is not satisfied with the outcome, as determined by the budget administrator (department head), he or she may appeal the decision to the budget executive (dean).

Policies to cross reference include:

AC80 – Private Consulting Practice
AD07 – Use of University Name, Symbols, and/or Graphic Devices
AD47 – General Standards of Professional Ethics
FN14 – Use of University Tangible Assets, Equipment, Supplies, and Services
HR35 – Public Service by Member of the Faculty and Staff
HR42 – Payment of Personal Compensation by a State Agency or Department of the Commonwealth
HR91 – Conflict of Interest
IP06 – Technology Transfer & Entrepreneurial Activity (Faculty Research)
RP06 – Disclosure and Management of Significant Financial Interests (Formerly RA20 Individual Conflict of Interest)