



THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE
OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

Conflict of Interest Policy

Updated: February 25, 2006

In past years, the Academic Deans have been concerned about occasions when there has been more than a casual relationship between a faculty/staff sponsor of an internship or contract and the field supervisor. In January 1996, the Academic Deans developed and disseminated a conflict of interest policy for internship sponsorship.

Recently, it has become clear that this policy needed an update. Especially it needed to include contracts as well as internships. In addition, it is time to distribute the policy again to faculty and staff contract sponsors.

The deans have discussed whether particularly close relationships between any of the parties involved in the contract (student, field supervisor, faculty sponsor or subcontractor) might create conditions for real or apparent conflicts of interest, or at least conflicts of role. For example, such relationships might prevent a useful distancing between the academic role a faculty sponsor might play and the practical role that a field supervisor might play. These types of situations have a greater chance to be undesirable for a student's learning outcomes.

Examples of relationships that seem to present conflict of interest among parties to contracts and should be avoided:

- Immediate family member or other close personal relationship serving as field supervisor, faculty sponsor, or subcontractor (such as parent, sibling, spouse or partner etc.),
- When the sponsor has a stake (business or professional connection) in the internship project or site
- The internship sponsor is the supervisor or co-worker of the field supervisor – or vice versa
- Any similar on-site or affiliated relationship that constitutes a conflict that could compromise the objectivity of the internship evaluation.

The academic deans will not approve contracts where such relationships appear to be too close. Please advise students accordingly when you work with them on internships and independent contracts in the future, and refer students to sponsors or field supervisors who can maintain the necessary separation of roles and responsibilities. If you have questions about a particular situation, please contact your academic dean or Academic Advising.