

# Conflict of Interest During Student Assessment Policy for Washington University School of Medicine

—This policy applies to all MD students.—

## Background

Washington University School of Medicine is committed to ensuring that individuals who directly assess and remediate students and/or make decisions about the competence and promotion of students do so without a conflict of interest that compromises the objectivity and integrity of our student assessment process. In keeping with Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) element 12.5, health professionals who provide a medical student with health-care services, including psychiatric/psychological counseling, should generally be precluded from making decisions regarding that student's academic assessment or promotion and from certain teaching roles that include assessment or remediation as detailed below.

For the purposes of this policy, the term *conflict of interest* (COI) will refer to any set of circumstances in which a person's ability to assess, remediate and/or make competency decisions about a student objectively is compromised by personal, social, financial or other interests. Potential examples are included below.

## Policy

Persons assessing or making decisions about the competence or promotion of a student, including engagement in remediation, shall do so free of COIs that may bias their decision making about a student in a positive or negative manner. In situations where persons in the role of student assessment, promotion and/or remediation have a COI involving a particular student, such persons should recuse themselves from their roles in the assessment, promotion and/or remediation of that student.

Examples of potential COIs include but are not limited to the following:

- Individual treatment providers of health and/or psychiatric/psychological services to a medical student
- Faculty previously engaged in adverse action against the student, including personally filing a professionalism concern form or serving on a clerkship competency committee where previous adverse actions were submitted for that student. Serving on the competency attainment committee where the totality of data is reviewed for all students longitudinally is not considered a COI.

- Having significant personal, social or business relationships with the student or a member of the student's immediate or extended family
- Serving as that student's assigned academic advisor in their administrative capacity for Washington University School of Medicine (e.g., coaches, associate/assistant deans for student affairs, director of the student success team)

Faculty and students must recognize that the appearance of a COI may interfere with the learning environment for both the involved student as well as the student's peers and should also be considered, regardless of whether an actual COI is truly present. Should uncertainty arise as to whether an instructor's interactions or relationship with a student presents a COI, it is the expectation that the instructor take responsibility for managing the relationship based on the best interest of the student and disclose the COI to the relevant course or clerkship director and/or the appropriate administrative leader (i.e., committee lead, assistant or associate dean).

*Last approved on October 3, 2022*