

College of Engineering Implementation Guidelines for Policy AC80 Faculty Outside Professional Activities and Conflict of Commitment

<https://policy.psu.edu/policies/ac80>

Policy *AC80 Faculty Outside Professional Activities and Conflict of Commitment* sets forth the policies and principles that permit faculty to engage in outside professional activities and encourage those that enhance the mission of the University. While outside activities are not discouraged, faculty members' primary employment obligation is to their Penn State responsibilities and their outside professional activities must not conflict with those duties and especially must not impinge on the educational experience of our students. Outside professional activities must be consistent with federal regulations and guidelines and must be reported to the University.

Outside activities that are general in nature and provide negligible risk for a conflict with a faculty member's Penn State responsibilities typically do not require preapproval. Activities that may adversely affect the University's interests or mission, require more of a faculty member's time, create the possibility of conflict or competition with Penn State courses or responsibilities, include research for other entities, or involve intellectual property ownership do require preapproval. Faculty members should review *AC80* for a **list of specific activities that always require preapproval** (before a contract is signed, specific arrangements made, or activity initiated). An activity that **will not be approved** is holding a tenure-line appointment or holding tenure at another institution.

AC80 also provides further context, time limits, and references to faculty obligations under other University policies when engaging in outside activities. Any potential or perceived conflicts of interest must also be disclosed and responsibly managed in accordance with *RP06*.

An important aspect of *AC80* is that, except for Outside Teaching and time limits on outside activities, "all other provisions of this policy, including but not limited to Prior Approval and Required Disclosure, apply at all times, regardless of the Appointment Period." Faculty members should note that the *AC80* definition of the Appointment Period includes sabbaticals, paid leave, and supplemental appointments, including summer.

AC80 requires preapproval for Outside Teaching only if it occurs during the Appointment Period. However, all Outside Teaching, even outside the faculty member's Appointment Period, requires *disclosure* prior to starting the teaching engagement. Faculty members should review *AC80* for the definition of Outside Teaching. Representative examples of teaching-related activities that do not require either preapproval or disclosure include:

- Presenting a seminar or teaching a one-day workshop at another institution
- Serving on a graduate student's committee at another institution, when any compensation is only for travel expense and perhaps a small honorarium (\$1000 or less)
- Teaching that is not for academic credit
- Teaching that is not in the general area of expertise of a faculty member's appointment

The required forms for *AC80* Prior Approvals and Disclosures can be accessed at <https://www.research.psu.edu/coc>. The ***Faculty Activities and Disclosures Guide*** is also available at the link as a resource to assist faculty in determining the approval, disclosure, and reporting requirements for outside activities under both *AC80* and *RP06*; the ***Guide*** does not supersede either *AC80* or these College of Engineering Implementation Guidelines, nor do these Guidelines supersede *AC80*.

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