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Revision Date: 12/18/2025

Oregon Tech Policy
OIT-22-055
Consensual Relationships

1. Policy Statement

Oregon Tech is committed to an environment free from conflicts of interest, favoritism, and exploitation. Oregon Tech recognizes that relationships between consenting adults in unequal positions of power within the University can give rise to unique and challenging concerns that must be managed with great care. Consensual relationships involving power differentials must be disclosed and managed to prevent bias, exploitation, allegations of misconduct, and the appearance of impropriety.

2. Reason for Policy/Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to address consensual relationships between adults with unequal positions of power at Oregon Tech to assure:

- The parties to the relationship understand that they are responsible for disclosing their past or present relationship;
- The parties to the relationship understand that they are responsible for participating proactively and cooperatively in a plan to eliminate any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest or any adverse effects on third parties resulting from the past or present consensual relationship;
- Such relationships do not result in assertions of a coerced relationship, sexual harassment, discriminatory favoritism, or existence of a hostile learning or working environment;
- Such relationships do not result in any actual or potential conflict of interest;
- There is a clear process through which parties can disclose their past or present relationship; and
- There is a clear process through which individuals can disclose concerns about possible violations of non-compliance with this Policy.

3. Applicability/Scope

This Policy applies to all employees of the University and applicants for employment or admission.

4. Definitions

Conflict of Interest: A conflict of interest (COI) occurs when a person has past or present relationships or interests that affect—or could appear to affect—their professional judgment as they perform Oregon Tech-affiliated work or responsibilities.

Consensual Relationships: Relationships that are intimate, romantic, or sexual in nature, legal within the state of Oregon, in which both parties are willing participants, and in which there is a power differential, as defined below. A relationship falls within this definition even if one or both of the participants consider it to be casual, informal, temporary, or episodic.

Unequal Power/Power Differential: The actual, potential, or perceived imbalance of power that exists in a relationship when one of the parties either directly or indirectly supervises the other, has an evaluative role over the other, or controls resources of the other, such that the more powerful party may exert influence over the less powerful party's terms and conditions of employment, educational experiences, resources, opportunities or participation in services, activities, or programs (*e.g.*, administrator and faculty, faculty and student, supervisor and employee, coach and athlete). An imbalance of power may be inherent, due to the positions of the individuals involved, or it may be episodic, such that it arises only in a particular situation. Accordingly, a power differential may exist even between nominal peers who meet these criteria.

Retaliation: Any action (beyond a petty slight or trivial annoyance) taken against an individual because of the individual's participation in a protected activity that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in protected activity.

5. Policy

a. Professionalism Expectations

Faculty, supervisors, and employees must not supervise, evaluate, or make employment or academic decisions about individuals with whom they have a romantic or sexual relationship. If such a relationship exists, immediate arrangements must be made to remove any evaluative or supervisory authority and eliminate conflicts of interest.

b. Disclosure Expectations

The University requires participants in a past or present consensual relationship where any unequal power/power differential exists to disclose the nature of the consensual relationship, as described below, and to participate proactively and cooperatively in measures designed to eliminate the actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest or any adverse effects likely to arise from the past or present consensual relationship.

c. Required Reporting

Individuals in consensual relationships involving a power differential must promptly disclose the relationship to their supervisor and the Office of Human Resources (for employees) or the Office of Student Affairs (for students). Disclosure must occur before any employment- or education-related

decisions are made that could affect the other party. Because of their positions of power and responsibility, the more powerful party has the primary responsibility for reporting the consensual relationship. See, **Declaration Related to Consensual Relationships and Potential Conflicts of Interest.**

d. Avoiding and Managing Conflicts of Interest

Upon disclosure of a consensual relationship involving a power differential, the parties must work with their supervisor and the Office of Human Resources or Student Affairs to eliminate any actual or perceived conflict. Typical measures include reassigning supervisory duties, removing evaluative responsibilities, or adjusting access to resources and opportunities to ensure fairness and transparency.

e. Confidentiality

Reports required under this policy will be considered submitted in confidence, pursuant to ORS 192.345(4), and will be kept as confidential as allowed by law. All parties should be mindful of confidentiality, but mitigating measures to be implemented may be disclosed to the extent necessary to eliminate the actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.

f. Consultation

Individuals with questions or concerns regarding reporting requirements or other questions regarding this Policy should contact the following offices, as appropriate: Office of Human Resources (employees) and/or the Office of Student Affairs (students).

g. Complaints and Investigations

Concerns about violations of this policy should be reported to the Office of Human Resources (for employees) or the Office of Student Affairs (for students). These offices will conduct prompt, neutral investigations and ensure appropriate corrective actions are taken. Allegations of sexual misconduct should be reported directly to the Title IX Coordinator.

h. Non-Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone who reports a consensual relationship, participates in an investigation, or helps implement conflict mitigation measures is strictly prohibited. Violations may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination or expulsion.

i. Failure to Comply with and Violations of this Policy

Failure to comply with this Policy, including the failure to self-report or self-disclose, could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students. A more powerful party who enters into a consensual relationship and fails to comply with this Policy should be aware that such action may constitute malfeasance in office or willful or wanton neglect of duty and could result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination for employees and expulsion for students.

6. Links to Related Procedures, Forms, or Information

Declaration Related to Consensual Relationships and Potential Conflicts of Interest
Conflict of Interest
Prohibited Discrimination and Discriminatory Harassment
Prohibited Sexual Misconduct
Reporting Misconduct and Prohibited Retaliation
Violence-Free Campus

Related State and Federal Law
Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972

7. Policy Review/Consultation/Responsible Officer

This Policy was adopted pursuant to Oregon Tech's policy review and making process.

8. Policy Approval

Approved by the President on December 18, 2025.

Nagi G. Naganathan, Ph.D., ASME Fellow
President

Adoption Date
January 25, 2006

Revision Dates
February 24, 2006
August 1, 2010
December 18, 2025

Oregon TECH
Oregon Institute of Technology

Declaration Related to Consensual Relationships and Potential Conflicts of Interest

Employee Name: _____

Employee: ID: _____

Reports required under policy OIT-22-055 will be considered submitted in confidence, pursuant to ORS 192.345(4), and will be kept as confidential as allowed by law. All parties should be mindful of confidentiality, but mitigating measures to be implemented may be disclosed to the extent necessary to eliminate the actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest.
If an employee finds themselves in a situation or a potential situation of conflict of interest, they must seek guidance from their supervisor, an HR representative, or the Title IX Coordinator to determine if a conflict or potential conflict exists and how Oregon Tech and the employee(s) involved can work to mitigate the conflict or potential conflict. If a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest is identified the employee must use this form to officially declare the conflict or potential conflict and institutional remedies.
Declaration Related to Consensual Relationships and Potential Conflicts of Interest form:
I, _____, hereby declare the following potential or actual conflict of interest to Oregon Tech.
1. Description of the situation that presents an actual or potential conflict of interest:
2. Name of Individual(s) involved in the actual or potential conflict of interest:
3. Nature of your relationship with or interest with the individual(s) named above:

4. In accordance with Oregon Tech's OIT-22-055 and in agreement with the appropriate supervisory entities at Oregon Tech the following actions will be taken to mitigate the risks posed by this potential or actual conflict of interest:
The undersigned hereby acknowledge the above noted actual or potential conflict of interest and agree that the above-mentioned action be taken to mitigate any risks posed by the actual or potential conflict of interest identified above.
Signature of Employee Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Signature of Supervisor Date (MM/DD/YYYY)
Signature of AVP of Human Resources Date (MM/DD/YYYY)

Rev. 12/18/2025