



Policy on Societies Mentors Conflict of Interest and Student Performance Assessment

Category: 8-Faculty and Residents
Curriculum Phase: All Phases
Author/Authoring Body: Curricular Affair
Responsible Unit: Curricular Affairs
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Next Review Year: 2028

Summary

Societies Program mentors at the College of Medicine – Tucson (COM-T) serve as both educators and mentors, often holding additional leadership roles within the curriculum and administration. To prevent real or perceived conflicts of interest in student assessment, this policy outlines specific restrictions on their involvement in grading and instructional roles. Mentors may not provide summative grades for their own mentees in the Doctor and Patient Course. Additionally, mentors are prohibited from serving as regular facilitators in the Clinical Reasoning Course (CRC) for their mentees and cannot hold the roles of Clerkship Director, Block Director, or CRC Director.

Applicability & Scope

This policy applies to all mentors in the Societies Program.

Definitions

Conflict of Interest (COI) – A conflict of interest (COI) in the context of medical student education exists when a faculty member's responsibilities to a student may be compromised—or perceived to be compromised—by personal, professional, academic, or administrative relationships. Conflicts may arise when a faculty member is involved in both mentoring and assessing a student, particularly if they are in a position to influence the student's academic progression or evaluation.

Policy Statement

I. Restrictions on Assessments and Grading

A. Doctor and Patient Course

- 1) Societies Program mentors may not provide a summative grade for their own mentees in the Doctor and Patient Course, which is administered by Societies Program mentors. Rather, the summative grade in this course is determined by the following:
 - a) **Semester 1:** A history and physical practicum graded by a trained Patient Instructor.
 - b) **Semester 2:** Two formal Standardized Patient encounters graded by a trained Patient Instructor and two written history and physicals graded by a Societies Program mentor different from the student's designated mentor.
 - c) **Semester 3:** The Year 2 Clinical Thinking OSCE which is observed and graded by a Societies Program mentor different from the student's designated mentor.

B. Clinical and Electives Courses

- 1) Societies Program mentors who serve as directors of required clinical courses (e.g., Intersessions, Transition to Clerkships) or electives courses may tabulate and report grades based on students' performance and assessments but may not independently assess individual students.
- 2) If a mentee appeals an overall course grade, the appeal will be referred to a co-director and/or the Associate Dean for Curricular Affairs.

II. Restrictions on Instructional Roles

A. Preclerkship Blocks

- 1) Societies Program mentors may not serve as Block Directors.

B. Clinical Reasoning Course

- 1) A Societies Program mentor may not serve as a director of the Clinical Reasoning Course (CRC).
- 2) A Societies Program mentor may not function as a regular CRC facilitator for their assigned mentees.

C. Required Clerkships

- 1) Societies Program mentors may not serve as Clerkship Directors.

III. Required Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

A. Mandatory Disclosure

- 1) Faculty who serve as Societies Program mentors must disclose any existing or potential conflicts of interest that could affect their objectivity in student instruction or assessment. Disclosures must be made to the Office of Curricular Affairs:
 - a) At the time of appointment to any course, clerkship, or assessment role.
 - b) Whenever a new potential COI arises due to changes in student-faculty relationships or faculty roles.

B. Types of Potential Conflicts

- 1) Examples of potential conflicts that require disclosure include, but are not limited to:
 - a) Being assigned to assess a student for whom the faculty member serves or has served as a mentor or advisor.
 - b) Holding a leadership role (e.g., Block Director, Clerkship Director, CRC Director) that would involve oversight or assessment of their own mentees.
 - c) Personal relationships with students (e.g., family members, close friends, or other relationships that may compromise objectivity).

C. Review and Management

- 1) All disclosures will be reviewed by the Office of Curricular Affairs. When a COI is identified, appropriate adjustments to teaching, grading, or oversight responsibility will be made to preserve fairness and objectivity in student assessment.

D. Ongoing Responsibility

- 1) Faculty have an ongoing, shared responsibility to proactively identify and disclose any new or evolving COIs.
- 2) Failure to disclose a COI may result in removal from instructional or evaluative roles and may be subject to further review under professionalism standards.

Procedures

None

Related Information

None

Revision History

2025/09/24: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved policy revisions that modified restrictions on assessments, grading, and instructional roles for block directors, expanded coverage to include required clinical course directors and Clinical Reasoning Course directors, and established conflict of interest disclosure requirements.

2023/03/23: The Tucson Educational Policy Committee approved revisions to the policy.

2013/12/12: Policy approved.