

<b>NEOMED ACADEMIC POLICY</b>	<b>Policy No: 3349-AC-380</b>
<b>ACADEMIC POLICY TITLE:</b> Conflicts of Interest - Academic	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: February 1, 2026</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:</b> College of Graduate Studies	<b>Approval Authority:</b> Dean, College of Graduate Studies

**(A) PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish guidelines regarding conflicts of interest for the assessment and promotion of graduate students. This Policy is intended to remove, as much as possible, bias in the assessment of a student’s performance, assignment of grades, or decisions regarding academic standing or progression toward degree completion.

**(B) SCOPE**

This Policy applies to credit-bearing courses in the College of Graduate Studies (COGS) curriculum and to academic standing and progression committees within the College of Graduate Studies. This Policy does not apply to co-curricular activities, independent student research efforts not tied to course credit, or student employment.

**(C) DEFINITIONS**

- (1) “Committee on Academic and Professional Progress” (CAPP) refers to the committee that evaluates graduate students’ academic performance, research performance where applicable, professional readiness for continued studies, and determines appropriateness of probation, remediation, dismissal, or leaves of absence.
- (2) “Conflict of Interest” refers to the ability of a faculty member to improperly influence a decision about a student due to a preexisting personal or professional relationship between the faculty member and the student.
- (3) “Course Director” refers to the appointed faculty member who is responsible for the overall design, conduct, student assessment within and evaluation of a credit-bearing course.
- (4) “Credit-bearing Course” refers to a course offered by the College of Graduate Studies in which a student is enrolled, the course appears on the student’s official transcript with either contact hours or credit-bearing acknowledgment, and a grade is assigned.

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- (5) "Faculty" refers to any instructor or graduate faculty member who is responsible for assigning a grade or contributing substantially to a grade, or who contributes to promotion, academic standing, or progression decisions.
- (6) "Clinical or Research Site" refers to instructional, research, or clinical settings where graduate students' complete degree-related experiences and that are not located on the NEOMED campus.

**(D) POLICY STATEMENT**

This Policy applies to all credit-bearing courses within the COGS curriculum. It does not apply to courses in which the principal means of assessment is a multiple-choice examination scored anonymously or graded strictly by predetermined cut lines. The Policy applies to Course Directors, faculty who contribute substantially to course grades, internship and research mentors and clinical preceptors when involved in formal assessment, and members of academic standing or progression committees.

- (1) A Conflict of Interest is deemed to exist when Faculty has a close personal or professional relationship with a student.
  - (a) A familial or close personal relationship includes, but is not limited to blood relatives (ex., parents, grandparents, siblings, cousins) and others with whom there is a familial or close personal or active/current professional relationship (ex., step-parents, in-laws, fiancé, godparents, mentor, work together)
  - (b) In the case of CAPP, a Conflict of Interest exists when a course director has assigned, or contributed in a significant way to, a failing grade or adverse evaluation for a student, or has referred the student for review due to academic or professionalism concern.
- (2) This Policy is designed to remove, as much as possible, bias in assessment of a student, assigning a grade to a student, or making a promotion decision regarding a student. The goal is to avoid Conflicts of Interest to the extent possible by not assigning students to Faculty with a Conflict of Interest.

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(3) Faculty responsibilities:

Members of CAPP must recuse themselves from discussion and decision-making involving students for whom they serve as Course Director, Research Mentor, Clinical Preceptor, major evaluator, or for whom they have assigned or contributed substantially to a non-anonymous failing grade or adverse assessment.

(4) Student responsibilities:

Graduate students who are assigned to research laboratories, clinical rotations, practica, internships, or other experiences in which they would be evaluated by faculty or staff with whom they have a close personal relationship must disclose the real, perceived, or potential Conflict of Interest using the Student Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form prior to the start of the experience or as soon as they become aware.

- (a) Students will be made aware of the need to disclose Conflicts of Interest in orientations and via the NEOMED Compass.
- (b) Disclosure of such relationships must be prior to the start of a graded experience.
- (c) Should the student fail to disclose the relationship until the graded experience has begun, and it is discovered, the Course Director will either move the student to avoid the Conflict or reassign the supervision to minimize its impact. Inability to complete a required experience related to student non-disclosure of a Conflict of Interest may result in failure to meet graduation requirements on time.
- (d) Failure to disclose a potential Conflict of Interest prior to the start of a graded experience is a conduct concern that will be reported.