

OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS & COMPLIANCE**Guidance for Conflict of Interests in Textbook Assignment**

There is no conflict of interest when a faculty member publishes a text/textbook which is assigned for use in classes taught by other faculty member(s). There is a financial conflict of interest when a faculty member has published a text/textbook, wants to use in their own class, and will financially benefit from the sale of the text to her/his own students. All faculty requesting approval to use/incorporate textbook/texts which they have authored/published, within their classrooms/syllabus, should not benefit financially from the sale of text/textbook to their student(s). If a faculty member has assigned their own text/textbook to their own class for an upcoming semester, please follow the steps outlined below.

1. **Option 1: Disgorge financial benefits.** The simplest means of proceeding is for the faculty member to fully disgorge any financial benefits, thereby removing any financial conflict of interest. To fully disgorge any financial benefits, the faculty member should donate, to a campus student scholarship fund, any royalties accrued from the sale of the text/textbook to her/his own students and forego any tax benefit. Faculty members electing this process should complete the "Ethics Commission Disclosure & Disgorgement Form," select "Disgorgement," and sign. Copies of the completed form should be forwarded to your Department Chair, Dean, and Office of Institutional Ethics & Compliance.
2. **Option 2: Disclose Financial Conflict of Interest.** If a faculty member does not elect to disgorge, then a full disclosure of the financial conflict of interest to their appointing authority and the MA State Ethics Commission is required. The faculty member should (1) draft a brief memo to address why their financial interest in the textbook selection decision is not so substantial as to affect the integrity of their service to the Commonwealth and (2) complete the "Ethics Commission Disclosure & Disgorgement Form," select "Disclosure," and sign. The faculty member should submit the request (memo and form) to the Department Curriculum Committee, then Department Chair, and finally, the Dean for review. The Dean of the college then sends the request to the Provost's office with a recommendation. The Provost, as appointing authority may approve or deny the request. Copies of requests are forwarded to the MA State Ethics Commission.

For further guidance please review:

- Massachusetts State Ethics Commission Opinion: [EC-COI-04-2](#)
- American Association of University Professors (AAUP): [Professors Assigning Their Own Texts to Students](#)

Note: Disclosures for spring classes are due in the Provost's office by November 15th; disclosures for fall classes are due in the Provost's office by July 15th. Faculty members must obtain the Provost's approval prior to assigning the textbook. If you have questions, concerns, or would like further information please contact, Stephanie Pena via email spena4@umassd.edu.