

# **AACSB INTERNATIONAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST POLICY**

## **Excerpt from Policy Governance Manual**

**Introduction:** Mutual respect and integrity must characterize the interactions and activities of those who participate in all AACSB International discussions, decisions, and actions, including, but not limited to, the following: corporate governance, leadership and advocacy activities, and accreditation decisions. Acceptance to serve in a volunteer capacity on the AACSB Board of Directors, a standing committee, task force, peer review team, or other volunteer role, or in an AACSB staff role constitutes an express agreement to conduct oneself in accordance with the highest standards of professional and moral integrity. In all circumstances, both actual and the appearance of conflicts of interest must be scrupulously avoided to assure the maintenance of the integrity of AACSB International. Furthermore, all individuals addressed in this document who find themselves in an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, as described herein, must exercise their duty of disclosure as soon as a conflict becomes apparent. The remainder of this document provides guidance with regard to actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and their resolution.

**Scope:** This policy addresses actual, potential, and perceived conflicts of interest relative to the responsibilities of all persons acting on behalf of AACSB, including, but not limited to, members of the AACSB Board of Directors, accreditation policy or operating committees (Committee on Accreditation Policy, Accounting Accreditation Committee, Continuous Improvement Review Committee and Initial Accreditation Committee), Peer Review Team Members, Accreditation Appeal Panelists, AACSB staff members and independent contractors engaged by AACSB.

### **Policy:**

#### ***Employees and Contractors***

AACSB staff and Special Advisor contractors are prohibited from establishing or maintaining AACSB accreditation-focused consulting relationships with institutions or independent business schools for which they are compensated. This prohibition continues for one year following the termination of employment or contract engagement with AACSB.

Individuals under contract to facilitate accreditation-focused seminars, webinars or other educational offerings, such as the Business Accreditation Seminar, Continuous Improvement Review Seminar, or Accounting Accreditation Seminar, are prohibited from establishing or maintaining AACSB accreditation-focused consulting relationships with institutions or independent business schools for which they are compensated while they are under contract to facilitate educational offerings. This prohibition continues for six months following the completion of a services contract with AACSB.

#### ***Volunteers***

Members of an accreditation policy or operating committee (Business Accreditation Policy Committee, Accounting Accreditation Policy Committee, Accounting Accreditation Committee, Continuous Improvement Review Committee and Initial Accreditation Committee) are prohibited from establishing or maintaining AACSB accreditation-focused consulting relationships with

institutions or independent business schools for which they are compensated. This prohibition remains in effect during the period of service to the accreditation committee.

A participant in any AACSB meeting or peer review team acting on behalf of AACSB, including, but not limited to, Board of Directors' meetings, committee meetings, or other AACSB meetings, where there is an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest must recuse him or herself from any and all involvement, discussions and/or votes relative to the issue or topic associated with the actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest. Except with the express consent of the presiding Chair of the meeting, a person recused by virtue of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest will absent him or herself from the proceedings.

**Conflicts of Interest:** Actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Within the past ten years, employment,<sup>1</sup> enrollment as a student,<sup>2</sup> or other service<sup>3</sup> in any capacity by an institution that is under review.
- Within the past three years, employment, enrollment as a student, or other service in any capacity by an institution that is part of the same multi-institutional system as the institution under review.
- Within the past year, employment, enrollment as a student, or other service in any capacity by an institution that is a competitor of the institution under review or that may otherwise have a material interest in the outcome of the actions regarding the institution under review.
- Within the past three years, employment, enrollment as a student, or other service capacity and direct involvement in the development, direct oversight, and continuing direct management of joint programs or other collaborative educational activities at an institution in cooperation with the institution under review.
- Current employment by an institution that is in the same state, province or territory<sup>4</sup> as the institution under review.
- Within the past year, having been a candidate for employment in any capacity or having applied for enrollment as a student at the institution under review.
- Having an immediate<sup>5</sup> family member(s) who is (are) a current employee(s), board member(s), candidate(s) for employment or admission to a degree program, or student(s) enrolled in a degree program, at the institution under review.

---

<sup>1</sup> "Employment" includes any engagement by the institution, including consulting or contractual services, whether or not compensated by the institution itself.

<sup>2</sup> "Enrollment" includes any academic involvement whether or not for credit or leading to an academic credential of any kind.

<sup>3</sup> "Other service" includes, but is not limited to, serving as a board member, advisor, member of an advisory board or committee.

<sup>4</sup> In certain regions, at the discretion of AACSB and the Business Accreditation Policy Committee, current employment in the same country as an institution under review could constitute a conflict of interest.

<sup>5</sup> "Immediate family members" include spouses, siblings, children, grandchildren, parents, grandparents, and domestic partners.

- Being an alumna or alumnus of the institution under review.
- Having been a host of a peer review team at one's institution that included a dean who will host a peer review team for which one is being considered.
- Having a financial interest in the institution under review, including but not limited to, ownership of shares of stock in the institution or in any parent of the institution, excepting shares or interests held indirectly such as in mutual funds, insurance policies, or blind trusts. In addition, having any immediate family member(s) with any of the above financial interests.

### ***Board, Committee and Task Force Meetings***

The Chair of the Board of Directors, a standing committee, or task force, respectively, is responsible for determining if a conflict of interest exists when a volunteer in one of the roles described above requests a determination. If the Chair has a conflict of interest, the Vice Chair will provide the final determination. In cases where a participant voluntarily identifies an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest and recuses him or herself from the deliberations and actions, these events will be recorded in writing as part of the meeting record and a copy filed with the executive office of AACSB. If a request for a determination of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest is made to the Chair (or Vice Chair), such requests must be made in writing, and the determination by the Chair (or Vice Chair) is to be in writing, and both are to be filed with the executive office of AACSB.

An assertion by any third party of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest in any matter will be referred to the affected individual who will be expected to provide a written explanation. Both the asserted conflict and the explanation will be considered by the Chair (or Vice Chair) for a determination as to the existence of a conflict of interest.

### ***Volunteer Accreditation Assignments***

When a volunteer is being considered for an assignment as a mentor, peer review team member or another volunteer role associated with the accreditation process, a determination will be made concerning conflict of interest. In cases where a volunteer identifies an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, this disclosure will be recorded in writing as part of the volunteer assignment process and a copy filed with the executive office of AACSB. If there is a request for a determination of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest, the EVP and Chief Accreditation Officer, and the Senior Directors of Accreditation will make the determination regarding the actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest. As appropriate, these individuals will consult with the appropriate accreditation committee Chair (or Vice Chair). Such requests must be made in writing, and the determination by the Chair (or Vice Chair) is to be in writing, and both are to be filed with the executive office of AACSB.

An assertion by any third party of an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest in any matter will be referred to the affected individual who will be expected to provide a written explanation. Both the asserted conflict and the explanation will be considered by the Chair (or Vice Chair) for a determination as to the existence of a conflict of interest.

**Annual Confirmation:** Each person covered by this Policy, including but not limited to, members of the Board of Directors, standing committees, task forces, and all AACSB staff shall, by July 1 of each year or by the commencement of the first meeting after July 1 of each year of

the Board, committee, or task force, sign the statement set forth below acknowledging receipt and express agreement with the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy.

Exception of Annual Confirmation: Peer review team members and accreditation mentors must sign the statement at the time of confirmation of the appointment as a condition of serving in these roles. The statement will cover a period that commences on the day of signature and expires on the day the assignment is completed and pertains only to the institution to be visited listed below.

**Statement of Agreement:** By my signature below, I acknowledge that:

- (a) I understand the mission of AACSB and agree to support the mission as it relates to the role I am assuming;
- (b) I have received, read and understand this Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy; and
- (c) I agree to comply in all respects with this policy.

---

Signature

---

Date Signed

---

Please print name

---

Institution to be visited

---

Or Effective Dates

**Return to: Office of Corporate Governance  
AACSB International  
777 S. Harbour Island Boulevard, Suite 750  
Tampa, Florida 33602-5730  
Fax: +1 813 472 5530**