



UNDERSTAND AND
AVOIDING CONFLICTS OF
INTEREST

What is a conflict of interest?

Dictionary

Search for a word 

 con·flict of in·ter·est

noun

a situation in which the concerns or aims of two different parties are incompatible.
"the conflict of interest between elected officials and corporate lobbyists"

- a situation in which a person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity.
"Watson quit his job after questions about a possible conflict of interest"

 Translations, word origin, and more definitions

Definitions from Oxford Languages [Feedback](#)

What would a conflict of interest look like in the resolution process?

Personal Relationship Conflicts of Interest

- The Decision Maker is a coach of the athletic team that the complainant plays on
- The Appellate has a mentoring relationship with the respondent
- The Appellate is the direct supervisor of the complainant.

The Decision Maker and the Appellate should both consider recusing themselves from this case, as they are in a situation where they could derive a personal benefit from actions or decision made in their professional capacity.

In the first example, the Decision Maker knows the complainant, and is at risk of seeming like the decision they make are biased in favor of the complainant in order to keep a player on their team.

In the second example, the Appellate is a risk of making a biased decision due to their relationship with the respondent.

Similar to the second example, the Appellate's employment positionality relative to the complainant risks putting the Appellate in a position to make a biased decision.

What would a conflict of interest look like in the resolution process?

Administrative Process Conflicts of Interest

- The Decision Maker conducted the intake with the complainant
- The Decision Maker conducted the investigation
- The Appellate makes a decision on a dismissal appeal (deciding to overturn a TIX Coordinator's decision to dismiss for the purposes of TIX) and is then the Appellate for the Determination of Responsibility for that same case.

In the first two examples, the Decision Maker would need to recuse themselves, as the concerns/aims of a Decision Maker are different than those of someone conducting an intake or investigation. A Decision Maker's focus must be solely on weighing the evidence impartially and without bias. Title IX Regulations are clear that there should be a division between the intake/investigation phase, and the decision phase, explicitly stating that the Decision Maker cannot be the same person as the investigator.

In the third example, because the Appellate had already made an appeal decision in an early stage of the process, they should not be in the position to make a second decision in a later stage.

Questions to Ask Before You Participate

- Do I know either party and/or have a pre-existing relationship that will effect my ability to be an impartial actor in this process?
- Have I served in a different role in this specific process already?

Though the Title IX Coordinator will be vetting all participants in the resolution process, you should also evaluate every case for any conflict of interest and should not serve in a process where a conflict of interest is present.

Policy on Impartiality and Conflicts of Interest

IMPARTIALITY AND CONFLICT-OF-INTEREST

- The Title IX Staff act with impartiality and authority free from bias and conflicts of interest. The members of the Title IX Team are vetted and trained to ensure they are not biased for or against any party in a specific case, or for or against Complainants and/or Respondents, generally. The training that all Title IX staff receive can be reviewed at www.norwich.edu/title-ix.
- To raise any concern involving bias or conflict of interest by the Title IX Coordinator, contact the Senior Vice President for Student Affairs and Information Technology, Dr. Frank Vanecek. Concerns of bias or a potential conflict of interest by any other Title IX Team member should be raised with the Title IX Coordinator.