

Guidelines, Best Practices, and Issues to Consider to Help Faculty Create Fair and Ethical Professional Opportunities for Students Outside of the Classroom

The TSOA Conflict of Interest Committee, formed in 2017 mandated by the Tisch School of the Arts Policy on Conflict of Interest, Ethics, and Professional Student Opportunities, approved by the TSOA faculty on April 19, 2013 ([you may read the full policy document here](#)), has developed a list of questions for faculty to consider and some best practices to follow to help faculty engage with students around professional opportunities outside the classroom in a fair and ethical manner. All arrangements must comply with and be reviewed individually under the Policy referenced above. Faculty members and Chairs are reminded to familiarize themselves with the process outlined in the Policy.

Questions faculty should consider when deciding to hire or select a student for professional opportunities:

- What is the nature of the work?
- Is the work clearly defined, with stated expectations and timeframe?
- Is there an actual or possible departmental relationship with the student, e.g., is the student currently or might the student in the future be in the faculty member's class?
 - Is the faculty member currently or might the faculty member in the future be the student's advisor (thesis, project, or otherwise)?
 - Does the faculty member currently or might they in the future have a supervisory relationship with the student in the department?
- How could this work impact that relationship?
- Could the work have an impact on the student's ability to complete classroom work required for full-time enrollment?
 - Will the work interfere with the student's progress towards degree, or the student's graduation timeline?
 - Will the work present restrictions on publishing or presentation that could negatively impact publication of a student's thesis, film, theatre or dance presentation, dissertation, publication work, oral presentations, or other requirements for degree completion?
- Is there anything, actual or perceived, about the relationship that "feels" unethical to you? If the answer is no, might others still perceive it to be unethical?
- How was the student chosen?
 - Have all potentially qualified students been notified of the opportunity?
 - Was there fairness, transparency, and equity applied to the selection?
 - What were the criteria?

- What is the compensation, either tangible or not?
- Is the compensation fair?
 - Will the student finish the work with a professional credit?
 - Are there any clear pedagogical benefits?

Best practices:

- The duties should be communicated clearly, in writing, to the student.
- The student's involvement in the project is beneficial to the student and should promote the student's education and professional growth.
- Students always have the voluntary choice of whether or not to participate in any faculty project.
- The student should be selected using a fair, transparent process.
- Compensation, tangible and not, is equivalent to the work provided and compliant with all applicable laws.
- There is no potential damage to any current or future classroom, advisory, or supervisory relationship, and the student's involvement is not likely to create a perception thereof.
- The student's involvement must not interfere with their academic progress, and the student should be able to withdraw from the work if they find the work to be interfering.
- Payment/fee structure and project credit should be indicated in writing to the student.
- Where possible and reasonable, students should receive credit for their work.