



Policy

Amendments to the Alabama Ethics law passed by the 1986 Legislature place faculty of state-supported institutions of higher education within the purview of the conflict of interest standards set forth in the law. Advisory Opinion No. 1130 issued by the Alabama Ethics Commission on August 21, 1987 concluded that a faculty member “...who is also author is not permitted to make the decision as to whether his or her publication will be used.” The opinion approved a process where “...the decision is made by either administrative officials of the institution or a textbook committee composed of other faculty members and administrative officials within the institution.”

*NOTE: For purpose of this policy, textbooks include published materials, including digital, which students would be expected to purchase.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to mitigate the potential for conflict of interest when faculty authored textbooks are used by USA students. When using faculty authored textbooks there is an inherent potential conflict which may arise by requiring students to purchase course materials authored by a faculty member and for which a faculty member authored and may stand to gain financially.

Submission of Materials

Faculty must submit, to a College/School Committee, copies of self-authored or co-authored course materials that will be required for student purchase prior to textbook assignments to such faculty members' students. The text itself should be submitted along with projected cost to the student.

College/School Committee

Appointed by the dean, each academic department or college/school is required to have a faculty/staff authored text review committee composed of faculty and administrator(s). The committee should be led by an individual at the dean or associate dean level but members may be ad hoc to provide a thorough review of content. The College/school must ensure that any college/school committee is no less restrictive than the University policy. The Committee would need to convene only when a textbook has been submitted for review.



Review and Approval of Materials

The textbook selection committee is responsible for reviewing the materials for the course, and informing the faculty member and department head and dean of their decision. Considerations may include 1) appropriateness of the text for the course and 2) cost effectiveness to the students.

Re-approval is required every three years and materials should include a summary of revenues received. Standards for use of self or co-authored textbooks include:

1. If a faculty **receives no revenue** from the textbook, the faculty would report only to the central (or college) committee with no approval required.
 2. If a faculty **does receive revenue and donates it to a scholarship fund**, the faculty would report with no approval required. The donation would be annual. The donation would cover only revenue from USA students.
 3. A faculty who **does receive revenue** and prefers to retain it must obtain approval from the college/school committee, renewable every three years.
 4. Ensuring that at least one copy of the text is in reserve at the USA library.
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History

Published January 2016

Responsible Party

Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Next Review Date

March 2018