Oregon State University

Extension Guidelines on Outside Professional Activities

Oregon State University Extension Service employees may work outside the University as a means of increasing their effectiveness and broadening their experience in relation to their function at the University. This work may not conflict with their Extension assignments and must be approved and undertaken in a manner consistent with the “OSU Conflict of Commitment Policy (2012).”

This Extension document interprets how general guidelines of the University apply to the specific expectations of Extension positions and the administrative structure in which they work. Specific rules covering all possible Extension situations are not provided, but consistent with the University Guidelines, each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This document clarifies provisions where there is a question regarding the application of the University guidelines to an Extension appointment. Although not specifically addressed here, other provisions of the University guidelines still apply.

Review and Approvals
All outside employment by OSU faculty requires the submission and approval of the OSU “Request for Approval of Professional Outside Activities” form prior to commencement of the professional activities. The approval of the form is from two successive levels of supervisors. For Extension employees, this generally is three individuals—the employee’s immediate supervisor, the appropriate program leader, and the dean (or designee) to whom the immediate supervisor reports for his or her administrative responsibilities. For typical off-campus Extension faculty positions, the immediate supervisor is the Regional Administrator, and the program leader with the primary program responsibility for the faculty; the second level of review is provided by the Associate Director of the Extension Service. For typical on-campus positions, the department head and the dean of the College in which the position is housed carry out the review.

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest and Time
The University Guidelines states, “The potential magnitude of outside professional activity is such that orderly procedures must be followed to avoid conflicts of commitment and conflicts of interest and to ensure that such activities do not interfere with the successful performance of a faculty member’s University obligations and responsibilities.” A given opportunity could conflict with University obligations because the work would:

- Create a real or perceived conflict of interest with the employee’s University assignment,
- Create a real or perceived conflict of interest with other Extension programs in the area, or
- Take the employee away from his or her University assignment for an amount of time that would be detrimental to University obligations.

University guidelines permit outside professional activities up to an average of one day in each work week, proportional to the faculty member’s FTE, when it is not detrimental to an employee’s University obligations. Given the demands on most full-time Extension appointments, the time an Extension employee can be away from his or her assignment without being detrimental will be significantly less than the maximum permitted by the University and
may be limited to certain times of the year. Time conflicts are less of a factor for employees employed by the University at less than full time, provided the outside activities are consistent with the amount of time available.

For Extension employees, there can be a perceived conflict between their Extension role and outside professional activities, including consulting. Outside professional activities will be approved when it is believed that such activities will not have a detrimental effect on the faculty member’s credibility or the ability of all Extension faculty to effectively carry out their assignments. Faculty on Extension appointment will not be granted approval for activities that fall within their Extension job responsibility and geographic area. This geographic area usually means Oregon, but depends on the assignment of the employee and the nature of the proposed work. Given the difficulty of allocating limited Extension resources to audiences in an objective, fair, equitable manner, and the opportunity for the public to perceive a conflict of interest, this provision applies equally to employees with full and partial Extension appointments.

**Elected Offices and Commercial Enterprises**

A more rigorous review and approval process may be required for Extension faculty when their proposed outside activities involve elected offices and commercial enterprises. These provisions apply to the following situations that commonly arise among Extension employees:

- Ownership or operation of a farm or other outside business.
- Buying, selling and/or trading livestock, crops, or other commodities, whether their own or for others.
- Holding elected or appointed public office (including but not limited to county commissions, city council, state legislature, or other board/committee/district membership).

**Conflict of Interest**

In addition to an “OSU Conflict of Commitment Policy”, Oregon State University has a Conflict of Interest policy that provides additional information and can be found at [http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/coi/conflictofinterest.htm](http://oregonstate.edu/research/ori/coi/conflictofinterest.htm).

**Summary of Approval/Review Responsibilities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Primary responsibility</th>
<th>Request is made with support of</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Submit form requesting approval for outside employment</td>
<td>Faculty member</td>
<td>Immediate supervisor and program leader</td>
<td>This request should be made at least 30 days prior to the time the outside employment would begin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval</td>
<td>Associate Director of Extension Service for off-campus faculty or the Administrative Dean of the immediate supervisor for on-campus faculty.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Revised January 2014