



Office of Research Education

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS**

Policy on Conflict of Interest and Undue Influence for Thesis Committees

Student committees provide advice and critical feedback about a student's progress on their thesis research as well as their overall development as a biomedical researcher. Committees also serve as the examiners for Comprehensive and Thesis exams. Faculty members of the committee must be without any conflicts of interests or other bias that would interfere in providing assessment, candid feedback and advice about the student's progress, and to act in the best interest of the student's PhD training. In addition, it is important to preserve the integrity of the practice of confidential discussions between the committee and student, in the absence of their mentor, and to ensure fair and unbiased examinations.

The current Graduate School policy is insufficient in that it is limited to Thesis and Comprehensive examination committees and does not address potential conflicts of interest or undue influence involving the student.

The following ORE policy will apply to all meetings of Thesis or pre-comps committees, including examinations.

“To ensure independent evaluation of students' progress and examinations, and provision of impartial advice and guidance, no member of the committee should have undue influence over another member of the committee or the student. Undue influence could include, but is not limited to, direct employment (e.g. a postdoc employed by a faculty member), familial, domestic or amorous relationships, financial relationships or significant scientific collaboration (e.g joint funding). Any potential conflicts must be disclosed by committee members to the student, the committee and ORE. Familial, domestic or amorous relationships, perceived undue influence or other potential conflicts of interest, involving a prospective committee member and the Thesis Advisor(s), Committee Chair and/or Student, will prohibit that prospective member from serving on said committee. The ORE Assistant Dean for Student Affairs will review and adjudicate other potential conflicts.”