

AEESP UNIFIED CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

Purpose

All AEESP volunteers are asked to comply with the Conflict of Interest (COI) policy outlined below. This COI policy applies to all committees that select AEESP Awardees, Lecturers, and Fellows, referred to in this document as “Selection Committees”. The COI policy guides the handling of COIs for those committees in the selection of the awardees/lecturers/fellows; therefore, promoting an overall ethical process and upholding values of equality, inclusiveness, integrity, and excellence.

The purpose of this COI policy is to avert, to the extent possible, biasing circumstances or the appearance of biasing circumstances in the selection of award/lecturer/fellow recipients.

Ethical Standards

AEESP AWARDS COMMITTEE

1. Those Ineligible for Awards. AEESP members holding the following leadership positions are not eligible to be candidates for any awards, with the exception of awards that are for students, during their terms of service:

- AEESP President;
- AEESP President-elect;
- Board members;
- Awards Committee members;
- All staff of AEESP;
- AEESP immediate Past President (up to one year after completion of their term as President).

2. On the Relationship to an Award Nominee. This policy on the relationship to a nominee is applicable to committee members, nominators, and supporters.

2a. The following relationships need to be acknowledged and communicated to selection committees, but do not disqualify the individual from participating in the nomination or committee review process:

- Candidate’s current dean, departmental chair, supervisor, supervisee, laboratory director, an individual with whom one has a current business or financial relationship (e.g., business partner, employer, employee);
- Research collaborator or co-author within the last three years; and/or
- An individual working at the same institution or having accepted a position at the same institution.

2b. The following offices and relationships disqualify individuals from making nominations:

- President, President-elect, and AEESP staff, cannot nominate or write support letters for candidates other than letters for student awards;
- Nominator/supporter for awards should not be on the “Awards Selection Committee”;
- Awards committee chairs cannot nominate or support candidates;
- Family member, spouse or partner;
- Chairs and members of “Award Selection Committees” who are conflicted with the above-mentioned relationships should recuse themselves from participating in the deliberation and voting process for that particular nominee.

AEESP LECTURERS COMMITTEE

1. Those Ineligible for consideration as a Lecturer.

- Members of the Lecturers Committee are ineligible for nomination during their term of committee service.

2. On the Relationship to a Lecturer Nominee. This policy on the relationship to a nominee is applicable to committee members, nominators, and supporters.

- Members of the Lecturer Committee are not eligible to evaluate or vote on a nominee for a Lecturer if their relationship with the nominee is one of doctoral student advisee/advisor, and/or post-doctoral associate advisee/advisor. The member of the lecturer committee with this COI will be able to vote on the other entries.
- Members of the lecturer committee can serve as nominator or endorser for any nomination submitted to the committee for Lecturer only if it is from a different institution from the nominator and if there is no personal relationship, collaborative efforts, and other types of COI.

AEESP FELLOWS COMMITTEE

1. Those Ineligible for consideration as a Fellow.

- All AEESP members with at least 10 years of continuous membership are eligible to be considered as a fellow.

2. On the Relationship to a Fellow Nominee.

- Members of the Fellows Steering Committee, the committee that will facilitate the nomination and selection of new AEESP Fellows each year, who have submitted a nomination package should not vote for or discuss that nominee; preparing a support letter is not a conflict of interest.
- Steering committee members who are at the same institution or have collaborated actively with any on the nominees within the past three years should not vote for or discuss that nominee.
- Steering Committee members with any other actual or perceived conflict of interest are expected to recuse themselves from voting on a particular nominee.

Additional Conflicts

A vital aspect of fairly managing COIs in the selection process of awardees/fellows/lecturers is personal ethical integrity in being aware of bias for or against a nominee for any other reason besides those outlined above. Open discussion about potential COIs among selection committee members is required prior to the selection discussion. If, for any reason, committee members judge that they have a COI with a nominee, then they are expected to recuse themselves from any relevant discussion and voting. Examples are provided below:

- Chairs of “Selection Committees” who are supervisors of nominees cannot participate in the review and selection process of that committee;
- Members of “Selection Committees” may determine that they have conflicts or potential conflicts for other reasons (e.g., open personal or professional disagreements) and act on that determination if they believe that service could affect the fairness of the selection process.
- Nominees may also identify potential conflict with an awards/lecturer/fellows committee member and can voice that concern as a COI without mentioning the reason for the COI.

Disclosure and Management

- COI standards and implementation procedures for service on one of the Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Selection Committees should be widely publicized and readily accessible to AEESP members.
- The President, relevant Committee chair, and/or other appointed members of the Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Selection Committees will make potential members aware of these ethical standards and the implementation procedures.
- Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Selection Committee members with a COI will inform the chair of the committee of any potential conflicts before the nominations are reviewed.

- The chair of the specific Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Selection Committee, in consultation with the members, will determine whether the conflict requires any members to refrain either from voting, from participating in the deliberation process, or from the entire selection procedure.
- If vacancies occur on the selection committees due to withdrawal of members from service as a result of a COI during their term, those vacancies should be filled promptly, the relevant Committee chair, with approval from the appropriate Board member, the President, should be prepared to appoint alternates if a vacancy arises due to a conflict.
- Any Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Selection Committee chair or member with questions or ambiguous circumstances should seek the advice of the Board liaison who will, where necessary, consult with the President on this policy and its implementation.
- If a committee member knowingly or unintentionally fails to disclose a COI and participates in the consummated selection process, he or she will not be permitted to participate in any award selection committee or process for a period of two years; he or she will still be allowed to nominate or support packages.

Timing of Policy Review

The Award, Lecturer, or Fellows Committee members who select the Awardees, lectures, or fellows respectively, will review the Conflict of Interest Policy every three years and revisions will be forwarded to the AEESP Board for approval.