

SECTION TWO: Conflict of Interest

A. Policy:

Service as an ABET Board Director, Board Delegate, Member Society representative to an Area Delegation, on a Committee, Council, or Commission, as a Team Chair or Program Evaluator, Alternate to the Board of Delegates, Area Delegation, or Commission, or ABET staff member creates situations that may result in conflicts of interest or questions regarding the objectivity and credibility of ABET's accreditation process. ABET expects these individuals to behave in a professional and ethical manner, to disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest, and to recuse themselves from discussions or decisions related to real or perceived conflicts of interest or questions regarding the objectivity and credibility of the accreditation process. The intent of this policy is to:

1. Maintain credibility in the accreditation process and confidence in the decisions of the Board of Directors, the Board of Delegates, Area Delegations, Committees and Councils, Commissions, Team Chairs, Program Evaluators, and staff members;
2. Assure fairness and impartiality in decision-making;
3. Disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest; and
4. Act impartially to avoid the appearance of impropriety.

B. Procedure:

1. Real or perceived conflicts of interest are defined as a close, active association with a program or institution that is being or has been considered for official action by ABET. These include but are not limited to:
 - a. Employment as faculty, staff, or consultant by the institution or program.
 - b. Discussion or negotiation of employment with the institution or program.
 - c. Attendance as a student at the institution within the past 10 years.
 - d. Award of a degree (may include but not limited to honorary degrees) from the institution.

- e. An institution or program where a close family relative is, or was, a student or employee within the past 10 years. Close family relatives are defined as grandparents, parents, siblings, spouses/partners, children, grandchildren, stepchildren, or other family members with a relationship similar to those listed.
 - f. Current or past membership on the institution's governing board or any institutional, departmental or program advisory board.
 - g. Current or past paid or unpaid, official or informal relationship or affiliation within the past 10 years with an institution, such as providing significant assistance or review for a program's accreditation preparation, working on a fundraising campaign, being a volunteer club advisor, or similar. This does not include serving on an ABET evaluation team, which is covered in paragraph B.2.a..
 - h. A financial or personal interest.
 - i. Any reason that the individual cannot render an unbiased decision.
2. ABET will observe the following procedures:
- a. ABET will not assign individuals to an evaluation team if they have served as an ABET team member (Team Chair, PEV or Observer) at the institution during any part of the last two institutional general review cycles.
 - b. Individuals representing ABET must decline an assignment for which they have a real or perceived conflict of interest per section 1.
 - c. Editors will not be assigned to edit a statement for an institution where they have been employed, engaged in consulting, or been on an ABET team (Team Chair, PEV or Observer) during any part of the current institutional general review cycle. Editors must declare any conflicts of interest before the start of the accreditation cycle program assignments.
 - d. Individuals who have been employed at or provided significant consulting services or assistance (paid or unpaid) with a program's accreditation preparation during the period of an accreditation cycle for which accreditation decisions are under consideration shall declare their conflict of interest and not participate in discussions or vote on any accreditation action.
3. Members of the ABET Board of Directors and staff members may observe an accreditation visit, but they are not eligible to serve as Program Evaluators or Team Chairs. Commissioners are not eligible to serve concurrently on the Board of Directors, the Board of Delegates, or Area Delegations; nor are ABET Directors or Delegates eligible to serve concurrently on an ABET Commission. Area

Directors, in their role as liaisons to the Commissions, serve as ex-officio, non-voting members of the Commissions.

4. A record of real or perceived conflicts of interest will be maintained for all those involved in the accreditation process. Each individual will be provided the opportunity to update this record annually. Each Member Society will have access to their volunteers' records for the purposes of annually updating or removing Program Evaluators from the approved list. The records of conflicts of interest will be utilized annually in team chair and program evaluator selection.
5. All individuals representing ABET must annually review and acknowledge conflict of interest and confidentiality statements indicating that they have read and understand these policies. The policies on conflict of interest and confidentiality will be reviewed at the start of each Board of Directors, Board of Delegates, Area Delegation, and Commission meeting.
6. ABET will maintain a record of the names of individuals recusing themselves for conflicts of interest at each meeting related to accreditation decision making.

SECTION THREE: Confidentiality

A. Ethical Conduct:

ABET requires ethical conduct by each volunteer and staff member engaged in fulfilling the purposes of ABET. The organization requires that every volunteer and staff member exhibit the highest standards of professionalism, honesty, and integrity. The services provided by ABET require impartiality, fairness, and equity. All persons involved with ABET activities must perform their duties under the highest standards of ethical behavior. Information provided by the institution is for the confidential use of ABET personnel, including but not necessarily limited to, members of the Board of Directors, Board of Delegates, Area Delegations, Commissions, Committees, Councils, Team Chairs, Program Evaluators, ABET staff, and ad hoc participants in other ABET activities. The information provided by the institution will not be disclosed without specific written authorization of the designated official institution contact

B. Privileged Information:

The contents of all materials furnished for review purposes, from the submission of the Self-Study through the Final Statement completion, and discussion during the Commissions' meetings are considered privileged information. The contents of those documents and the accreditation actions taken may be disclosed only by ABET staff, and only under appropriate circumstances. All communications between institutions and evaluators or commissioners regarding final accreditation actions must be referred to ABET headquarters.