



## Important University Policies for Faculty and Academic Staff

Michigan State University endorses [academic freedom](#) and responsibility as essential to attainment of the University's goal of the unfettered search for knowledge and its free exposition. Indeed, these principles are formalized in the [Faculty Rights and Responsibilities](#) policy in the [Faculty Handbook](#) and have been in place since 1984 as implementation of this fundamental concept in higher education. Academic freedom and responsibility are fundamental characteristics of the University environment and are always closely interwoven and at times indistinguishable.

With academic freedom comes the responsibility to carry out assigned teaching, research, and outreach duties within the highest ethical standards. Clear policies and transparency affecting faculty and academic staff activities is an essential element of the faculty/academic staff-University professional relationship.

This document was put together by the [Office of the Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs](#) as a reference guide and summary of relevant and important policies for faculty and academic staff. It is not intended to be a comprehensive guide of university policies. The best source of information can be found in each policy contained within the applicable faculty and academic staff employment [Handbooks](#) or the [MSU Policy Library](#).

Many of the policies listed in this document either have pre-approval, disclosure, or mandatory reporting requirements. Where applicable, these requirements are noted within each policy reference. As a best practice, it's important to keep your unit administrator informed of your activities and to inquire ahead of time about any applicable policies or authorizations that may be needed pertaining to your work.

We encourage you to use this document as a resource to refer to throughout the semester.

## Contents

<b>Employment</b>	<b>4</b>
Anti-Discrimination	4
Conflicts of Interest in Employment	4
Conflicts of Interest, Faculty/Academic Staff	5
Consensual Amorous or Sexual Relationships with Students	5
Criminal Background Checks for Faculty, Academic Staff and Executive Management (Self-Disclosure Requirement)	6
Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy ( <i>new revisions August 25, 2025</i> )	6
<b>Registering a Disability</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Employee Accommodations</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Questions</b>	<b>7</b>
Dual Appointment	7
Statement on Faculty Professional Integrity	7
Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (FRR)	7
Guidelines and Policies about Technology Usage at MSU	8
<b>Acceptable Use Policy</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Appropriate Use of MSU Email</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Institutional Data Policy</b>	<b>8</b>
Overload Pay	9
Outside Work for Pay	9
Pregnancy, Childbirth and Pregnancy-Related Conditions for Students and Employees	10
Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) and Title IX Policy ( <i>new revisions August 25, 2025</i> )	10
Religious Accommodation Process for Employees ( <i>new 2025</i> )	11
Mandatory Reporting for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Stalking Policy (RVSM Mandatory Reporting) ( <i>new revisions August 25, 2025</i> )	11
University Reporting Protocol: Child Abuse and Other Harm to Children (Mandatory Reporting)	12
<b>Teaching</b>	<b>12</b>
Code of Teaching Responsibility	12
Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy ( <i>student details</i> )	12
<b>Registering a Disability</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Student Accommodations</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>Questions .....</b>	<b>13</b>
Faculty Authored Works Assigned to Students and Perceived Conflicts of Interest.....	13
Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act .....	14
Religious Observance Policy .....	14
Requirements Regarding Student’s Intellectual Property (IP) .....	15
<b>Research .....</b>	<b>15</b>
Intellectual Property .....	15
Sponsored Research and Creative Endeavor.....	15
Emerging Federal Guidance on Outside Influence .....	16
Prohibition of Participation in Malign Foreign Talent Programs ( <i>new August 2024</i> ) .....	16
<b>Non-Retaliation .....</b>	<b>16</b>

# Employment

## Anti-Discrimination

The Anti-Discrimination policy (ADP) sets forth expectations for institutional and individual conduct. It applies to all University community members, including but not limited to, faculty, academic staff, support staff, and students. Unlawful acts of discrimination or harassment are prohibited. In addition, the University community holds itself to certain standards of conduct more stringent than those mandated by law. Thus, even if not illegal, acts are prohibited under this policy if they:

1. Discriminate against any University community member(s) through inappropriate limitation<sup>1</sup> of employment opportunity<sup>2</sup>, access to University residential facilities, or participation in education, athletic, social, cultural, or other University activities on the basis of age, color, gender<sup>3</sup> (including gender identity and gender expression), genetic information, disability status, ethnicity, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation), military or veteran status, or weight; or
2. Harass any University community member(s) on the basis of age, color, gender, (including gender identity, gender expression), genetic information, disability status, ethnicity, height, marital status, national origin, political persuasion, race, religion, sex (including pregnancy, sexual orientation), military or veteran status, or weight.

Complaints under this Policy are processed and investigated by the Investigation, Support and Resolution (ISR) Department within MSU's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) pursuant to the ADP User's Manual. Questions about this policy may be directed to ISR at 517-353-3922 or [ocr.isr@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.isr@msu.edu).

## Conflicts of Interest in Employment

The Conflicts of Interest in Employment policy discusses the expectations, procedure, and approval requirements regarding the employment of relatives and individuals with personal relationships in the same unit or department. The policy defines the term "relative" as a connection between persons by blood, marriage, adoption, domestic partnership, or other personal relationship in which objectivity might be impaired. Relationship to another individual employed by the University shall not constitute a bar to hiring, promotion or reappointment, provided that employment of relatives in the same unit or department or under the same supervisor is authorized only with the prior written approval of the head of the unit or department and the Office of the Provost or the Office of MSU Human Resources as appropriate.

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<sup>1</sup> Limitations are inappropriate if they are not directly related to a legitimate University purpose. The [Anti-Discrimination Policy User's Manual](#) provides additional guidance on inappropriate limitation as defined by this Policy.

<sup>2</sup>For purpose of this Policy, "employment opportunity" is defined as job access and placement, retention, promotion, professional development, and salary.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this Policy, the reference to "gender identity" shall be interpreted to include protection against gender stereotyping based on a person's gender expression. In other words, gender stereotyping is impermissible discrimination or harassment based on a failure to conform to stereotypical gender norms.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FASAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FASAffairs@msu.edu).

Required Disclosure: Disclose any applicable relationship(s) to the head of your unit. A [Conflict of Interest in Employment Form](#) is required to be completed.

### **Conflicts of Interest. Faculty/Academic Staff**

**Please note: This policy will be replaced by new requirements on September 30, 2025. Additional communication will follow.**

The Conflicts of Interest policy addresses the disclosure, review, management, and resolution of conflicts of interests relating to performance by faculty/academic staff of their research, teaching, outreach, and service responsibilities at the University. A conflict of interest exists when a faculty/academic staff member's financial interests or other opportunities for tangible personal benefit may compromise, or reasonably appear to compromise, the faculty/academic staff member's independent judgment. Each faculty/academic staff member is responsible for disclosing their own conflicts of interest. Questions about this policy may be directed to the [Office of Conflict Disclosures and Management](#) in the Office of Research Regulatory Support at [cdm@msu.edu](mailto:cdm@msu.edu) or (517) 884-7000.

Required Disclosure: On an annual basis, all faculty and academic staff are required to disclose all significant financial interests and other opportunities for tangible personal benefit that are related to their institutional responsibilities. Faculty/academic staff members must also submit an updated disclosure within thirty days of acquiring any new significant financial interest or other opportunity for tangible personal benefit. Submit disclosures through the [Kuali-Research portal](#) and inform your unit administrator of your disclosure.

### **Consensual Amorous or Sexual Relationships with Students**

An amorous or sexual relationship between an undergraduate student and a faculty member, academic staff member, or a graduate teaching assistant may impair or undermine the ongoing trust needed for effective teaching, learning and professional development. This policy prohibits consensual amorous or sexual relationships between:

1. undergraduate students and employees classified as faculty and academic staff. This ban exists regardless of whether the faculty member has educational responsibility for an undergraduate student, and it exists for as long as the faculty member is employed and the student is enrolled as an undergraduate at MSU, and
2. graduate students and employees classified as faculty and academic staff over whom there is educational responsibility.
3. postdoctoral fellows and employees classified as faculty and academic staff over whom there is educational responsibility.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FASAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FASAffairs@msu.edu).

Required Disclosure: Where a relationship predates the enrollment of the *undergraduate student*, immediately disclose this relationship to the head of your unit. Where the relationship predates the faculty or academic staff member's assumption of educational responsibility for the *graduate student*, the faculty or academic staff member shall immediately disclose the amorous or sexual relationship to the relevant unit administrator. A management/oversight plan will be developed.

### Criminal Background Checks for Faculty, Academic Staff and Executive Management (Self-Disclosure Requirement)

Required Disclosure: The Criminal Background Checks (CBC) policy requires faculty and academic staff currently employed or engaged by the University (whether paid or unpaid) to notify the Vice Provost and Associate Vice President of Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs of certain arrests, convictions, or events **within 72 hours** or at the earliest possible opportunity by using the [Michigan State University Self-Disclosure Form](#). These include:

1. Professional misconduct or sanctions
2. Any civil rights violation that the individual admitted or was determined by a court or other adjudicative process to have committed
3. Any felony crime for which the individual was arrested and charged or any serious crime for which the individual was convicted or pled "no contest."

Engagement in any such conduct will not, in and of itself, result in termination of the appointment. However, failure to disclose such information, or any misrepresentation made in connection with the disclosure, could be grounds for termination.

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FSAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FSAffairs@msu.edu).

### Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy (new revisions August 25, 2025)

The Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy (DRAP) prohibits discrimination and harassment against a qualified individual with a disability and prohibits retaliation against those who report disability discrimination or harassment or who request reasonable accommodations. The DRAP sets forth the University's commitment to ensuring equal employment opportunities and access to University programs, services, and facilities for qualified individuals with disabilities, except when an accommodation poses a direct threat to self or others, fundamentally alters an educational program, service, or activity, or causes undue hardship.

#### Registering a Disability

The DRAP sets forth the process for registering a disability and requesting reasonable accommodations. Employees needing an accommodation must register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) and provide medical documentation of their disability and of the need for an accommodation. Medical documentation is kept confidential, except as necessary to administer the accommodation process.

### Employee Accommodations

The Workplace Accommodation Specialist in the Office of Employee and Labor Relations (ELR) coordinates the accommodation process for all employees, including faculty and staff. Employee accommodations are set forth in the Accommodation Letter. The Accommodation Letter communicates to supervisors an employee's need for an accommodation. Supervisors are responsible for maintaining confidentiality of the Accommodation Letter and for facilitating the granted accommodations outlined in the letter. The Accommodation Letter should be held in a confidential place separate from the employee's personnel file. A new Accommodation Letter may be necessary if the employee's position or job duties are changed, or the employee begins employment with a different unit. Appeals of the Accommodation Letter determinations may be made to the ADA & Section 504 Coordinator within thirty (30) calendar days from the date of the Accommodation Letter.

### Questions

The ADA & Section 504 Coordinator is designated by the University to coordinate compliance with the DRAP and available to answer questions about the DRAP. The ADA & Section 504 Coordinator can be contacted at [ocr.tracyleahy@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.tracyleahy@msu.edu).

### Dual Appointment

The Dual Appointment policy states that no faculty/academic staff member holding a full-time appointment at Michigan State University may, during the term of the appointment, or while on leave of absence, simultaneously hold a paid appointment at another institution. Exceptions to this policy must be approved in advance by the Dean and by the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs (or designee). Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FSAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FSAffairs@msu.edu).

### Statement on Faculty Professional Integrity

While not a policy, the *Michigan State University Statement of Professional Integrity*, endorsed by the Faculty Senate and adopted by the Office of the Provost in 2024, outlines the principles that guide faculty conduct to foster an equitable, safe, and respectful workplace. The statement emphasizes the importance of civility, respect, and non-discrimination in all interactions among faculty, students, staff, and the broader community. It reaffirms the commitment to academic freedom, mutual respect, and the value of diverse perspectives as essential to the university's mission. This resolution complements existing policies on sexual misconduct, relationship violence, and discrimination, ensuring that the university remains a supportive environment grounded in robust intellectual engagement and civil discourse.

### Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (FRR)

The purpose of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (FRR) policy is to acknowledge the fundamental rights and responsibilities of faculty in carrying out the mission of the University as members of both the academic and the broader public community. It discusses the rights and responsibilities surrounding academic freedom and responsibility, academic governance, teaching, research and creative activity, service, relations with colleagues, professionalism, and relations to the University and the community. Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FSAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FSAffairs@msu.edu).

## Guidelines and Policies about Technology Usage at MSU

A trusted and effective information technology environment is vital to the mission of Michigan State University. To that end, the university provides an IT environment which includes an array of institutional electronic business systems, computing services, networks, databases, and other resources. These resources are intended to support the scholarship and work activities of members of the university's academic community and their external collaborators, to support the operations of the university, and to provide access to services of the university and other publicly available information.

### Acceptable Use Policy

This policy outlines the university's expectations and responsibilities for employees who use MSU IT Resources. Employees may not engage in the usage of MSU IT resources for partisan political activity, to operate a business or for commercial purposes, or to store, display, or disseminate pornographic or other sexually explicit content. Child pornography is illegal. The use of MSU IT resources to store, display, or disseminate child pornography is absolutely prohibited and must be reported immediately to the MSU Police and Public Safety.

### Appropriate Use of MSU Email

This policy outlines the university's expectations and responsibilities for internal users of MSU Email. The University's email services are not provided for private or personal use. Incidental personal uses of the email system are permitted as long as they do not violate: the law; restrictions that derive from the University's tax-exempt status; University policies, ordinances, rules, and guidelines; and contracts the University has made.

### Institutional Data Policy

This policy establishes minimum requirements for the appropriate stewardship of Institutional Data (e.g., all of the data and records held by the University, in any form or medium, for the administration, operation, or governance of the University or any unit of the University). These requirements state that members of the University community: may access and use Institutional Data only for University purposes, are individually responsible for the security and integrity of Institutional Data in their possession or control, including their proper storage and disposal, and must use, store, transfer, disseminate, and dispose of Institutional Data in ways that minimize the potential for their improper disclosure or misuse. The policy also defines Confidential Data and discusses expectations surrounding the security, use, and disposal of Confidential Data.

The university may be compelled to disclose Users' electronic records in response to various legal requirements, including subpoenas, court orders, search warrants, discovery requests in litigation, and requests for public records under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act ("MIFOIA").

Questions about this policy may be directed to the IT Service Desk at 517-432-6200 or [ithelp@msu.edu](mailto:ithelp@msu.edu).



## Overload Pay

The Overload Pay policy discusses the eligibility, process, and pre-approval guidelines for performing overload assignments related to teaching, research, outreach activities, and academic and student support activities. Overload pay assignments require prior written approval (a) by the immediate supervisor of the individual who will undertake the proposed overload pay assignment; (b) by the administrator of the major administrative unit ("MAU") in which that individual is appointed; and (c) if the unit in which the overload pay assignment is to be performed is different from the unit in which the individual is appointed, by the administrator of, and the MAU administrator for, the unit in which the overload pay assignment is to be performed. To be approved, the faculty or academic staff member must be satisfactorily performing their duties and the proposed assignment represents a substantial increase over the individual's regularly assigned duties. Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FASAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FASAffairs@msu.edu).

Required Pre-Approval: Overload pay assignments require prior written approval by your unit administrator and the unit in which the overload pay assignment is to be performed. Complete the [Overload Pay Pre-Authorization Form](#) and submit to your unit administrator.

## Outside Work for Pay

**Please note: This policy will be replaced by new requirements on September 30, 2025. Additional communication will follow.**

The Outside Work for Pay (OWP) policy discusses faculty members' obligation to obtain written approval before engaging in paid work outside the University. "Pay" is anything of value received in consideration for work. Examples of pay include, but are not limited to, any salary, fee, honorarium, stock, stock option, monetary gift or contribution beyond actual expense, or the promise of any of these in the future. Work for any business or other for-profit enterprise owned or operated by a faculty member or by their relative(s), shall be considered "pay." The policy applies to work such as consulting and expert witness testimony, as well as any work for a faculty-owned business.

The policy permits faculty to obtain approval to engage in outside work for pay for a total average of four days per month (calculated as one full day for any portion of a day that is spent engaged in outside work), provided that the work will enhance the faculty member's expertise as a teacher and scholar and all other policy requirements are met. Additionally, the OWP policy works in conjunction with the Overload Pay policy; all approved outside work for pay and overload pay assignments for the faculty member will not exceed a total average of four (4) days a month during duty periods. Faculty are expected to arrange their outside activities so as to avoid conflicts of commitment. A "conflict of commitment" occurs when the time and attention a faculty member devotes to outside activities interferes with the performance of their responsibilities to the University.

[Frequently Asked Questions](#) related to the OWP policy is available for review. Additionally, [MSU's Patent Policy](#) and policy on the [Development of Copyrighted Materials](#) will apply to employees' activities as they engage in Outside Work for Pay. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs at (517) 353-5300 or [FASAffairs@msu.edu](mailto:FASAffairs@msu.edu).

Required Pre-Approval: Outside work for pay assignments require prior written approval by your unit administrator. Complete the [Outside Work for Pay Approval Form](#) and submit to your unit administrator.

### **Pregnancy, Childbirth and Pregnancy-Related Conditions for Students and Employees**

This Policy addresses the University's obligations under federal law to provide reasonable accommodations for employees affected by pregnancy, childbirth or pregnancy-related conditions, and academic modifications and extended leaves of absence for students who are affected by pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related conditions, and/or students who are parenting, including, adoptive parents, foster parents, stepparents and/or legal guardians.

Students and employees who are affected by pregnancy, childbirth or pregnancy-related conditions and who are seeking modifications and accommodations related to their education and/or work, including leaves of absence, may seek assistance under this policy. Parenting students, including adoptive and foster parents, stepparents and legal guardians, who are seeking modifications related to their education may also seek assistance under this policy.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)/Investigation, Support and Resolution (ISR) at 517-353- 3922 or [ocr.isr@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.isr@msu.edu).

### **Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (RVSM) and Title IX Policy (new revisions August 25, 2025)**

The University strives to provide an academic and work environment that fosters the values of safety; mutual respect; dignity; equity; responsibility; and clear and timely communication. Relationship violence, sexual misconduct, and stalking are in direct conflict with the University's values and policies and present barriers to fulfilling the University's missions.

All faculty, staff, academic staff, students (including graduate students and professional students) volunteers, and other members of the MSU community are expected to comply with the RVSM and Title IX Policy. The policy prohibits sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence (includes dating and domestic violence) and stalking as defined by Title IX, and the University's broader definitions under the RVSM.

The policy also prohibits retaliation. The University defines retaliation as an act or attempted act taken because of a person's participation (or expectation of participation) in a protected activity that would discourage a reasonable person from engaging in protected activity.

Retaliation under Title IX is defined as intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination, including charges against an individual for code of conduct violations that do not involve sex discrimination or sexual harassment, but arise out of the same facts or circumstances as a report or complaint of sex discrimination, or a report or formal complaint of sexual harassment, for the purpose of interfering with any right or privilege secured by Title IX.

The policy contains a detailed explanation of the process for investigations, hearings, appeals and discipline for violations.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)/ Investigation, Support and Resolution (ISR) at 517-353- 3922 or [ocr.isr@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.isr@msu.edu).

### **Religious Accommodation Process for Employees (new 2025)**

Michigan State University is committed to providing a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment. As an employer and consistent with applicable law, MSU will accommodate an employee's religious beliefs unless doing so is unreasonable or poses an undue hardship. A religious accommodation in the employment setting is any reasonable adjustment to the work environment or in the way tasks or responsibilities are customarily performed.

To the extent possible, supervisors and unit leaders should anticipate and consider religious holidays and celebrations when planning events like meetings, retreats, unit events, etc. For more information about religious holidays please refer to the [religious observance calendar](#).

The process for seeking a religious accommodations for employees can be found [here](#).

Questions about this guidance may be directed to Faculty and Academic Staff Affairs (for faculty, academic staff and executive management) at [fasaffairs@msu.edu](mailto:fasaffairs@msu.edu).

### **Mandatory Reporting for Relationship Violence, Sexual Misconduct and Stalking Policy (RVSM Mandatory Reporting) (new revisions August 25, 2025)**

"Responsible employees" and "volunteers" must promptly report incidents or conduct that may be prohibited by the RVSM and Title IX Policy (relationship violence, sexual misconduct, sexual harassment, stalking, and retaliation) that they observe or learn about in their working or professional capacity and that occurred at a University-sponsored event or on University property or involves a University community member with respect to conduct that may have occurred while they were a University community member.

Responsible employees and volunteers must report to the Title IX Coordinator/Office for Civil Rights (OCR). Undergraduate student employees must also report, but to their supervisor rather than OCR. Unless otherwise exempt from reporting, their supervisor will then report the incident to OCR.

"Responsible employees" are defined as those persons employed by the University as executive management, faculty, academic staff, support staff (including regular, temporary, and on-call), post-doctoral fellows, graduate student employees (including research assistants, teaching assistants, and lab assistants), leased employees, and contract employees, except when exempt as described in the Policy.

"Volunteers" are defined as persons performing unpaid services for the University as (i) faculty or academic staff, (ii) a University Extension Gold volunteer, (iii) an advisor to students, or (iv) a volunteer for a University Youth Program.

"Employees exempted during provision of services" are employees and volunteers who work in the list of offices set forth in the Policy. These individuals provide important counseling, health, advocacy, and other support services to members of the University community and are not required to report information disclosed to them in connection with providing those services.

Responsible employees and volunteers must report all details known to them about the incident, including what happened, who was involved, when the incident occurred, and where the incident occurred. Responsible employees and volunteers should not investigate or attempt to determine if alleged conduct occurred.

Individuals who violate the reporting requirement may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Potential violations of this policy will be investigated by OCR/ISR.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office for Civil Rights (OCR)/ Investigation, Support and Resolution (ISR) Department at 517-353- 3922 or [ocr.isr@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.isr@msu.edu).

### **[University Reporting Protocol: Child Abuse and Other Harm to Children \(Mandatory Reporting\)](#)**

Employees and volunteers are required to report any perceived, disclosed, or observed non-accidental harm to a child, learned in the context of their role with the university, to MSU Police and Public Safety at 517-355-2222. Individuals who are designated as “mandated reporters” under the state Child Protection Law and who suspect child abuse or neglect must report to the Michigan Department of Health & Human Services immediately.

Employees or volunteers who become aware of suspected child sexually abusive material on MSU IT Resources or in the possession of an MSU employee or volunteer must contact the MSU Police and Public Safety immediately, unless such information is protected by a legally recognized privilege.

[Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\)](#) provides answers to common questions, including how to address adult student disclosure of abuse as a child.

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## **Teaching**

### **[Code of Teaching Responsibility](#)**

The Code of Teaching Responsibility policy sets forth faculty and academic staff members’ instructional obligations, including developing course content and syllabi, informing students of grading criteria, handling testing documents and term papers, holding regularly scheduled classes, and being accessible to students. The policy also prohibits students from commercializing course notes and materials without the written consent of the instructor.

Questions about this policy may be directed to the Office of the Ombudsperson at (517) 353- 8830.

### **[Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy \(\*student details\*\)](#)**

The Disability & Reasonable Accommodation Policy (DRAP) prohibits discrimination and harassment against a qualified individual with a disability and prohibits retaliation against those who report disability discrimination or harassment or who request reasonable accommodations. The DRAP sets forth the University’s commitment to ensuring equal employment opportunities and access to University programs, services, and facilities for qualified individuals with disabilities, except when an

accommodation poses a direct threat to self or others, fundamentally alters an educational program, service, or activity, or causes undue hardship.

### Registering a Disability

The DRAP sets forth the process for registering a disability and requesting reasonable accommodations. Students needing an accommodation must register with the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) and provide medical documentation of their disability and of the need for an accommodation. Medical documentation is kept confidential, except as necessary to administer the accommodation process.

### Student Accommodations

RCPD coordinates the accommodation process for students. Student accommodations are set forth in an Accommodation Letter. The Accommodation Letter enables students to validate and communicate their accommodation needs to faculty.

Faculty are responsible for facilitating the accommodations and adjustments in the Accommodation Letter. Modifications or changes to the Accommodation Letter may only be made after discussion with the student's RCPD Ability Access Specialist and the issuance of an amended Accommodation Letter, as may be determined necessary by RCPD. Faculty should promptly contact the student's RCPD Ability Access Specialist with questions or concerns regarding the granted accommodations or adjustments in the Accommodation Letter or their use. Appeals of RCPD's accommodation determinations may be made to the Director of RCPD or to the ADA Coordinator within thirty (30) calendar days of the accommodation determination.

### Questions

The ADA & Section 504 Coordinator is designated by the University to coordinate compliance with the DRAP and available to answer questions about the DRAP. The ADA & Section 504 Coordinator can be contacted at [ocr.tracyleahy@msu.edu](mailto:ocr.tracyleahy@msu.edu).

### Faculty Authored Works Assigned to Students and Perceived Conflicts of Interest

Faculty and academic staff members at Michigan State University are experts in their fields and encouraged to publish their knowledge and research. Faculty acting in their role as instructors may assign their published work for reading to students in their classes. In 2004, the American Association of University Professors published a statement that professors have the right under principles of academic freedom to select their own instructional materials.<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, the statement acknowledged that there can be a real or perceived conflict of interest if instructors gain monetarily through assigning their own publications to a "captive audience" of students.

To guard against even the appearance of impropriety, Michigan State University joins many other universities in providing a policy outlining ways faculty can mitigate real and perceived conflicts of interest from the assignment of their own texts to their own students.

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<sup>4</sup>American Association of University Professors, 2004. On professors assigning their own texts to students. Available at:

<https://www.aaup.org/report/professors-assigning-their-own-texts-students>

The policy discusses ways to mitigate perceived conflict of interest (e.g., including a statement in the syllabus). It also discusses ways to mitigate a real conflict of interest (e.g., foregoing royalties/profits and educating their students on this point). Additionally, instructors are encouraged to notify their chairperson or school director on the plan of the disposition of payments they derive from the sales of textbooks or other course materials to their own students. This allows for the chairperson/school director to simply be aware in the event student-related issues/concerns arise.

This policy was developed by the University Committee on Faculty Affairs and was endorsed by the Faculty Senate in and the Office of the Provost in 2022.

### [Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act](#)

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA") is a federal law that gives students who enter a post-secondary institution, the right to have access to their education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from their education records.

With limited exceptions, FERPA prohibits the release of personally identifiable information from a student's education record without the student's prior written consent. The [Access to Student Information](#) policy provides important information for faculty and academic staff to comply with FERPA.

Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Office of the Registrar at 517-355- 3300 or [reg@msu.edu](mailto:reg@msu.edu).

### [Religious Observance Policy](#)

Michigan State University (MSU) is committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive environment that respects and supports the spiritual expression and practices of its community members. To accommodate the increasing diversity and potential conflicts between academic requirements and religious observances, MSU's policy mandates that religious observance claims be accepted without question. Faculty and staff are required to be sensitive to these observances, ensuring that students are not disadvantaged due to absences for religious reasons. This includes avoiding scheduling exams and presentations on major religious days, offering reasonable accommodations for missed work, and addressing attendance policies to ensure they do not unfairly penalize students observing religious holidays. Additionally, students are responsible for notifying instructors of any conflicts at least two weeks in advance. This policy must be communicated in course syllabi, and orientation programs should inform new students of their rights and responsibilities under this policy. Information about the dates of observance is available on the [religious observance calendar](#) webpage maintained by the Office of the Provost.

Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Office for Institutional Diversity and Inclusion at 517-353-4563 or [inclusion@msu.edu](mailto:inclusion@msu.edu).

## Requirements Regarding Student's Intellectual Property (IP)

MSU's primary goal is to educate and prepare students for a career in their chosen field of study. To that end, MSU and its faculty/academic staff may provide educational experiences through exposure to a variety of circumstances and opportunities. Often, MSU faculty/academic staff will engage an outside individual, small business, or corporation (a "Sponsor") to present or support a project for educational purposes and as part of a course. The Sponsor may require each participating student to sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) to protect its proprietary or confidential information and/or an IP Assignment so that the Sponsor may secure rights to incorporate the students' contributions into a product or service of Sponsor.

There are requirements for faculty who are teaching classes that involve student NDAs and student intellectual property rights assessments (IP Assignment). These apply to both undergraduate and graduate students and affect some colleges more than others.

Questions about these requirements may be directed to the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education at 517-353-5380, [UndergraduateEducation@msu.edu](mailto:UndergraduateEducation@msu.edu) or the Vice Provost for Graduate Education at 517-353-3220, [gradschool@grd.msu.edu](mailto:gradschool@grd.msu.edu).

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## **Research**

### Intellectual Property

The [Patent Policy](#) and policy on the [Development of Copyrighted Materials](#) govern the ownership, protection, use, and commercialization of University inventions and copyrighted materials created by University faculty, students and staff. Questions about this policy may be directed to MSU Technologies at 517-355-2186, [msut@msu.edu](mailto:msut@msu.edu).

### Sponsored Research and Creative Endeavor

The [general statement](#) and [guidelines](#) concerning sponsored research discuss the standards and procedures in sponsored research conducted at the University. These guidelines reference important issues confronting faculty, such as appropriate use of facilities, proper budgeting, and obtaining appropriate approvals for research projects including those involving use of animals, human subjects or hazardous substances. If you have any questions about these guidelines, the Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation at (517) 355- 0306 can help direct your call or please consider contacting these areas directly:

Contact information: [Sponsored Programs Administration-Office of Sponsored Programs- Contract and Grant Administration](#)

Information on practices, resources, and contacts:

- [SPA-OSP-CGA \(Pre- and Post-award\)](#)
- [Business-CONNECT](#)
- [Office of Research Regulatory Support](#)



## [Emerging Federal Guidance on Outside Influence](#)

As an inclusive place of learning, MSU welcomes and promotes international scholarship, partnerships, and exchanges. An essential, common element of scholarship, partnership, and respectful exchanges is disclosure. Undisclosed working relationships between scholars in U.S. institutions and non-domestic entities (e.g., universities, companies, and governments) have increasingly been a concern of federal agencies. In its absence, concerns arise over risk to objectivity of research, overcommitment of investigators relative to federal obligations, loss of U.S. intellectual property and attribution, and trade sanctions or export control violations. The message from federal agencies is that investigators in U.S. labs must disclose activities supported by non-domestic entities in grant applications and during awards. For more information, please see: [Outside Influence Guidance](#). Various disclosures by faculty are needed throughout the life cycle of a sponsored program. The [Faculty Disclosure Chart](#) can be a helpful resource to navigate these sponsor requirements.

## [Prohibition of Participation in Malign Foreign Talent Programs \(new August 2024\)](#)

In spring of 2024, MSU implemented new questions on the Conflict of Interest Disclosure in order to certify that key personnel on federally funded grants do not participate in [Malign Foreign Talent Recruitment Programs](#) (MFTRPs). This was in response to regulations outlined in the CHIPS and Science Act of 2022 and other specific federal agency requirements.

In the next phase of complying with these federal requirements, the University was required to develop a policy addressing these programs and prohibiting participation by “Covered Individuals” no later than August 9, 2024. MSU’s policy is now live and effective as of August 5, 2024.

We encourage you to read the policy in full, particularly the definitions of an MFTRP and Covered Individuals. Principal investigators on federally funded grants will be responsible for sharing the policy with all key personnel.

Our team has developed several resources on the [Research Security website](#) and we encourage you to review the information. MSU remains committed to supporting faculty and their research endeavors and will provide assistance in navigating these federally required changes. The Talent Program Resource team welcomes your questions at [ORI.TalentPrograms@msu.edu](mailto:ORI.TalentPrograms@msu.edu).

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## **Non-Retaliation**

The University prohibits retaliation (including retaliatory harassment) against individuals who report or make good faith complaints of relationship violence, stalking, sexual misconduct, discrimination, harassment, and other forms of misconduct (as specifically governed by individual University policies), or who participate in the University’s investigation and handling of such reports, even if the University finds that no violation of Policy occurred. In addition, the laws that prohibit discrimination and harassment contain anti-retaliation provisions (e.g., Title VII, Title IX, ELCRA, etc.). Specifically, Title IX prohibits retaliation against reporters of sex discrimination, including reports of sex discrimination against administrators and other employees. MSU will independently investigate alleged retaliation for participation in the Title IX process. This type of retaliation should be reported to ISR.



**Prohibition of Retaliation from Other Reports of Misconduct (non-civil rights related)**

MSU policy also prohibits community members from engaging in retaliation against students and employees who report other types of misconduct (non-civil rights related), or who participate in investigations or reviews of other types of misconduct. Those found responsible for retaliation may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination for employees.

For more information, please review the following policies:

- [Notice of Nondiscrimination, Anti-Harassment and Non-Retaliation](#)
- [Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)
- [Anti-Discrimination Policy User's Manual](#)
- [Disability and Reasonable Accommodation Policy](#)
- [Faculty Handbook: Protecting Participants in Research Misconduct Proceedings](#)
- [Interim Policy on Protection from Retaliation for Reporting Misconduct](#)

This interim policy prohibits retaliation from reports of misconduct that do not relate to the Anti-Discrimination Policy or the Relationship Violence Sexual Misconduct and Title IX Policy.