

PROCEDURE

Number: 11-09
Title: Area Commission Conflict of Interest
Responsibility: Office of the President
Original Approval Date: New Policy
Last Cabinet Review: 06/24/2025
Last Revision:

Reference (Policy and/or Procedure)

SBTCE:

FDTC: Policy 10-09

Other: SBTCE 8-0-105 Ethics Requirements for Employees and Public Officials

Procedure Description

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest Procedure for the Florence Darlington Technical College (FDTC) Area Commission is to ensure the integrity, transparency, and accountability of the Commission's decision-making processes. This procedure is designed to identify, disclose, and appropriately manage any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest that could compromise the impartiality of Commission actions or erode public trust. By establishing a consistent and formal process, the Area Commission reinforces its commitment to ethical governance and the responsible stewardship of the College's mission and resources.

II. PROCEDURE

All Area Commissioners will sign a Conflict of Interest Statement annually during the April Area Commission Retreat. By signing, each Commissioner affirms their shared responsibility to act impartially and to uphold the mission and integrity of the College. Commissioners are expected to avoid any conflicts of interest that could compromise the credibility of the Commission or create a perception of bias within the College community.

If the April Retreat does not occur, the Conflict of Interest Statements will instead be signed at the regularly scheduled Area Commission meeting held prior to the June meeting of each academic fiscal year.

Completed Conflict of Interest Disclosure Forms must be submitted to the Area Commission Chair. These forms will be maintained in both the Office of the President and the FDTC Department of Institutional Effectiveness.

Step-by-Step Procedures Include:

Step 1: Annual Disclosure

- **Timing:** During the 4th quarter of each fiscal year, during the Area Commission Retreat.
- **Action:**
 - Conflict of Interest Statements and the Conflict of Interest Policy is distributed to each Area Commissioner from the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, or Office of the President.
 - Each Area Commission must read and sign the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form.
- **Responsibility:**
 - FDTC Office of the President ensures distribution, collection, and secure storage of the forms.
- **Documentation:**
 - All signed forms are kept on file in the Office of the President and the Office of the Institutional Effectiveness in a secure location.

Step 2: Ongoing Disclosure

- **Timing:** Prior to or during any Area Commission meeting or discussion where a conflict may arise.

- **Action:**
 - Area Commissioners must verbally disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest related to agenda items or decisions under consideration.
- **Responsibility:**
 - Each Area Commissioner is individually responsible for self-disclosure.
- **Documentation:**
 - The Area Commission Chair and recording Secretary must ensure the disclosure is clearly noted in the official meeting minutes.

Step 3: Determination and Recusal

- **Action:**
 - Once disclosed, the Area Commission Chair (or Vice Chair, if the Chair has a conflict) will determine whether the Commissioner should recuse themselves from discussion, deliberations, and/or voting.
 - The Area Commissioner must refrain from influencing other members on the issue where the conflict exists.
- **Responsibility:**
 - Chair (or designated alternate) leads this step.
- **Documentation:**
 - The nature of the conflict and the Area Commissioner's recusal must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

Step 4: Failure to Disclose

- **Action:**
 - If a conflict of interest is identified after the fact and was not disclosed, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Chair.
 - The Chair may initiate a review to determine whether a violation of policy occurred.

- **Responsibility:**
 - The Area Commission Chair, with support from legal counsel.
- **Consequence:**
 - Depending on the severity, outcomes may include a formal warning, documentation in the Commissioner's file, or referral to the South Carolina State Ethics Commission.
- **Documentation:**
 - All actions taken must be documented and kept in the confidential records of the Area Commission.

Step 5: Annual Review of Policy and Procedure

- **Timing:** Annually during the Area Commission 4th Quarter Retreat.
- **Action:**
 - Review the Conflict of Interest Policy and procedural guide for clarity, completeness, and effectiveness.
 - Update forms or processes as needed to reflect changes in state ethics law or institutional priorities.
- **Responsibility:**
 - Area Commission Chair in consultation with the President and legal counsel.
- **Documentation:**
 - Any revisions are formally adopted in an Area Commission meeting and noted in the minutes.

Additional Notes:

- Commissioners are encouraged to consult the Chair or legal counsel in advance if unsure about a potential conflict.
- This Area Commissioner conflict of interest procedure complements, and does not replace, obligations under the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education policy number 8-0-105.

