



Managing Conflicts of Interest for Stanford-Affiliated Candidates in Faculty Searches

For the purposes of these guidelines, a “Stanford affiliated” faculty candidate is one who:

- is currently a student, postdoc, resident, fellow, or employee at Stanford
- was employed at Stanford in the past (e.g. Instructor, Clinician Educator, Senior Research Scientist)
- completed MD, PhD, residency, fellowship, or post-doctoral studies at Stanford
- is now or has been in the past affiliated with Stanford as, for example, a consulting or visiting faculty member.

The goal is to avoid any conflicts of interest during the search process, whether real or perceived. Current Stanford faculty members with a real or perceived conflict would generally include the PhD advisor, post-doctoral sponsor, mentor, or any other faculty member with a significant supervisory or collaborative relationship, for example, someone who closely supervised the candidate in the clinical setting. Note that these recommendations on managing conflicts of interest also apply to candidates who are not affiliated with Stanford but who have a collaborative relationship with a current Stanford faculty member in the department. Consult the Office of Academic Affairs if guidance is needed in specific situations.

Before commencing a search

The chair and committee members (and if needed the department chair and division chief) must provide the names of any Stanford-affiliated individuals who they think are likely to apply. This list must be included, with CV’s for candidates, in the Initiation of Search package.

If a Stanford-affiliated candidate is known to the department as a likely finalist in an upcoming search, it is best to avoid including on the search committee any faculty member with real or perceived conflicts.

After commencing a search

Sometimes a Stanford-affiliated candidate will apply who was not on the list of “known candidates” as described above. If this happens and the candidate reaches the definitive pool and interview process, any committee members with conflicts or relationships must step down from the committee. This is new guidance from the University and represents a change in our practice.

Faculty who step down from the committee may attend the candidates’ job talks. Informal social meetings with the candidate, such as dinners with department faculty

including search committee members, may include faculty with conflicts of interest. Faculty with conflicts may not attend meetings where the candidates are discussed, ranked, or voted upon.

As usual, OAA must approve any search committee changes.

Concluding a search

If a Stanford-affiliated candidate begins to emerge as the candidate of choice, the following strategies are recommended:

- If most of the recommendation letters provided by the candidate are internal, solicit two additional external letters beyond those provided by the candidate during the search process, for an unbiased assessment and to strengthen the case. If the candidate's packet already includes several non-Stanford-related letters, additional letters typically are not needed.
- The search committee chair should speak with the Vice Dean to discuss details of the search process and candidates, how the Stanford-affiliated candidate emerged, what steps were taken to avoid real or perceived conflict of interest, and a strategy for the final recommendation. This should take place as soon as possible once the choice of the top candidate is beginning to become clear.