

Outside Employment: Guidance for VCU Staff

September, 2023

Outside Employment: What are the Issues?

Following the recent implementation of VCU's [Conflict of Interest and Commitment Disclosure and Management for University Employees \(Including Faculty\)](#) policy (owned by the Office of Integrity and Compliance (ICO)), VCU HR received many questions about whether a conflict of interest or conflict of commitment exists when a VCU staff member engages in employment outside of their VCU employment. The policy prohibits VCU employees (faculty and staff) from engaging in activities that present a conflict of interest or a conflict of commitment with their work at VCU.

But the policy does not specifically address 1) whether VCU employees can/should/should not engage in employment outside their VCU employment.

And it does not specifically address 2) whether holding a job outside of their employment at VCU creates a conflict of interest or commitment.

How did we go about addressing these issues?

1. We sought feedback from our HR Advisory Committee, ICO, HR Professionals, HR Leadership and University Counsel.
2. We researched how our Virginia peers handle these issues.
3. We reviewed and analyzed VCU Employee Relations data to determine whether there has been a history or pattern of employees' outside employment resulting in performance concerns or creating conflicts of interest/commitment.

What did we find?

1. Our HR partners recommended we implement policy changes that spoke to the issues and provided clarity to VCU staff members and managers;
2. Our peer institutions generally require employees to report their outside employment; and
3. Our ER data indicates that outside employment has very rarely been the reason for an employee relations matter/concern.

What are we doing to resolve the issues?

1. We added language in the FWA section of the [Great Place policy](#) that speaks to the issues:

Requests for flexible work arrangements will be handled on a case-by-case basis and are granted at the university's sole discretion. VCU employees shall be available during their scheduled VCU working hours unless they are on an approved absence. Whether working remotely or on campus, employees shall use their VCU working time to perform the duties of the VCU position for which they were hired.

2. We added two FAQs to the [Conflict of Interest and Commitment Disclosure and Management for University Employees \(Including Faculty\)](#) that provide clarity on the issues.

What are we doing to resolve the issues?

3. We will add the COI FAQ language to the HR Manager Toolkit and to the FWA guidelines.
4. We have requested that ICO incorporate information about the FAQs in their COI training.
5. We will communicate the information to HR Professionals and HR Associates so that they are informed of the changes and can provide the information to managers and employees as needed.