

**UC MERCED  
COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL  
RECUSAL POLICY**

In the university, the term “conflict of interest” refers to financial or other personal considerations that may compromise a faculty member’s professional judgment in administration, management, instruction, research, or other professional activities. Conflicts of interest have the potential to bias, directly or indirectly, important aspects of the Committee on Academic Personnel’s (CAP) endeavor, including its recommendations about candidates for appointment, merit advance, or promotion and campus policies. CAP members must always keep this potential in mind and recuse themselves where a conflict of interest arises.

There are additional circumstances in which recusal is necessary. The need for recusal may arise from the nature of academic review, the structure of the review process, and the importance to the campus of maintaining the integrity of Academic Senate review of academic personnel matters.

Recusal Policy

- (A) CAP members must recuse themselves in the following circumstances:
1. The CAP member has, or has had, a family relationship with the candidate, such as that of a current or former significant other, partner, or spouse, or child, sibling, or parent.
  2. The CAP member has, or has had, a sexual relationship with the candidate.
  3. The CAP member has a private financial interest in the outcome of the case.
  4. The CAP member is aware of any prejudice, pro or contra, that would impair his or her judgment of the case.
  5. The CAP member has participated, or intends to participate, in deliberations about the questions at issue in the case as another level of review.
  6. The CAP member believes that his or her recusal is necessary to preserve the integrity of the review process.
- (B) Upon joining the Committee on Academic Personnel, each member is expected to sign a document indicating his or her awareness of this recusal policy and his or her intention to abide by it.

Comment

A CAP member is not expected to recuse him or herself simply because he or she has published research or publicly expressed views opposed to, or supportive of, those of the candidate. In carrying out their work, CAP members are expected to rely on their academic expertise, experience, and judgment, and so professional agreements or differences of opinion are not by themselves a basis for recusal. Indeed, members of CAP, like all members of the academic community, are expected to understand the standards of their disciplines, to judge the work of others in light of these standards, and to express these judgments publicly when that is relevant to their own professional activities.

Grey Areas

In “grey areas” where a CAP member is uncertain regarding recusal, he or she is expected to disclose the potential grounds for recusal to the Chair of the Committee on Academic Personnel. Such grounds may include collaborative work with the candidate during the review period, recognizing that the nature of such work varies enormously from field to field. The Chair may then determine whether the member should recuse himself or herself, or the Chair may seek the advice of other Committee members in making this determination. The Chair should consult the whole Committee regarding potential grounds for his or her own recusal. In making its determination regarding recusal in grey areas, the Committee will take into account the fact that, by design, each member brings valuable and unique expertise to the Committee as a whole.