

Nepotism Policy for Research and Sponsored Activities

I. POLICY STATEMENT

In accordance with the Auburn University Nepotism Policy, employees responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research, serving on regulatory compliance committees, and/or conducting sponsored activities must disclose familial relationships as required in this policy to ensure that these activities will be free from bias or the appearance of bias.

II. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The purpose of this policy is to avoid favoritism, or the appearance of favoritism, toward relatives with regard to research, compliance committees, and sponsored activities and establish procedures to identify and address these instances.

The fundamental criteria for inclusion as personnel on a research project or sponsored activity shall be relevant qualifications, knowledge, skills, and ability. Employees may not make or influence research, compliance, or sponsored decisions, including but not limited to, inclusion on a project, compensation, and work responsibilities, specific to a family member within the fourth degree of affinity or consanguinity. This prohibition requires employees to recuse themselves from deliberations and decisions or actions, including those conducted by regulatory compliance committees, regarding research or sponsored activities involving a family member within the fourth degree of affinity or consanguinity.

Relationships that are effectively managed with an approved management plan that addresses inclusion on a research project, reporting relationships, supervision, and approvals to eliminate any decision-making potentially based on kinship, do not violate this policy.

III. EFFECTIVE DATE

February 12, 2020

IV. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all employees of Auburn University, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station (collectively “Auburn University” or “the University”). These policies and procedures are further defined in and in addition to the [Auburn University Nepotism Policy](#), which applies to all employees of the University.

V. POLICY MANAGEMENT

Responsible Office: Office of Research Compliance

Responsible Executive: Vice President for Research and Economic Development

Responsible Officer: Vice President for Research and Economic Development

VI. DEFINITIONS

None

VII. POLICY PROCEDURES

Auburn University requires all employees to disclose at the time of proposal submission, project initiation, or committee assignment any family members who are included or represented as investigators, co-investigators, technicians, students, collaborators, sub-recipients, or otherwise involved in the project or activity. Prior to award establishment, any conflict must be eliminated, or a management plan approved by the Office of the Vice President for Research and Economic

Development and the Division of Institutional Compliance & Privacy must be completed to manage the conflict.

Nepotism that is disclosed or discovered will be subject to corrective action. This corrective action may include any action the University deems necessary to eliminate the nepotism, including but not limited to, denial of proposal submission, withdrawal of proposal, or refusal of award. Where appropriate, a management plan may be approved by the Office of the Vice President of Research and Economic Development and the Division of Institutional Compliance & Privacy.

VIII. SANCTIONS

Violations of this policy may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment.

IX. EXCLUSIONS

None

X. INTERPRETATION

Interpretation of this policy shall be made by the Office of the Vice President for Research & Economic Development, in consultation with the Office of the General Counsel.