

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION	ACAF Academic Affairs
POLICY NUMBER	ACAF 1.34
POLICY TITLE	Use of Instructional Materials That Generate Direct Financial Benefit to a Faculty Member
SCOPE OF POLICY	USC System
DATE OF REVISION	May 14, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER	Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE	Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

A fundamental principle of an exceptional education is that faculty select the best instructional materials available. When such materials include books, manuals, or other aids that generate direct financial benefit to the faculty member teaching the course, great care must be taken to avoid even the appearance of an instructor improperly profiting by the choice of materials.

By reviewing the use of instructional materials that generate direct financial benefit to a faculty member, the University seeks to prevent potential conflicts of interest and to prioritize the best interests of students.

DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Classroom Materials: Any instructional material or technology, regardless of format, which is used while conducting a course. A non-exclusive list of classroom materials includes textbooks, monographs, case studies, compiled printed information, audiotapes, videotapes, or computer software.

POLICY STATEMENT

Requiring students to purchase classroom materials from which the faculty member derives direct financial benefit may constitute a violation of the South Carolina Ethics Act or may present the appearance of a conflict-of-interest or a lack of objectivity. Therefore, requiring students to purchase classroom materials from which the faculty member derives direct financial benefit is allowed only when approved in writing by the faculty member’s chair or director and their respective dean. Sales of such items cannot be conducted directly between a faculty member and a student

PROCEDURES

A. Instructor’s Request

1. A faculty member who wishes to require students to purchase classroom materials from which the faculty derives direct financial benefit must obtain prior written approval from their immediate chair/ director and dean
2. According to the Columbia faculty manual, faculty must submit textbook information, including whether or not a textbook will be used, to the University Bookstore. Therefore,

the request to use materials from which the faculty member derives direct financial benefit must be submitted to the chair in advance of any deadlines for ordering materials at the University Bookstore.

B. Chair/Director Review and Consultation

1. The faculty members’ chair or director will evaluate whether the classroom material in question is the best or equivalent to the best option available for the course. In some cases, the chair or the director will appoint a committee with members of the faculty in the unit who have expertise in the area under consideration.

The chair or director will then forward their recommendation, either approving or denying the request to the dean.

2. **Decision and Documentation**

- a. The dean will review the request and the recommendation of the chair or director and either approve or disapprove the request.
- b. Disagreement between the chair or director and the dean will be resolved by the provost.
- c. A copy of the written approval must be retained by the instructor and the unit.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES

[BTRU 1.18 Conflict of Interest and Commitment](#)

[HR 1.02 University of South Carolina Ethics Policy](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
August 21, 1996	New policy approval
February 16, 2016	Policy organization, content and accuracy reviewed in February 2016; no substantive revisions required.
May 14, 2025	Policy updated to standard template and revised to reflect current practices.