



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY  
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™  
EL PASO

Office of Research

**TTUHSC EI PASO**

# Regulatory Lite



**A hint of research compliance tips for your everyday life**

## What is “Nepotism” and what do I need to know?

While there is an institutional policy labeled [HSCEP OP: 70.08 Nepotism](#), our focus this month will be on the new policy created for matters related to research, [HSCEP OP: 73.18 Research Nepotism](#).

Nepotism refers to an individual using power or influence to approve, recommend, or otherwise take action with regard to the appointment, reappointment, promotion, salary, or supervision of an individual related to the employee. In regards to research, the possibility for nepotism most commonly arises in the supervisory category wherein a Principal Investigator includes a related individual among their study personnel.

Related individuals includes anyone that falls within the definition of a “family member” as described by [HSCEP OP 73.09](#) and [73.18](#). This includes an individual’s spouse, parents, children, in-laws, and step-parents, among others.

Although the conduct of research may require that a related individual be recruited due to specialized skills and knowledge specific to a study or an area in research; personal relationships present the possibility for a conflict of interest resulting in bias in the conduct or reporting of the research.

The main thing to remember is that:

- Appointments of study personnel shall be made on qualifications and suitability, and justification must be provided if a related individual is going to be included.
- No employee may solely oversee the research activities of a related individual. An independent monitor must be assigned.
- This applies to all faculty and staff involved in research regardless of funding, and to any sub-recipients, sub-awardees or collaborators involved in research.

If a situation like this arises, it is the investigator’s responsibility to:

- Use iRIS to disclose all personnel listed on their research projects to whom the investigator is related on their annual research financial disclosure and must submit their disclosure prior to receiving final approval for their research.
- Report any changes in study personnel concerning related individuals to the COIRC via iRIS disclosure within thirty (30) days of occurrence. Examples of this may occur either due to the new addition related individuals to a study such as in an amendment or when the status of individuals change to qualify as related personnel (i.e. in the event of marriage).

Completed disclosure statements get submitted to the Office of Research for review and approval, and research personnel may not share data or intellectual property with external entities.

If you have any question, you can also submit them to the [Research Compliance Unit](#).

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