SUNY and CUNY Financial Disclosure

Important changes have been made in the process and forms that academic employees of the State University of New York and City University of New York use to comply with the financial disclosure law, Public Officers Law 73-a.

This page relates to those changes, which only affect academic employees of SUNY and CUNY. SUNY and CUNY employees who are designated as policy-makers are not affected by the changes.

Please Note: Academic employees have a different filing schedule than other State employees. Please consult the Financial Disclosure Filing Schedule to determine correct dates for academic filers. Also note that e-file is closed from January 1 to March 31 each year. It cannot be used during that period.

Password and User Identification are mailed from Albany in separate letters on or about October 1 each year. If you do not receive both by October 10, please contact us.

Useful Links


Ruling on SUNY Academic Filing  Ruling on CUNY Academic Filing

Financial Disclosure Filing Schedule

E-Mail for Electronic Filing Help  E-Mail for Help on Completing Form

Download Paper Form  Download Paper Instructions

Electronic Financial Disclosure Form – Click Here to E-File

SUNY & CUNY Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why is the process changing?

Q. Do I have to complete the form all at once or can I do part today and part tomorrow?
Q. All I do is teach. I don't have financial dealings with anyone. Why should I have to file?

Q. I received a password (or User ID or neither) but not both. How can I get what I need to file electronically?

Q. These questions are tough. Where can I get help with them?

Q. Where can I find out more about electronic filing?

Q. How do I get help using the electronic filing program if I need it?

Q. Okay. What's the first thing I need to do to file electronically?

Q. What are the penalties for failing to file a financial disclosure statement or for filing a false statement?

Q. Your exemption form requires a job description. We don't have them. How can we apply?

Q. Your letters discussed electronic filing. I can't file electronically. What am I supposed to do?

Q. Why is financial disclosure required at all?

Q. Who must file financial disclosure statements?

Q. What information does the financial disclosure statement require?

Q. Where do employees file their financial disclosure statements?

Q. When must employees file their financial disclosure statements?

Q. May required filers apply for an extension of time to file a financial disclosure statement?

Q. Are the financial disclosure statements public documents?

Q. May filers apply to have any information reported on the form deleted from public inspection or exempted from reporting to the Commission?

Q. What period of time does the disclosure report cover? The calendar year (January to December) or the academic year (August to July)?

Q. Is TIAA-CREF a state retirement plan? Is NYS Teachers Retirement System a state retirement plan?

Q. I applied for an exemption. When will I hear if it is granted? Do I have to file while I am waiting to hear?
Q. Your exemption form requires a job description. We don't have them. How can we apply?

A. Where a job description is not available, an academic applicant may submit either of the following:
(1) A copy of the current annual report which the applicant filed with their department,
-OR-
(2) A job description prepared by the applicant which includes the following: whether the individual is involved in purchasing or contracting activities; administrative duties such as chair or director for a department or program; and, whether individual received externally funded grants.

Q. Why is the process changing?

A. Briefly, ethics and financial disclosure laws apply to all New York State employees. The law makes no distinction - and no exception - for academic employees of the State and City University systems.

Financial disclosure statutes define several classes of people who are required to annually file financial disclosure statements with the State Ethics Commission including State employees who are designated by their agency as policy makers, and State employees who earn in excess of the job rate of salary grade 24, which is currently $77,661. Policy-making employees of SUNY and CUNY have used the same process and forms as other filers. However, in 1990 the Commission decided that SUNY and CUNY academic employees who earn in excess of the filing rate could comply with the law by filing a shortened disclosure form with their respective campuses.

In 2000, the Office of the State Comptroller conducted an audit and found "considerable noncompliance" with Commission requirements pertaining to the timeliness, completeness and extent of review of financial disclosure reports for academic employees of SUNY. The Comptroller noted "there is increased risk for situations to be undetected where an academic employee is involved in outside professional or business activities which interfere or conflict with their responsibilities to SUNY."

Following a Comptroller's follow-up review in August, 2002, the Commission re-considered and re-evaluated the short form filing process for SUNY academics and concluded the financial disclosure process previously instituted by the Commission must be modified. The text of the Commission's decision may be found on this Web site, under Advisory Opinions, as Advisory Opinion No. 03-6. In 2003, the Commission extended its requirement that SUNY academic employees file the statutory form, to CUNY academic employees. See Advisory Opinion No. 04-4.

Q. Okay. What's the first thing I need to do to file electronically?
A. An overview, instructions and help may be found at http://www.dos.state.ny.us/ethc/ethel.html but the program is so user-friendly that you may not need them. When you receive both your password letter and user identification letter from the Commission, which are sent in separate mailings to your home address, use the link at the top of our home page to log in and use electronic filing.

Q. Do I have to complete the form all at once or can I do part today and part tomorrow?

A. Your work is saved each time you use the program. You may take several days if you wish.

Q. All I do is teach. I don't have financial dealings with anyone. Why should I have to file?

A. You may not have to file. The Commission may exempt employees depending on their job duties and responsibilities. But you must apply for an exemption. Once the Commission grants an exemption, for as long as you serve in that title, the Commission will not require you to submit a financial disclosure statement in any subsequent years unless (1) your duties change to include duties which preclude an exemption, (2) you are designated a policy-maker by your appointing authority, or (3) the Commission, upon review of its determination to grant your exception decides the exemption is no longer appropriate under the Public Officers Law or Part 935 of Title 19 of the Official Compilation of Codes Rules and Regulations of the State of New York (NYCRR). Exemption applications must be postmarked no later than November 1st each year. Downloadable exemption forms may be found in the Download Zone area of our publications page. Note: You need not reapply annually for exemption.

Q. I received a password (or User ID or neither) but not both. How can I get what I need to file electronically?

A. E-mail Ethel@DOS.State.NY.US or call the Commission at 518-474-8320 or 1-800-87-ETHICS.

Q. These questions are tough. Where can I get help with them?

A. Click the "Filing Instructions" button in the program to open a new window with instructions that include simplified explanations for each question. Additionally, the "Where Do I Report My...?" link of the top of the instruction page will tell you where to report specific investments and holdings. From 9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday through Friday you may call the Commission at 518-474-8320 or 1-800-87-ETHICS. If staff on phone duty cannot help, they can transfer you to an attorney or other expert who can. You may also e-mail questions to Ethics@DOS.State.NY.US
Q. Where can I find out more about electronic filing?

A. Our web page http://www.dos.state.ny.us/ethc/ethel.html has extensive information and links about electronic filing.

Q. How do I get help using the electronic filing program if I need it?

A. E-mail Ethel@dos.state.ny.us or call the Commission at 518-474-8320 or 1-800-87-ETHICS.

Q. Your letters discussed electronic filing. I can't file electronically. What am I to do?

A. You can download a paper form in the Download Zone on the menu list at left or call, e-mail or write the Commission, ask for a paper form and give us your address. Our phone numbers are 518-474-8320 and 1-800-87-ETHICS. You may e-mail us at Ethics@dos.state.ny.us. You may write us at A.E.S.O.B., 80 South Swan Street, Room 1147, Albany, NY 12210.

Q. What period of time does the disclosure report cover? The calendar year or the academic year?

A. All forms, whether from academic or other filers, are for the calendar year preceding the filing year. For example, the form due in 2006 covers the calendar year 2005.

Q. Is TIAA-CREF a state retirement plan? Is NYS Teachers Retirement System a state retirement plan?

A. TIAA-CREF and NYS Teachers Retirement System are considered state retirement programs and therefore do not need to be reported. However, other retirement accounts that you possess, such as accounts held in deferred compensation plans and 401(k)s, must be reported. You do NOT need to report your spouse's retirement plans.

Q. I applied for an exemption. When will I hear if it is granted? Do I have to file while I am waiting to hear?

A. Generally, you will receive a reply within 10 days. You may file the disclosure statement in addition to the exemption request. If your exemption is approved, we will return your original form and no record of it will be retained by the Commission. If you choose to wait for a response and are denied, you are given 20 days from the date of denial.
to file your disclosure, or November 15th, whichever is later.

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