

Conflict of Interest (COI) Procedure

Section 1 – Purpose

- (1) This Procedure outlines how to identify, disclose, manage and, where possible, resolve matters relating to Conflicts Of Interest (COI) at the University of Canberra.

Section 2 – Scope

- (2) This Procedure has the same scope as the *Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy*.

Section 3 – Policy

- (3) This Procedure supports the *Conflict of Interest (COI) Policy*.

Section 4 – Procedure

Identifying COIs

Types of COI

- (4) Interest, Conflict of Interest (COI), Actual COI, Perceived COI and Potential COI are defined in Section 7.

COI test

- (5) Individuals must regularly use the following COI Test to identify whether a personal interest or relationship may lead to a COI:
 - a. 'Am I, could I, or might I appear to be influenced by a relationship, Interest or other conflict when carrying out my duties and responsibilities for the University?'
 - b. 'Would a reasonable person, separate to my role, think that a private relationship or Interest could conflict or appear to conflict with my official University role?'

Considerations

- (6) In identifying Actual, Perceived or Potential COIs that are direct or indirect, individuals must consider situations such as:
 - a. financial Interests, including cash, services, equipment, sponsorship or private investments;
 - b. paid or unpaid directorships, executive positions or similar of other entities.
 - c. Actual or Potential receipt of any Gifts or Benefits, including hospitality;
 - d. external work they may be undertaking (see the *Outside or Additional Work Policy* for more information);

- e. consultancy being undertaken (see the *Consultancy Management Procedure* for more information);
- f. past, present or future relationships, whether personal or professional, in friendship or animosity, where an Interest may benefit or cause detriment to either party;
- g. memberships of committees, advisory groups or boards;
- h. ownership of intellectual property;
- i. research activities, especially those that are externally funded or involve commercialisation (see the *Research Conduct and Governance Policy* for more information);
- j. requests for public comment; and
- k. past COI disclosures of the same COI or similar nature.

Advice

- (7) Individuals who are unsure if they have an Actual, Perceived or Potential COI should first seek advice from their line manager or HDR supervisor. Further advice can then be sought from:
 - a. the Chief People Officer for employment matters;
 - b. the Chief Financial Officer for finance and procurement matters;
 - c. the University Secretary for governance matters;
 - d. the Director, Research Services for University research matters;
 - e. the Dean, Graduate Research School for HDR research matters;
 - f. the relevant faculty executive dean for academic matters;
 - g. the Director, Student Life for student matters.
- (8) The Legal team can provide legal advice on this Procedure, as required.

Disclosing COIs

Governance bodies

- (9) The Chairs of Council, Academic Board and their committees must take proactive and reasonable steps to ensure that members:
 - a. disclose the nature, character and extent of any existing Actual, Potential or Perceived COI in relation to the specific business of the governance body when their role commences; and
 - b. disclose any Actual, Potential or Perceived COI that arises from the governance body's ongoing business.
- (10) During meetings of Council or its committees, or Academic Board or its committees, the names of individuals who disclose a COI must be recorded in the meeting minutes.

- (11) The individual must complete the *Council and Council Committee Members' Declaration of Interests Form*, available on the Staff Portal. This form is submitted to the University Secretary.
- (12) The University Secretary records the details of disclosed COIs on the *COI Register*. This register is published on the University's public website and is updated annually in line with the *Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities*.

Researchers

- (13) Under the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*, all researchers must adhere to the:
 - a. principle (P3) of transparency in disclosing COIs; and
 - b. the responsibility (R24) of disclosing and managing COIs.
- (14) All researchers must disclose any new COIs as soon as possible to:
 - a. their managers (for Staff); or
 - b. candidature supervisor (for higher degree by research [HDR] students).
- (15) Research-related COIs must also be disclosed to:
 - a. research participants;
 - b. journal editors;
 - c. readers of published works; and
 - d. external funding bodies.
- (16) COIs must be disclosed at the time of proposing research and applying for funding. The following authorities will determine if the proposal or funding application can proceed based on the COI disclosure:
 - a. For Staff research, the Director, Research Services.
 - b. For HDR student research, the Dean, Graduate Research School.
- (17) All researchers must regularly update any COI disclosures as circumstances change, at least annually while the research activity remains active.

Non-research business areas of the University

- (18) Staff from non-research business areas of the University must disclose a COI to the relevant director, dean or other appropriate manager. This disclosure must be in writing.

Controlled entities

- (19) Employees of controlled entities must disclose a COI to their CEO (or equivalent manager of the entity). This disclosure must be in writing. See the *Controlled and Related Entities Policy and Procedure* for more information.

Managing COIs

General management

- (20) Individuals who have disclosed a COI must complete and sign a *COI Management Plan* with their manager (for Staff) or candidature supervisor (for HDR students).
- (21) The *COI Management Plan* and all related COI disclosure correspondence will be stored by:
- a. the manager and employee, for employee COIs;
 - b. the Governance team, for Council, Academic Board and committee COIs;
 - c. the Research Services team, for staff research COIs; or
 - d. the Graduate Research School, for HDR student COIs.
- (22) The *COI Management Plan* must include:
- a. a COI disclosure section, including:
 - i. the type of COI (Actual, Perceived or Potential);
 - ii. the nature of the COI (personal or professional);
 - iii. the date of disclosure; and
 - iv. the duties or projects affected by the COI;
 - b. the potential risks to the University's objectives and interests;
 - c. the likely impact of the COI's consequences;
 - d. actions to manage the COI, such as:
 - i. requiring the individual to remove the COI, if appropriate;
 - ii. disqualifying the individual from participating in the processes that will be put at risk by the COI;
 - iii. assigning different duties to the individual to avoid the COI; or
 - iv. adjusting the processes to ensure the impartiality of the individual in the performance of their duties.
- (23) Under Clause 6 of the University's *COI Policy*, the manager must consider and balance the interests of the University against the interests of the individual, third party or project. Unless exceptional circumstances exist, the balance of interests will be resolved in the University's favour.
- (24) If the disclosed COI changes in any way, the existing *COI Management Plan* must be updated by the notifying individual and their manager or HDR supervisor.
- (25) If the individual identifies a different COI, a separate *COI Management Plan* must be completed.

Management of research-related COIs

- (26) The Research Services team will maintain a register of staff research-related COI declarations.

- (27) The Graduate Research School will maintain a register of HDR candidate COI declarations.

COI training

- (28) The People & Culture team, in consultation with the Legal team and Governance team, will publish COI training on the University's training platform.
- (29) All Staff and all HDR students must complete COI training.
- (30) The Governance provides information on identifying and disclosing COIs to new Council members when they are appointed.

COI dispute resolution between researchers from different institutions

- (31) COI disputes between researchers from the University and other institutions will be resolved through a joint *COI Management Plan* completed and signed by the researchers and their managers (for Staff) and/or candidature supervisors (for HDR students).

Breaches

- (32) Breaches of the *COI Policy and Procedure* may also be considered a breach of the *Charter of Conduct and Values*, the *Student Charter*, the *University of Canberra (Student Conduct) Rules 2023*, or several external codes and policies that involve research funding obligations.
- (33) Breaches of the *COI Policy and Procedure* will be investigated by the Chief People Officer under the:
- Enterprise Agreement* for Staff;
 - University of Canberra (Student Conduct) Rules 2023* for HDR students.
- (34) In instances where the breach is committed by someone who is both a Staff member and a HDR student, the Chief People Officer will confer with the Director, Student Life to determine the appropriate investigation process.
- (35) Breaches of the *COI Policy and Procedure* concerning research activities will also be investigated by Research Services (for Staff research) or the Graduate Research School (for HDR student research) under the:
- Research Conduct and Governance Policy* and the *Research Conduct and Complaints Procedure* for Staff;
 - Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Policy and Procedure* for HDR students.
- (36) The following will also be consulted when investigating and handling research-related breaches of COI:
- the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018*;
 - the guide *Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*;
 - the Australian Research Council's *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy*; and
 - the Australian Research Council's *Research Integrity Policy*.

Privacy

- (37) A COI disclosure could involve the disclosure of personal information. The University adheres to its *Privacy Policy* and relevant privacy legislation.
- (38) Any individual who is concerned about the potential impact of disclosing particular information may raise their concerns directly with the Privacy Officer, particularly if they feel it is inappropriate to disclose such information to their supervisor.

Section 5 – Responsibilities

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Chief People Officer (CPO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigating Staff breaches of the <i>COI Policy and Procedure</i>. Consulting with the Director, Student Life when a breach of the <i>COI Policy and Procedure</i> is committed by an individual who is both a member of Staff and a HDR student.
Council, Academic Board, and committee members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disclosing Actual, Perceived, or Potential COIs.
Employees of controlled entities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disclosing a COI to their CEO (or equivalent manager of the entity).
Governance Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Storing COI Management Plans and COI disclosure correspondence for members of Council, Academic Board and their committees.
Graduate Research School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing advice on identifying COIs, and elevating complex requests for advice to the Dean, Graduate Research School. Recording disclosed COIs made by HDR students. Storing COI Management Plans and COI disclosure correspondence for HDR students.
HDR Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completing compulsory COI training. Identifying their Actual, Perceived or Potential COIs using the COI Test. Disclosing their identified COIs to their HDR supervisor. Determining a COI Management Plan with their HDR supervisor. Regularly reviewing their disclosed COIs for changes and disclosing any new COIs.
HDR Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing advice on identifying COIs, and elevating complex requests for advice to the Director, Research Services. Determining a COI Management Plan with their HDR students.
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing legal advice on COI matters. Liaising with the People & Culture and the Governance team in the maintenance of COI training materials.
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing advice on identifying COIs, and elevating complex requests for advice to the appropriate senior manager(s). Determining a COI Management Plan with their employee.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amending COI Management Plans if an employee's COI changes. Storing COI Management Plans and COI disclosure correspondence.
Research Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recording disclosed COIs made by research Staff. Storing COI Management Plans and COI disclosure correspondence for research Staff.
People & Culture (P&C)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publishing COI training, in consultation with the Legal team and Governance team.
University Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In consultation with Legal and Governance, supplying up-to-date COI training for members of Council, Academic Board and their committees. Recording the details of disclosed governance COIs on the <i>COI Register</i> and publishing the <i>COI Register</i> annually on the University's public website.

Section 6 – Associated information

Legislation, standards and codes

- [Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018](#)
- [Code of Governance Principles and Practice for Australia's Public Universities](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2014 \(ACT\)](#)
- [Privacy Act 1988 \(Cth\)](#)
- [University of Canberra \(Student Conduct\) Rules 2023](#)

University documents

- Additional UC Employment Procedure
- Charter of Conduct and Values
- Conflict of Interest (COI) Form
- Conflict of Interest (COI) Management Plan
- Conflict of Interest (COI) Procedure
- Controlled and Related Entities Policy and Procedure
- Council and Council Committee Members' Declaration of Interests Form
- Course Advisory Group (CAG) Policy and Procedure
- Delegations of Authority Policy
- Enterprise Agreement
- Fraud and Corruption Control Plan
- Gifts and Fundraising Policy
- Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Policy and Procedure
- Outside or Additional Work Policy
- Outside Work Procedure
- Privacy Policy

- Research Conduct and Governance Policy
- Research Conduct and Complaints Procedure
- Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Policy and Procedure

Websites and other resources

- [ACT Audit Office](#)
- [Australian Council of Graduate Research \(ACGR\) Good Practice Guidelines for Disclosing and Managing Interests in Graduate Research](#)
- [Australian Research Council \(ARC\) Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy](#)
- [Australian Research Council \(ARC\) Research Integrity Policy](#)
- [Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest: A Guide Supporting the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)
- [Independent Commission Against Corruption \(ICAC\)](#)
- [Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

Section 7 – Definitions

TERM	DEFINITION
Actual Conflict of Interest	Involves a direct or real conflict between an individual's duties and responsibilities to the University and a competing interest or obligation, whether personal, financial or involving a third party.
Affiliate	A group or person officially attached or connected to the University, including adjuncts, clinical titleholders, conjoint or honorary appointees to the University; an office holder in a University entity; any other person appointed or engaged by the University to perform duties or functions on its behalf, and any students who may sit on a University Committee.
Benefit	Anything which provides the staff member or affiliate with a direct or indirect personal gain or the potential or perception of personal gain or gain to a third party. Such a gain need not be financial; it could be a personal or a non-financial gain. It includes the provision of material or facilities, or the support of individuals through the provision of benefits (e.g. travel or payment for overtime, entertainment, accommodation expenses, etc.), a financial benefit, opportunity, information or gift.
Conflict of Interest (COI)	A situation in which an individual has an Actual, Perceived or Potential Interest that may compromise their ability to act impartially. A COI may also include the Interests of their immediate family, friend, or person or organisation with whom they have a professional relation, to the extent known. A Conflict of Interest typically arises from a situation of personal gain, or avoidance of personal loss, whether financial or otherwise.
Gift	An item offered to or received by a staff member, or affiliate, in the context of their University role (not a formal gift to the University) or provided to an external party by a staff member, or affiliate, in the context of their University role, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has financial value, such as cash or vouchers that can be exchanged for goods;

TERM	DEFINITION
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has physical form, such as ornaments, or bottles/cases of alcoholic beverages; or • can be considered a favour.
Interest	Includes a relationship, Benefit or other connection that may be personal, financial, professional or otherwise advantageous for an individual. It is possible for an Interest of an individual to be held by that individual's immediate family, friend, or person or organisation with whom they have a professional relation.
Perceived Conflict of Interest	Exists where it appears that a staff's private interests could improperly influence the performance of their duties and responsibilities, whether or not this is actually the case. How something looks to third parties is often as important as what actually is the case, because it can undermine confidence in a staff member or institution.
Potential Conflict of Interest	Where a conflict may arise in the future between current or future duties and responsibilities and existing or future personal interests.
Staff	Academic Staff has the same meaning as in the University of Canberra Act 1989 . General Staff has the same meaning as in the University of Canberra Act 1989 . Collectively, Academic and General Staff are referred to in this Policy as 'Staff'.

Status and details

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Effective Date	26 August 2025
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Custodian	Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President Operations
Responsible Manager	Director, Legal & Policy
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