

ACADEMIC SENATE COMMITTEES

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Purpose

This paper provides advice to Academic Senate and its Standing Committees on good practice in relation to declarations of interest by committee members.

Background & Discussion

Declarations of interest are a standing item on Academic Senate's agenda under Item 1.2:

*Members are requested to declare any interests, in terms of the Conflict of Interest Guidelines, they may have in relation to the items on this agenda. The Conflict of Interest Guidelines are available on the Policy DDS at:
<http://policies.uws.edu.au/view.current.php?id=00093>.*

Members are reminded that they should also declare any interests that become apparent during a meeting of Academic Senate or one of its committees.

Standing Committees

On Standing Committee agendas there should be a standing item for 'Declarations of Interest'. Where a member has an interest in a matter, or is perceived to have an interest, it must be declared and managed to ensure integrity and transparency. Once a committee member declares an interest in a matter before the committee, it is then up to the Chair/Committee to determine if it is a conflict and how the matter should be dealt with.

Training

As part of a general commitment to integrity in decision making, members of Senate and its standing committees should complete the Conflict of Interest Online Training Module. The training is available via MyCareerOnline and can be completed within 30 minutes.

Examples of Interests for Academic Committee Members

Examples of where staff, as members of Senate and/or its standing committees, may have an interest include:

Relationships with Students

Where a staff member has a personal relationship with a student (immediate family, close relative, friendship which extends outside the workplace, sexual partners or rivals) then an interest should be declared in relation to any of the student's matters being considered by a committee. Staff should refer to clause 2c of the *Conflict of Interest Policy* for a full definition of personal relationships.

The following will almost certainly represent a conflict of interest:

- Recommending or approving results or the conferral of awards for that student;
- Recommending or approving the awarding of medals, prizes and scholarships for that student;
- Participating in misconduct, disciplinary or appeal proceedings for that student;
- Participating in a teaching or assessment panel or committee, for example a supervisory panel or Confirmation of Candidature panel.

Supervision of Students

A staff member might not have a personal relationship with a student, as defined in the *Conflict of Interest Policy*, but may still have an interest that needs to be declared. Members may have supervised an Honours or HDR student whose results (or any other benefit for the student) are being considered.

Dual Interests

A staff member may be involved with an external organisation, including being on the board or committee of an external body, holding an honorary appointment with another university or being involved with a Cooperative Research Centre or other research project external to the University. This often complements the staff member's role with the University, however staff need to be mindful of potential conflicts of interest arising in matters being considered by a committee.

Responsibility for Units and Courses

When new units or unit changes are being considered, committee members should state when they are the unit co-ordinator or are involved in teaching the unit. While participation in the discussion should be encouraged, given their expertise, the interest needs to be declared.

Research

In addition to conflicts arising from relationships with students, personal relationships between two or more members of a supervisory panel may give rise to a conflict of interest. Where a relationship cannot be avoided, the management strategy should be discussed with and agreed by the candidate.

To provide feedback on these guidelines or additional examples please contact James Fitzgibbon on 9678 7803 or j.fitzgibbon@uws.edu.au.

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