

Conflict of Interest Knowledge Article

This Knowledge Article supports the application of the [Integrity Compliance and Reporting Policy \(Conflicts of Interest, Gifts, Benefits\) Policy](#) in formal University decision-making activities of structured or formal process involving assessment, evaluation, recommendation or approval, including committee, panel, delegated authority or single decision-maker processes (e.g. Dean or delegated officer approvals).

→ It should be used to support consistent understanding and application of conflict of interest requirements prior to, during and following formal decision-making activities.

What is a conflict of interest and when must it be declared?

A conflict of interest arises where a personal, professional, financial or external interest could influence, or reasonably be perceived to influence, impartial decision-making or the performance of duties.

Conflicts may be:

- **Actual** – a direct conflict exists
- **Perceived** – it could reasonably be seen as a conflict
- **Potential** – it may develop into a conflict

Conflicts of interest must be declared:

- as soon as they become known
- *before* participation in any formal decision-making activity

If unsure whether a conflict exists, it must be declared.

Examples of Conflicts of Interest

- personal relationships inside or outside the University (e.g. family, friends or close personal associations)
- secondary employment or external business interests (including those of family members)
- participation in external organisations or groups that may influence decision-making (e.g. community groups, sporting clubs, religious or other personal groups)
- prior or current professional relationships (e.g. supervisor, direct report, close collaborator, PhD supervisor)
- gifts or benefits that could create bias
- perceptions of bias in favour of, or against, a person or matter (e.g. political or religious beliefs)

Professional relationships that extend beyond ordinary collegial interaction and could reasonably influence, or be perceived to influence, decision-making must be declared.

Committee and delegated decision-making requirements

The Chair, Convenor, or delegated lead of any committee, panel or assessment activity must:

- direct all members to declare conflicts of interest
- confirm declarations with the panel
- assess declared conflicts in consultation with the panel
- determine and implement appropriate mitigation strategies
- ensure conflicts and mitigation actions are documented

Individuals with a declared conflict must not participate in related discussion or decision-making until appropriately managed.

Individuals must not act as a referee, assessor or decision-maker in the same process where this creates an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest.

Where applicable, the **Conflict of Interest Checklist** and **final Conflict of Interest Assurance Statement** are used to support documentation of the process.

Recording and Documentation Requirements

Where a conflict is identified:

- the conflict and mitigation strategy must be documented in the corresponding COI Checklist
- the relevant member(s) must record in the [Integrity Reporting Register](#) within 5 days
- the Chair, Convenor, or delegated lead must sight evidence of the Register entry (e.g. confirmation email)

The **Conflict of Interest Checklist** must be completed and retained with the relevant process documentation, report or official record.

Key Principle

Declaring a conflict of interest ensures appropriate identification, assessment, management and documentation in decision-making processes.

It does not automatically prevent participation, but ensures transparency and integrity.

Further Information and Support

Refer to:

- [Integrity Compliance and Reporting Policy \(Conflicts of Interest, Gifts, Benefits\) / Document / Policy DDS](#)
- [Integrity Compliance and Reporting Guidelines \(Conflicts of Interest, Gifts, Benefits\) / Document / Policy DDS](#)
- [Code of Conduct Policy](#)

For support:

- contact the relevant committee, panel, or administrative officer who will escalate enquiries to the [Compliance Program Unit](#) where required.