

Conflict of Interest Guide

Researcher checklist for the identifying a conflict of interest

Research Integrity Unit

Conflicts of interest are not wrong, but should be appropriately identified, declared, and managed effectively and transparently. This checklist poses hypothetical questions when considering the situation where you think you may have an actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest. This form is a guide only; if you still have doubts after working through the questions regarding whether or not you have a research conflict of interest, you can contact a [Research Integrity Advisor](#) or the [Research Integrity Unit](#) to discuss it further.

How to start:

1. Consider the matter or issue and the specific research situation in which you are involved
2. Think about the standard of conduct expected of you as a researcher and staff member of the University

Making an assessment

The following questions will help you self-assess whether you have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest or whether you should seek further advice. When considering these situations, ask yourself, 'could this conflict with my research responsibilities?'.

What is the situation?

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will the proposed decision or action benefit or harm me or anyone associated with me?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could any benefits I receive, either now or in the future, cast doubt on my objectivity?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Can I identify any significant previous personal, professional or financial relationships or associations with the interested party, collaborator or funding body?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could my proposed decision or action enhance or damage my reputation or that of a relative, friend or associate?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is it possible that I or a relative, friend or associate will be subject to financial gain or loss in some covert or unexpected way?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would any of my personal or professional views or biases lead others to reasonably conclude that I am not an appropriate person to deal with the matter?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have I made a private contribution to the matter or situation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have I made any promises or commitments concerning the matter or situation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have I received a benefit or hospitality from someone who stands to gain or lose from my proposed decision or action?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Am I a member of an association, club or professional organisation, or do I have particular ties and affiliations with organisations or individuals who stand to gain or lose by my proposed decision or action?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could this situation influence any future employment opportunities outside my current official duties?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Could there be any other benefits or factors that could cast doubt on my ability to be objective?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do I still have any doubts about my proposed decision or action?

What perceptions could others have?

- What assessment would a fair-minded member of the public make of the circumstances?
- Could my involvement in this matter cast doubt on my integrity or the integrity and reputation of Charles Sturt University?
- Could my involvement cast doubt on this project's research findings and outputs, therefore jeopardising the project's integrity?
- If I saw someone else doing this, would I suspect they might have a conflict of interest?
- If I did participate in this action or decision, would I be happy if my colleagues and the public became aware of my involvement and any association or connection?
- Would I be comfortable with my actions if publicised in the media?

Should I seek help?

YES	NO	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would a community member be confident in my ability to act impartially and in the interests of my profession, research area and University?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do I feel a need to seek advice or discuss the matter with an objective party?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is all the relevant information available to ensure a proper assessment?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do I know what the University policies require concerning conflicts of interest?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Am I familiar with the Research Integrity Unit website, information and resources about conflict of interest?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do I understand the possible penalties if I proceed with an action or decision with an unresolved conflict of interest?

Can I now make a decision?

These questions provide scenarios that aid with considering whether or not you have a conflict of interest, whether you are aware of the policies, tools, and guidance material for conflict of interest, and the penalties that can apply if you have an unresolved conflict.

There is no specific threshold for the number of answers that qualify you as having a conflict. If you feel that you have an actual, perceived, or potential conflict after considering the situation and reviewing the questions in the checklist, contact the Division of People and Culture ([clause 50 of Conflict of Interest Procedure](#)).

Adapted from CMC Qld and ICAC NSW resource "Managing Conflicts of Interest in the Public Sector."