



PACIFIC COAST UNIVERSITY
FOR WORKPLACE HEALTH SCIENCES

Conflict of Interest Research - 072A

Policy Statement

The policy applies to all faculty, students and staff taking part in research at Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences. This includes but is not limited to adjunct professors, visiting professors and University administrators.

This policy operates under the overall framework regarding research integrity and the ethical review of research. Violations and alleged violations are the responsibility of the Senior Academic Officer of the University and managed according to the policy for disciplinary investigations of research practices.

Researchers, the University, and the University Research Ethics Committee will identify and address conflict of interest – actual, potential or perceived – in order to maintain University responsibilities and accountabilities. Where conflict of interest cannot be managed sufficiently well, the individual, individuals or the University may have to remove themselves from the research.

University Conflicts of Interest or Conflicts of Commitment involve the conflict between two substantial obligations of the University which cannot both be fulfilled without compromise. Such conflicts may compromise public trust in the mission, mandate and values of the University.

Examples of Conflict of Interest in Research

1. Holding financial investments in companies where the results of the research may materially have an impact on such investments;
2. Directing research to serve the needs of a company or organization that benefits the family or friends of the researchers who are employed or engaged by or with the company or organization;
3. Preferentially influencing purchases of research equipment or services from an organization which directly or indirectly (through family or friends) benefits the organization.

Examples of University Conflict of Interest

1. Sponsoring a research project where only one type of result is acceptable;
2. Accepting donations which carry conditionality with respect to the outcome of research undertaken for the donor;
3. Conflicting roles of persons who are administrators and researchers.

Researcher Conflicts of Interest

Researchers must operate in accordance with the University's Research Integrity Framework and the principles which guide the University Research Ethics Committee. Conflict of interest can lead to violations of fundamental research integrity, objectivity and the ethical pursuit of research. Some researcher conflicts of interest may occur through conflicts of commitment, e.g., loyalty to the University's research mandate and commitment to publish the results of research even when those may be negative results. Other conflicts may occur because of dual roles with research participants.

Examples of Researcher Conflict of Interest

1. Holding the position of researcher with clients. Clients who also receive treatment or services from the researcher as a practitioner may feel pressured to participate in the research, which violates the principle of free, autonomous and informed participant consent;
2. Preferentially hiring family members to work on the research project regardless of level of qualifications



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Related Policy

Research Integrity Policy
Research Ethics Review
Research Involving Humans
Misconduct of Academic Teaching and Research Staff
Procedures for the Investigation of Misconduct

Definitions

Conflict of Interest may occur when activities or situations place an individual or individuals in real, perceived or potential conflict between duties or responsibilities related to research and personal, University or other interests. These may include but are not limited to: financial interests, whether of self, family, friends, or of the University itself. In the latter case, this conflict is sometimes referred to as a **conflict of commitment** where the conflict that arises may be perceived to be between principles of research integrity and the purposes of the University. Particularly, with respect to human participant research, prospective participants need to know that the University seriously monitors real, potential or perceived conflict of interest responsibly. The oversight committee for research ethics review also monitors conflict of interest at the time of ethics approval as well as throughout the research inquiry and production of scholarly outputs.

Approval and Responsibility

Approved by: Academic Council, March 17, 2016
Responsibility Chief Academic Officer

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