

Conflict of Interest Protocol

Summary

When arranging the appointment of examiners (and may also be applied for the appointment of moderators, or reviewers for a doctoral revise and resubmit) a potential, perceived or material conflict of interest may be identified. This protocol outlines the definition, principles, identification, management and types of a conflict of interest, including material, perceived or potential conflicts of interest.

Purpose

This protocol defines what a conflict of interest is, and outlines the processes and procedures required when a potential, perceived or material conflict of interest is identified.

Scope

This protocol is for the appointment of examiners for a research component of Doctoral, Masters and Bachelor with Honours. It may also be applied for moderators and reviewers for a doctoral revise and resubmit.

Application

Definition

A conflict of interest is any situation where a person has an interest that conflicts, might conflict, or might be perceived to conflict with the interests of AUT conducting a fair, impartial and effective process.

While the conflict of interest itself is unlikely to be improper, it could lead to improper conduct or allegations of such conduct if not declared and managed appropriately.

A potential or perceived conflict of interest is often identified by those external to the situation and does not negatively reflect on the individual(s) involved. A potential or perceived conflict of interest may be identified at any time and does not imply any unprofessional behaviour.

Principles

This protocol on potential, perceived or material conflict of interest is guided by the following principles:

- All conflicts of interest must be declared and recorded
- A conflict of interest can be declared at any time but must be done as soon as practicable
- The action required depends on the nature of the conflict
- All actions on declared conflicts will be recorded

A conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest may be identified at a number of points in the supervision and examination processes or it may emerge as a result of changes in supervision or examination. A conflict of interest, either material or perceived can be identified at any stage in the supervision and examination process.

The perception of a conflict of interest needs to be managed along with interests that conflict or might conflict.

Identifying a Material and/or Perceived Conflict of Interest

In determining whether a conflict of interest is present or not, there are two questions to ask:

- Would a fair-minded reasonably informed observer have a reasonable apprehension that the individual's professional judgement would be compromised in the decisions required?

- Does the interest create an incentive for the individual to act in a way that would be contrary to the objectives for a fair, impartial and effective process?

If the answer to either of these questions is 'yes', then a conflict or potential conflict exists.

When a Conflict of Interest is Identified

When a Conflict of Interest is identified, normally:

- A replacement will be nominated for approval, or
- In exceptional circumstances, the Faculty may justify why the appointment must continue and a plan is presented on how to manage the conflict and approved by the UPB.

Different Types of Conflict of Interest

Different types of conflict of interest include but are not limited to:

- Conflict with the student; supervisor; subject matters; and/or institution and any other following relationships that are:
 - Working
 - Personal
 - Family
 - Business
 - Publications
 - Research
 - Presentations

Outcome

That potential, perceived or material conflicts of interests are identified, recorded and managed in an effective manner.

Review

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