



Creating Transparency Within the Disclosure Process

Paula Robinson, NU-RES Compliance

Rae Mwangi, HRPP

Veronique Corrdin, CRI



Purpose of Governing Policies



Northeastern
University

Protect the integrity of the research at the institution

Preserve public trust that research is conducted without bias

Compare interest and engagement against scope of funded work

Investigation of engagement's influence on design, conduct, and reporting of research

Applies to real and perceived bias

Create a plan to restore objectivity in research

Case 1 - Financial Conflict of Interest



Northeastern
University

Professor Jones works in College of Health Sciences. She is an esteemed professor in the study of pharmaceuticals. She's currently working with her lab to develop a new anti-nausea medication. Professor Jones spends 80% of her time and effort dedicated to her responsibilities to Northeastern and her funded research. Eight hours per week, though, she uses her allotted time per University Policy to perform some external consulting for Pepto Bismol. Pepto Bismol has a product line designed to treat nausea in adults and children. The findings of her studies could directly benefit Pepto Bismol, therefore she stands to gain financially depending on the results of her research. This poses a financial concern.

Case 2 – Conflict of Commitment

Professor White works as a full-time faculty member in the College of Engineering. Because of his love of the field of engineering, he does pro bono work at a local high school teaching a few classes on the basics of engineering. Professor White does not receive any pay and his appointment began as an eight-hour per week commitment. Under the circumstances, no conflict exists. However, since he's received such positive feedback on his course, he's been ask to lead an after school program for those with an extensive interest in engineering. He happily accepts this new role, and now his outside commitments come to 12 hours per week.

Case 3 – External International Engagement



Professor McCarthy took sabbatical for the fall semester of AY 2023-2024. During his time in Ireland on sabbatical, he met a number of faculty at the National University of Ireland and acquainted himself with their government funded research. Upon his return to Northeastern University, he became interested in participating in some external consulting for the government of Ireland. This will pay Professor McCarthy 20,000 euros per year and will require 35 days of travel over the course of the AY.

COI as it Relates to IP

Case 1 – Startup Founder

John, a Professor, been working on a novel drug delivery technology for several years and, with the support of NU/CRI, has founded a startup company to further develop and commercialize this technology. As the founder of the startup, John stands to benefit financially from its success. However, he continues to conduct research on the same technology at the university, blurring the lines between his personal interests and academic duties. This situation could create a conflict of interest as John's involvement in both the university research and the startup company could potentially influence research outcomes and decisions regarding the technology's development. How should John address this conflict of interest and how can you help?

Case 2 – SBIR Grant Recipient

Michelle, a Professor at COE, has been awarded a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant to develop a new medical device for detecting early signs of disease. The grant is funded by a government agency and requires collaboration between Michelle's COE lab and a small biotech company. Michelle is serving as both the principal investigator for the university and the small business. This dual role presents a conflict of interest, as Michelle's responsibilities to both entities could influence his research decisions and priorities. How should Michelle navigate this conflict of interest and how can you help?

To manage this conflict, she must ensure clear delineation between her roles, maintain transparency in her affiliations, and seek independent oversight to ensure research integrity.

Case 3 – Patent Licensing and Research

David, a researcher at a university, has developed a new technology for renewable energy production. The university has patented this technology and licensed it to a startup company founded by David and his colleagues. As part of the licensing agreement, David and his team retain a financial interest in the success of the startup. However, David continues to conduct research on the same technology at the university, creating a conflict of interest. How should David address this conflict of interest?

To manage this conflict, David must ensure transparency in his affiliations, maintain separation between his university research and entrepreneurial activities, and seek independent oversight to mitigate any potential biases in his research outcomes.

COI as it Relates to Human Subjects Research

Case 1 - Study sponsor and PI in a beneficial agreement



- Ariel Gus is a faculty member in Psychology. Their academic focus is on storytelling, particularly in how it can impact trauma healing. In previous research, Dr. Gustafson has realized positive result in groups within the refugee community. Now they would like to test their theory on a prison population with the aim of reducing recidivism.
- Gus has designed a specific 12 week curriculum for use with the subject population. A national nonprofit organization that works with prison populations is interested in the curriculum and would like to sponsor the research. They have also hired Dr. Gus as a consultant and are paying them \$12,000 annually for this activity.

Case 2 - Startup Founder

Dr. M wants to develop device X and owns a company that holds the patent to this device. His PhD students are interested in studying this device so they start working for the company part time to develop the device. This is in addition to their role at Northeastern.

Undue Influence?

Engagement?

Case 3 - Personal and Institutional COI

Michelle, a Professor at COE, has been awarded a Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) grant to develop a new medical device for detecting early signs of disease. The grant is funded by a government agency and requires collaboration between Michelle's COE lab and a small biotech company. Michelle is serving as both the principal investigator for the university and the small business. This dual role presents a conflict of interest, as Michelle's responsibilities to both entities could influence his research decisions and priorities.

Engagement?

Relevant Policies



[POLICY ON FINANCIAL
CONFLICTS OF INTEREST
RELATED TO RESEARCH](#)



[POLICY ON CONFLICT OF
INTEREST AND
COMMITMENT](#)



[POLICY ON EXTERNAL
INTERNATIONAL
ENGAGEMENTS](#)



[POLICY ON COPYRIGHT
\(USA\)](#)



[POLICY ON PATENTS
\(USA\)](#)



[POLICY ON HUMANS
SUBJECTS RESEARCH](#)



[POLICY ON CLASSROOM
RESEARCH INVOLVING
HUMAN SUBJECTS](#)



[FACULTY HANDBOOK](#)