

Conflict of Interest Policy

Category: Human Resources

Approval: Board of Governors

Responsibility: Associate Vice-President, Human Resources

Date: February 1, 2008, Last Reviewed December 6, 2012

Employees (including student employees) acting on behalf of Trent University or carrying out their University duties and responsibilities, and students serving on University committees or bodies, are obliged to place the interests of the University ahead of their personal interests.

No employee or student shall engage in activities which create for him or her a conflict of interest as defined below.

Employees shall disclose to their immediate supervisors (or to VP Research in the case of conflicts involving research) all conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest when these arise.

Students shall disclose conflicts of interest to their committee chair when they arise.

Failure to comply with this policy constitutes misconduct and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Decision-making at Trent University is dispersed and is carried out by individuals who may play different roles within and outside the institution. To protect academic quality and its reputation, the University wishes to ensure that personal interest does not bias decision-making, academic inquiry/research, the dissemination of knowledge or the education of students. This policy applies to Trent University, and any corporation, partnership or other legal entity owned, controlled or subject to the direction of Trent University.

Conflict of Interest occurs when there is an actual, perceived or potential discrepancy between a) an individual's¹ private interest² or benefit³ and b) his or her obligations to the University or the University's interests. One test of conflict of interest is "could an impartial observer reasonably question whether a person's actions or decisions were influenced by consideration of his or her private interest or benefit?"

¹ Includes all employees, students, post-doctoral fellows, visiting scholars, and volunteers; determined in 2012 to include researchers and retired employees using Trent facilities for University business and/or research. Employees and students serving on the Board of Governors of Trent University are subject also to the Board's policy on conflict of interest as it pertains to their Board responsibilities.

² Private interest includes interests of an individual's spouse, partner, parent, child or other family members with whom they live and third parties/businesses in which they have a material interest or of which they are a director or officer

³ Benefit includes the receipt or expectation of anything of monetary value, including pay or salary or payment for services (including consulting fees and honoraria), equity (shares, options, etc.), security or other ownership interests and intellectual property rights (e.g. patents, copyrights, royalties, carried interests or options related to such rights).

Examples of conflict of interest include but are not limited to: participation in the employment, supervision or evaluation of members of one's family or a person to whom one has a personal or legal obligation; participation on behalf of the University in the acquisition or disposition of assets/services where there is a personal interest; use of University information not available to the general public for personal gain; use of University services/resources to serve personal interests; acceptance of gifts, gratuities or favours; and competing with the University for business.

The University will establish procedures for evaluating conflicts of interest. In some circumstances the University may determine that a potential conflict of interest cannot be avoided entirely and may be mitigated through compensating internal controls or third-party involvement. Such a determination may only be made by the responsible party named in relevant supporting procedures.

Contact Officer:

Associate Vice-President, Human Resources

Date for Next Review:

December 2019

Related Policies, Procedures & Guidelines

a) N/A

Policies Superseded by This Policy:

a) N/A