

General Conflict of Interest Guidelines - Faculty of Science

(17 August 2021)

These Guidelines are parallel in several respects to those of NSERC but are more general to apply to a broader cross section of committees. The University guidelines are more general and do not address concerns that frequently arise in Science.

A conflict of interest exists whenever there is an overlap or conflict between a person's responsibilities or duties and a person's interests, whether private, professional, or public.

Conflicts may arise where there is the potential for a professional or personal benefit, where a professional or personal relationship is involved or where a financial interest, direct or indirect is involved.

These conflicts may be real, potential or perceived.

In the Faculty of Science, a conflict of interest may arise in many different venues including, but not restricted to, promotion and tenure committees, search committees, grant review committees, awards committees, and nomination committees. The definition of a conflict in these situations is complicated by the existence of collegial relationships.

A conflict of interest may exist or be perceived to exist when a faculty or support staff member:

1. is in a familial, close personal or business relationship with a person being assessed by a committee;
2. is in a position to gain or lose financially or materially from a decision being made by the committee;
3. has had long-standing scientific or personal differences with a person being assessed by a committee;
4. has been closely professionally affiliated in the last six year including having been a supervisor or a trainee, having published or having shared funding with a person being assessed by a committee.

Collegial relationships are expected and encouraged in the Faculty. Such relationships may involve discussions of all aspects of academia from science to pedagogy. If these have not led to one of situations 1 to 4 above, it is sufficient for a committee member to declare the collegial relationship in the first committee meeting.