



How can we better manage conflicts of interest?

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Principles of managing conflicts of interest well

- Recognise that conflicts of interest take many forms; they are not just to do with for-profit companies
- Recognise that conflict of interest is a state not a behaviour
- Recognise that poorly managed conflicts of interest can lead to bad decisions, corrupt information, and destroy reputations
- Have very clear rules; consult about them with all in the university but don't descend to the lowest common denominator



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- Be confident that the rules fit with the best international standards
- Make sure that everybody in the university is aware of the rules
- Include case based training on conflict of interest in training of all staff
- Recognise that rules cannot cover every set of circumstances, so provide an “ethics officer” who can advise on cases
- Back up the “ethics officer” with an “ethics committee” that can discuss issues and revise the rules

Principles of managing conflicts of interest well

- Have a body, perhaps the “ethics committee” that can investigate and judge possible breaches of the rules on conflict of interest and advise on punishment if necessary
- Be sure that the management of the university acts on the advice of the “ethics committee”
- Have the senior body in the university approve the rules and reapprove them each year
- Be transparent in reporting breaches of rules on conflicts of interest
- Don’t allow the process to degenerate to bureaucracy