

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

<b>Approval Authority</b>	President
<b>Responsible Executive</b>	Vice-President Administration
<b>Related Policies / Legislation</b>	Board By-law Conflict of Interest or Duty (BGB-110.05) Board Policy on Labour Relations Management (BRP-225.04) Board Policy Direction on Human Resources Development and Management (BPD-225) Board policy Direction on Risk Management (BPD-220) UFV Statement on Institutional Ethics (22) Policy 228 Gift Acceptance Policy 130 Procurement

### PURPOSE/POLICY

This policy requires that all UFV community members conduct their responsibilities ethically and transparently, free from actual or perceived conflicts of interest. It also seeks to protect the integrity of the University's operations, promote public trust, and comply with relevant legal and ethical standards.

By adhering to this Conflict-of-Interest Policy, the university aims to uphold the highest standards of integrity and ensure that its activities and decisions are conducted fairly and transparently.

### SCOPE

This policy applies to members of the UFV Community; hereafter, "member" includes:

- a. All university employees, including faculty and staff, when not in conflict with the collective agreement, and administrators.
- b. Students involved in university operations, research, and decision-making processes.
- c. All persons who volunteer to assist the university, including board members, except when executing their board member function, when such functions are governed by a board bylaw.

### DEFINITION OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest exists when a member:

- has a personal or private interest in a matter sufficient to cause a reasonable person

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to question whether the member could be influenced in the objective exercise of their duties.

- has personal interests, relationships, or activities which interfere, appear to interfere, or have the potential to interfere with their obligations to the University.
- a conflict of interest can exist without wilful wrongdoing and without evidence that a member's judgement was, in fact, affected by their personal or private interest.

The following are some areas of conflict of interest:

**Financial Interests:**

- a. Transactions related to property ownership, a business, or investments that may or do influence decisions.
- b. Compensation or payments that may or do influence decisions.

**Personal Relationships:**

- a. Family, friendships, or romantic associations that may bias professional judgments.

**External Engagements:**

- a. External employment or non-remunerated roles that may conflict with university duties.

**EXAMPLES OF POTENTIAL CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Conflicts of interest may arise unexpectedly or predictably in varied circumstances where a person, someone they are in a personal relationship with or an organization they are involved with stands to gain or suffer. The following examples illustrate scenarios of potential conflicts of interest:

- a. Research: Receiving funding from a company where the researcher has a financial interest.
- b. Procurement: Participating in selecting a vendor owned or directed by oneself, a partner, or a family member or where the vendor offers the procurer a benefit to complete a transaction.
- c. Teaching: Using a textbook authored by the instructor without proper disclosure and approval.
- d. Employment: Holding a secondary job that conflicts with university responsibilities.
- e. Accepting or giving gifts, gratuities, or favours related to the university member's responsibilities. Cash payments or equivalents must not be accepted or given as gifts.
- f. Participating in decisions regarding promotion, appointment, discipline, performance review, grades, financial aid, awards, or providing academic or employment references for a person the member has a personal relationship with.
- g. Use of university resources such as equipment, email address, stationary, or space, for non-university work or for personal benefit.

The following do not ordinarily give rise to a conflict of interest under this policy:

- a. Common business courtesies, such as meals or other gifts of nominal value. Gifts of a nominal value may be retained.
- b. The recognition by donors to UFV. Acceptance of gifts must be reported in writing to the recipient's immediate supervisor.

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## **DISCLOSURE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST AND REGULATIONS DEALING WITH CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Any actual or potential conflict of interest must be disclosed when it arises. Disclosures should be made to the appropriate authority, as detailed below:

- a. An employee must discuss the circumstances with their immediate supervisor.
- b. A volunteer must discuss the circumstances with their supervisor.
- c. A student must discuss the circumstances with the Executive Director, Student Affairs.
- d. A committee member must discuss the circumstances with the committee chair.

If a conflict concerns a person to whom the report will be made, that person shall report it to the next higher-level supervisor. The university shall provide a means for members to report conflicts of interest if they wish to do so or are directed to do so.

### **DUTY TO DISCLOSE AND PENALTY**

Members are encouraged to disclose potential conflicts of interest to an appropriate authority. A member who knows of a conflict of interest, whether related to themselves or another and does not report it violates this policy and may be subject to disciplinary procedures or other penalties, including termination of employment or academic sanctions.

### **MANAGEMENT, REDUCTION, OR ELIMINATION OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

Upon disclosure, the university will take appropriate and reasonable steps to manage, reduce, or eliminate the conflict of interest. These steps may include:

- a. Recusal of the person in conflict of interest from a decision-making process.
- b. Divestment of conflicting financial interests.
- c. Modification of duties.
- d. Independent review or oversight of decisions.

### **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**

The university will provide training and resources to advise members of the provisions of this policy and their responsibilities under it.

### **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Members seeking further guidance or clarification on this policy should contact their supervisor.