

Conflict of Interest

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Prepared By:	Sherman Leung	Head of Research Operations	<div><div>DocuSigned by:</div><div>Sherman Leung</div><div>63D8F418E2C0481...</div></div>		01 March 2024
Approved By:	Andrew Barron	Chief Executive Officer	<div><div>DocuSigned by:</div><div>Andrew Barron</div><div>E7A1E4E53FB4D...</div></div>		01 March 2024
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1.0 Introduction

Wesley Research Institute (WRI) performs activities that encompass various disciplines, collaborators, clients and vendors and as such it is normal to expect for there to be conflicts of interest. However, it is important for conflicts of interest to be appropriately managed to protect the institute, its employees, and research outcomes.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to describe the institute's requirements in disclosing and managing conflicts of interest.

3.0 Scope

This policy is applicable to all research staff including permanent, casual, secondment, full-time and part-time arrangements. It is also applicable to honorary appointments and students hosted at the institute.

4.0 Principles

4.1 Disclosure of interests

Financial interests must be disclosed to the institute including, but not limited to, direct payments (e.g., salary, consultancy, speaking fees, panel membership fees), indirect payments (e.g., travel, accommodation, professional development, hospitality), research funding (e.g., industry/interest group funds), company shares or options, royalties, directorships, scholarships and operational/infrastructure support.

Non-financial disclosures that must be disclosed to the institute include, but are not limited to, board membership, affiliations, personal/social relationships, current/past professional relationships and recent employment with a business that could stand to benefit or be affected.

The disclosure of interests must also occur in regard of immediate family or if there is future expectation of benefit e.g., intellectual property that may accrue commercial value. In the disclosure of interests, it is important to consider the significance that a reasonable independent observer would apply to the interest at hand. Similarly, it is important to note that having multiple interests does not necessarily constitute a conflict of interest.

4.2 Classifications of conflict

Perceived conflicts are competing interests that could reasonably give the appearance of influencing the performance of the individual's duties.

Potential conflicts are where there is possibility of a competing interest that could influence the performance of the individual's duties.

Actual conflicts are where a competing interest can directly influence the performance of the individual's duties.

4.3 Conflict determination and management

Interests must be reviewed by the institute's Head of Research Operations prior to commencement of research activities. For example, this can occur before budget finalisation or prior to approval of new projects out of budget cycle. If a conflict

exists, the Head of Research Operations in consultation with Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and if necessary the Board, will confirm the appropriate measure/s to take to manage the conflict. This can include:

- Public disclosure of the interest, such as when presenting or publishing the research
- Involving an appropriate individual to provide assurance of some or all of the research
- Requiring the researcher absent themselves from any deliberate decision making regarding the research
- Requiring the researcher play a different or reduced role in some or all of the research
- Requiring the researcher relinquish their interest

5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

All research staff, honorary fellows and students are responsible for understanding and adhering to this policy.

Frontline leaders are responsible for the monitoring of this policy's use within their team/s. Concerns and issues should be escalated to the Head of Research Operations for further investigation, which may involve an independent stakeholder such as a Research Integrity Advisor (RIA) or similar.

6.0 References and Related Documents

6.1 References

- 6.1.1 Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research 2018
- 6.1.2 National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2023
- 6.1.3 Research Integrity and Misconduct Policy 2019
- 6.1.4 Disclosure of Interests and Management of Conflicts of Interest 2019

6.2 Related Documents

- 6.2.1 RS01A Research Governance
- 6.2.2 RS01B Research Integrity and Misconduct
- 6.2.3 RS05 Intellectual Property Rights
- 6.2.4 RS10 Foreign Influence and Interference
- 6.2.5 RS12 Consultancy and Secondary Employment

7.0 Version History

Version No.	Approver	Implementation Date	Summary of Change
1.0	Andrew Barron	1/03/2024	e.g., Introduction of Policy