

# Disclosures: Conflicts of Interest & Conflict of Commitments

## Script

Version 02/24/22

Estimated length: 4 min 30 seconds

### Introduction

- Do you have outside financial interests related to the research you do for the University of California (UC)?
  - Do you engage in professional activities outside of the research you do for UC?
- UC encourages such pursuits as they facilitate opportunities for innovation and collaboration.
- However, they may also bias (or appear to bias) your use of time and research.
- Situations like this may present potential **conflicts of interest (COI)** and/or **conflict of commitments (COC)**.
- Let's talk more about these situations, **disclosure requirements**, and **resources** available to you.

### Conflicts of Interest (COI)

- In **sponsored research** settings, COI focus on *situations* where **personal financial interests may influence (or appear to influence) research decisions**.
- While common in research universities, they must be disclosed and carefully managed.
- You must **disclose** certain **financial interests**, whether domestic or foreign.
- **Why?** Because it's the law; it's UC policy; and it's the right thing to do.
- This helps ensure that the design, conduct, and reporting of your research is free from bias.
- **What to disclose?**
  - a. Disclosure requirements and processes vary by type of research funding.
  - b. In general, you must disclose economic interests if they relate to your UC professional responsibilities, including:
    - i. **Investments** (like stocks and bonds),
    - ii. **Income** or payments for salaries,
    - iii. **Loans** and intellectual property interests,
    - iv. **Gifts** and **honorariums**, and
    - v. **Travel** funds or reimbursements.
  - c. You must also follow UC and campus **intellectual property** policies to disclose certain outcomes of research, such as patentable inventions or copyrightable software.
- **How to disclose**
  - a. **Follow your campus process** for submitting the required disclosure forms.
  - b. When your research is funded by certain private entities, you are required to report any personal economic interests in that entity on **the Statement of Economic Interests for Principal Investigators**, known as the **Form 700-U**.
  - c. Locate the form on your campus Contracts & Grants or Conflict of Interest website.
  - d. Remember, there are specific disclosure requirements for awards funded by
    - i. Federal agencies, like the **National Institutes of Health (NIH)**, and the **National Science Foundation (NSF)**
- Your campus may also have separate disclosure processes for financial interests related to human subjects research.
- **Visit your campus and UCOP Conflict of Interest websites** to learn more about disclosure forms, timing, and the process of disclosures.

### Conflict of Commitment (COC)

- Per UC policy, faculty in certain roles must **disclose, or report, outside professional activities**.
- This is to protect your time, and ensure that you maintain your obligations to UC, your students, and your colleagues.

- A conflict of commitment may occur when a faculty member's **outside professional activities** interfere with their professional obligations to UC.
- Such activities can be paid or unpaid.
- They are separated into three categories, based on their likeliness to create a conflict of commitment.
- Some require approval before engaging in the activity.
- **What to disclose?**
  - a. Types **outside activities you must disclose** include (but are not limited to)
    - i. **Category I** activities, which need to be reported and approved in advance, such as:
      1. Employment
      2. Holding executive or managerial positions, and
      3. Founding a company
      4. An example is teaching, research, or administration of a grant at another institution.
    - ii. **Category II:**
      1. Consulting,
      2. Testifying as an expert, and
      3. Serving on a board of directors.
  - b. **Category III** activities do not need to be approved or reported. This includes:
    - i. Serving on government panels,
    - ii. Reviewing manuscripts, and
    - iii. Attending and presenting at outside academic conferences
- **How to disclose**
  - a. To disclose your outside professional activities, **submit an annual COC report through UC'S Outside Activity Tracking System, known as OATS**
  - b. Substantial penalties can result from failure to disclose conflicts.

## Foreign Talent Programs

- Foreign talent recruitment programs are government-sponsored efforts to recruit researchers.
- While many recruitment programs are used for legitimate purposes, some promote unethical behavior.
- You should
  - Carefully review the terms of any foreign institution employment agreements, and
  - ensure that you appropriately disclose participation.

## Conclusion

### Confused about what to disclose?

- When in doubt, err on the side of disclosure.
- Seek advice from university experts, who will help you maintain compliance and avoid penalty.
- For more information, **contact your local campus Research Compliance Office or Conflict of Interest Expert.**
- This message has been brought to you by the University of California Ethics, Compliance & Audit Services and Risk & Safety Training.

## Resources:

- [Foreign Influence](#) (UCOP, Ethics, Compliance and Audit Services)
- [Conflict of Interest Policies & Guidance](#) (UCOP, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination)
- [Intellectual Property](#) (UCOP, Research Policy Analysis and Coordination)
- [Training](#) (UC Conflict of Interest for Researchers Briefing)
- [Form 700 – Statement of Economic Interests](#) (UC Legal, Office of the General Counsel)
- [Conflict of Interest Coordinators](#) (UCOP)
- [UC Conflict of Commitment Policies](#) (APM 025, APM 240, APM 246, APM 671)
- [UC Outside Activity Tracking System](#) (OATS)