



Senate

Policy Name	Conflict of Interest in Research Policy
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Responsibility for Revision	Chair, Committee on Research and Publications
Responsibility for Implementation	Associate Vice-President Research

1. Purpose

Mount Saint Vincent University (MSVU) has a duty to promote objectivity in research and ensure that the conduct of research is not compromised by real or perceived conflicts of interest, according to the Agreement on the [Administration of Agency Grants and Awards by Research Institutions](#), as signed by both MSVU and the Tri-Agencies (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and Canadian Institute of Health Research).

This policy serves in addition to other University regulations, policies, and guidelines relating directly or indirectly to conflicts of interest (see Section 5. Application below). In preparing this policy, documents from several Canadian universities, the Tri-Agencies, and US and other international research funding bodies, such as NIH, NSF, and USDA, were consulted to ensure maximum coverage, understanding and compliance. However, each funding agency may have their own conflict of interest policies and procedures that must be consulted, where relevant.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all conducting research under the auspices of MSVU, including, but not limited to: faculty, undergraduate students taking part in research, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows and other personnel involved directly or indirectly in research, which may include service providers, contractors, research associates, technical staff, adjunct professors, visiting professors, and administrators and officials representing MSVU.

3. Definition

For the purposes of this policy, a conflict of interest (COI) in research is defined as follows:

A conflict of interest refers to activities or situations which place an individual in a real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional, or other interests. These interests include, but are not limited to, interpersonal, business, commercial or financial interests pertaining to individuals, partners, family members, friends, or their former, current or prospective professional associates, which could include departmental or University colleagues.

A conflict of interest exists under this definition even if the action or decision called for under the personal obligation is identical with the action or decision required under the institutional obligation (e.g., hiring a family member on a research project for which the faculty member has received funding, or involving a family member in a research study).

4. Conflict of Interest in Peer Review (Committee on Research and Publications)

The Senate Committee on Research and Publications (CRP) as an entity, or in the persons of the members who make up the committee, hold trust relationships with participants, research agencies, researchers and society. Members must also be aware of their own potential for real or perceived COI. For example, members are in a conflict of interest when their own research projects are under review by their committee, or when they are a co-investigator on a project. Members may also be in a conflict of interest situation when they have interpersonal or financial relationships with the researcher, or personal or financial interests in a company, labour union or not-for-profit organization that may be substantially affected by the research.

5. Application

Conflict of interest can naturally arise from being active in research, industry, and the community, and that the mere existence of conflict is not necessarily improper but must be recognized, disclosed, assessed and addressed.

Members of the University community, as defined in Section 2. Scope, shall follow documented procurement processes, consistent with Provincial, local laws and MSVU Procurement Policy & Ethics, and disclose instances where a conflict of interest may arise so that they may be appropriately assessed and resolved, as per University policies below.

With regard to federal, state, provincial or other external awarding agencies, any real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional, or other interests, must be disclosed, documented, and addressed in accordance to all relevant awarding agency policies.

With regard to internal awards, prior to the institution's expenditure of funds, any real, potential or perceived conflict between the duties or responsibilities related to research, and personal, institutional, or other interests, must be disclosed to the Associate Vice-President, Research who will determine whether a conflict of interest exists, and, if so, develop and

implement a management plan that shall specify the actions that have been, and shall be, taken to manage such conflicts of interest.

If the conflict of interest is with a member of the MSVU Research Office, conflict of interest must be disclosed to the Vice-President Academic and Provost.

The University has established procedures for disclosing, assessing and managing conflicts of interest. For more information, please consult the [MSVU Board of Governors Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [the MSVU Faculty Association Collective Agreement](#), [MSVU Policy on Responsible Conduct of Research](#), [MSVU Postdoctoral Protocol](#), [MSVU Procurement Policy](#) and [Procurement Ethics](#).