

# ZIAUDDIN UNIVERSITY

## GUIDELINES, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

<b>Policy Name</b>	<b>Conflict of Interest Policy</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	020
<b>Approved by</b>	Academic Council
<b>Date of Original Approval</b>	Feb 19, 2022
<b>Date of Revisions</b>	Nil
<b>Contact</b>	Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization

### **Preamble:**

Universities and their employees engage in a wide range of activities. The traditional academic roles, such as teaching and supervising students and conducting grant-funded academic research, are nowadays often supplemented by commercial collaborations including consultancy, commercial research and development, intellectual property licensing, and involvement in 'spinout' companies. The University recognizes that involvement in such commercial activities carries many advantages, including the practical application of new technologies, the provision of an additional source of research funding and insights into commercial and societal needs, and the receipt of royalty income for the University and its departments.

These activities can produce positive benefits, but they also have the potential for diverting the University and its employees from their primary educational, research, and service missions. For example, conflicts of interest can arise when the interests of a commercial venture, from which a university employee derives direct benefit, differ from the interests and primary obligations of the University as a whole, or when the commercial venture consumes an undue share of the employee's attention. The University believes it to be essential that its employees should manage or avoid, and be seen to manage or avoid, such conflicts. Moreover, many funding agencies, in the world, are now seeking assurance that universities are properly managing conflicts as a condition of grant funding.

Under their contract of employment with the University, academic staff is permitted to undertake private consultancy, as per university policy. Staff should refer to the University's Consultancy and Startup Policies. The University is keen to encourage relevant outside interests but staff will need to ensure that such work or consultancy complies with all relevant policies. By and large, the University leaves individual Faculties and academic staff to develop their own balanced 'portfolio' of activity, including external collaborations of one kind or another. However, by engaging in such external activities, employees may place themselves in a difficult position in which an outside interest may conflict, or appear to conflict, with their university duties. The employee may then be open to suspicion that decisions they take as a university employee are influenced by personal financial interest - even when, as is almost universally the case, the employee is acting with neutrality and complete professional integrity. In other cases, the employee may appear to be engaging in external activities which compete with the University.

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## CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

### **Disclosure:**

In the vast majority of instances, simple disclosure of a potentially conflicting external activity is sufficient to absolve the employee of suspicion. Occasionally the University may suggest a different way of managing an activity that avoids the conflict of interest. In extreme cases, the conflict of interest may be so fundamental and unmanageable that it is necessary to restrict one or other of the employee's conflicting activities. The full prior disclosure of interests is clearly an important (and in many cases, sufficient) mechanism for the management of conflicts of interest. Employees are required to complete the Register of Interests return each year.

Employees, Faculty, and Staff of Ziauddin University are required to perform their responsibilities with care and loyalty. Pursuant to the University's Code of Conduct, all decisions and actions of the administration are to be made for the only persistence of advancing the best interests of the institution and the community. The integrity of Ziauddin University must be protected at all times. In a university, while staff hold multiple roles and also have external relationships, conflict of interest may arise.

### **Conflict of Interest:**

In order to manage the related risks to an acceptable level, all employees and others working in the University (including grant holders, clinical faculty and emeritus researchers) are prerequisites to acknowledge and relate activities that might give growth to actual or perceived conflicts of interest.

The purpose of the Conflict-of-Interest Policy, and the related procedures and guidance, is to provide the employee of Ziauddin University with the information required to be aware of the issues, to be able to recognize potential or real conflicts, and to cope with them effectively if they occur.

Conflicts of interest could arise in many circumstances and it is not possible to provide a single definition to cover them all. A conflict of interest may be defined as including:

**“When your university responsibilities collide with your personal interests or obligations to other persons or groups, you may have a conflict of interest. External activities that are conducted in addition to your university role, personal connections, or opposing duties inside the collegiate University can all cause actual or perceived conflicts. They might be financial, non-financial, or a combination of the two.”**

Conflict of interest is limited to situations in which an individual actually breaks that trust; the conflict might be just as harmful whether it exists or appears to exist. It is important to note that the University's position on Conflicts of interest does not suggest that Ziauddin staff & faculty are untrustworthy. Rather, it's a safeguard to keep University personnel safe from criticism or compromise. by ensuring that they are aware of and disclose such conflict situations, as well as taking action to prevent and resolve them.

## **Types of Conflicts of Interest:**

Conflicts of Interest arise where there is a conflict between the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust and any other interests the particular individual may have, e.g., where the individual could be seen to be influencing University matters for actual or potential personal benefit. Such a conflict arises, for instance, when a member of staff is in a position to influence, directly or indirectly, University business, research, or other decisions in ways that could lead to gain for them, their family or others to the detriment of the University's integrity and its missions of teaching, research and public service. These are situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, an employee's professional judgment in administration, management, instruction, research, and other professional activities.

### **1. Conflicts of Commitment:**

- 1.1 This policy statement deals with the conflicts of commitment (COC). COC usually involves issues of time allocation. Personnel owes their primary professional loyalty and commitment to the university. Their primary professional commitment of time and intellectual energies, therefore, is for the education, research, and other academic/professional programs supporting the university's mission.
- 1.2 Attempts to balance university responsibilities with outside activities either paid or unpaid – such as consultation, government service, public service, or pro bono work – can result in conflicts regarding the allocation of time and energy.
- 1.3 Personnel intending to engage in an external activity that involves significant effort outside the university and that may present a COC must take prior written approval from the respective Head of the Department, Director/Principal/Dean, or any other relevant administrative head to forward the application to the ORIC for approval from the Competent Authority.
- 1.4 Individuals may be required to take a leave of absence to proceed with the external activity if it cannot be managed appropriately. Permitted leaves and relevant policies are already established and described in the Service Rules of Ziauddin university.
- 1.5 Personnel showing dishonesty in terms of their attendance, i.e., marking fake/proxy attendance by any means or marking the attendance properly for entering and leaving but not present physically on duty during the assigned working hours without any notice are also committed to COC. In such cases, the university can take action as per its code of conduct policy.
- 1.6 Any employee or personnel showing a lack of concern/enthusiasm/boredom towards the assigned duties/commitments resulting in a delay of that work or affecting the progress of that work is also considered as COC. In such cases, the university can take action as per its code of conduct.

### **2. Conflicts of Financial Interest:**

The University's employees have a responsibility to respect and promote the financial interests of the University. Staff should wherever possible ensure that the University:

- 2.1 Receives appropriate financial benefits from the provision of research services, including consultancy and other services conducted through the University.
- 2.2 Receives appropriate financial benefits from the use or commercialization of its intellectual property.
- 2.3 Receives appropriate financial benefits from the use of other resources and assets, including equipment, technical staff, and facilities.
- 2.4 Makes responsible use of its financial resources in relation to the purchase of goods as specified in the University's Financial Regulations.

### **3. Conflicts of Loyalty:**

The University's employees owe their primary commitment and allegiance to the University. Membership of Committees, Boards, Advisory Groups, etc. (External Appointments) implies an obligation (and sometimes a statutory duty) to act in the best interests of the external body. These duties may conflict with those duties and obligations as employees of the University. Where an External Appointment is allowed under the Consultancy Guidelines or otherwise allowed by the University, this does not absolve the employee from ensuring that he or she continues to give their primary commitment and allegiance to the University. Managing conflicts of loyalty is primarily a matter for individual staff and their Head of Departments.