



Conflict of Interest Policy 2020-21

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 As an employer, NMITE starts from a position of trusting the professionalism of the staff it employs, and this trust underlies any attempt to handle questions which raise potential conflicts of interest.
- 1.2 To protect individual staff members and NMITE from compromise, it is both necessary and helpful to have a policy to deal with Conflicts of Interest for the following reasons:
 - i. Conflicts of interest which are not effectively managed may jeopardise the organisations mission.
 - ii. NMITE wishes to encourage commercial activity and take advantage of commercial research, consultancy, intellectual property and partnering companies; this will require careful management of possible conflicts between NMITE's interests and legitimate personal commercial interest.
 - iii. NMITE must make good use of public funds, for example by ensuring best value in any contacts into which it enters.
 - iv. As a public body, NMITE must comply with the guidelines set out by the Nolan Committee¹ (as detailed in the Code of Ethics Policy) in relation to standards in public life.



- 1.3 In summary, the Conflicts of Interest Policy provides a threefold approach:
 - i. Disclose always
 - ii. Manage the conflict in most cases
 - iii. Prohibit the activity when necessary to protect the public interest or the interests of NMITE

2. Definition

- 2.1 A conflict between the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust and any other interests the individual may have, e.g. where the individual could be seen to be influencing NMITE matters for actual or potential benefit or seeking such a gain at the expense of NMITE.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This policy applies to all members of NMITE, including staff, students, Trustees and Volunteers.

4. Register of Interests

- 4.1 All members of NMITE are responsible for supplying and updating the required information for NMITE's Register of Interests. The Register is maintained by the Head of Financial Management.

5. Conduct of Meetings

- 5.1 Any Finance Committee member who has a clear and substantial interest in a matter under considerations by the committee should declare that interest at any meeting where the matter is discussed whether that interest is already recorded in the register. At the discretion of the Chairperson, the member concerned should withdraw from the meeting during the relevant discussion or decision.

6. Conflicts arising from commitments outside of NMITE

- 6.1 A conflict may arise when a member of staff undertakes external commitments which interfere with obligations arising under his or her contract of employment with NMITE. Where a staff member wishes to undertake substantial commitments outside NMITE, it may be possible to negotiate a part time contract with NMITE. Advice can be sought from the HR Department.

7. Use of Confidential Information

- 7.1 Individuals covered by these regulations should not use for personal gain any confidential information obtained through their involvement with NMITE.



8. Other Conflicts of Interest

- 8.1 Other conflicts of interest may arise in a variety of situations, for example in relation to students or student applications, staff or applications for staff posts, organisations or individuals giving funds to NMITE, suppliers of goods or services, collaborative partners, Higher Education related partners or other outside organisations. The potential conflict may result from personal, social, financial, or business interests or ethical considerations. The question as to whether a particular circumstance will give rise to a potential conflict of interest may be difficult. The general principle to consider is whether the circumstances could reasonably be perceived to affect the judgement of the individual's decision making.
- 8.2 The areas set out below are not an exhaustive list. If in doubt, the individual should consult his or her head of department or the CEO.

9. Students and Personal Relationships

- 9.1 Where there is a family or personal relationship between a member of the academic staff and a student, the staff member should inform his or her Manager, or in the case of the Manager, the CEO.
- 9.2 The staff member should take no part in the academic assessment of the student or in any other decision relating to the student, such as the award of a prize or scholarship. If the staff member attends a meeting of the board of examiners where the student is being assessed, the interest should be declared.

10. Student Recruitment

- 10.1 Where there is a family or personal relationship between a member of staff and a student application, the member of staff should declare the interest to their Manager. He or she should take no part in the decision whether to offer a place to the applicant or advise on the nature of the offer.
- 10.2 Where an applicant has a connection with a member of staff or a donor or a potential donor to NMITE or there is a similar connection, extra care should be taken in deciding whether to offer a place to the applicant and the terms of the offer to ensure impartiality. The matter should be discussed with the Manager.

11. Staff & Personal Relationships

- 11.1 Where there is a family or personal relationship between two members of staff, neither member of staff should be involved in any decision or process affecting the other, including promotion, remuneration, discipline, or grievance.



12. Part Time Employees

- 12.1 A part-time employee with commitments outside of NMITE should disclose such commitments to his or her Manager if there is an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

13. Suppliers of Goods & Services

- 13.1 All purchases for the supply of goods or services should comply with NMITE's Finance & Procurement Regulations, including the Code of Ethics. Where a conflict of interest could occur, those responsible for making the decision should take care in deciding which supplier or contractor to choose. To be able to show impartiality, individuals should take appropriate steps to ensure value for money. Advice may be sought from the Head of Financial Management.

14. Commercial Conflicts of Interest

- 14.1 Difficulties may arise in the commercial exploitation of intellectual property, whether this takes the form of a partnering Company or commercial research or consultancy. The guiding principle is that individuals should declare their future intentions and association with a venture to their Manager and all other parties involved, so there is no doubt as to the responsibilities and interests of all involved.
- 14.2 There is an ongoing duty to disclose any significant changes in the level of involvement. This initial disclosure and any ongoing disclosure must be sufficiently detailed to allow an accurate and objective evaluation to be made.