

Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Private Company Grants/Contracts

The State of Maryland and the University of Maryland System encourage faculty to network and create relationships with private industry to further the interests of the University and private industry in business ventures. In concert with this, authority for managing conflict of interest issues was delegated from the State Ethics Commission to the Presidents of the University System of Maryland campuses, and at College Park, the Conflict of Interest Committee was established to review issues and make recommendations to the President for final decisions.

First, when a University of Maryland (UM) faculty member has a stake in a company that submits a proposal for awards a contract through UM, the faculty member should make it clear¹ what the nature of his/her ownership position and what his/her responsibilities are at the company. This information should include the percent ownership and/or the number of shares owned by the faculty member and the current share value.

Second, the faculty owner should indicate¹ if he/she is expecting to be involved in a contract from a private company, whether he/she is representing the company or the University. A faculty member will generally not be permitted to act as Principal Investigator on behalf of UM in a project involving his/her company; however, this may depend on whether the ownership position is minimal or substantial.

Third, students and Post Docs who are supervised by a faculty member who holds an interest in the company generally may not participate in the work being performed with the company. In some cases it may be acceptable for the faculty owner to cede supervision of Post Doctoral fellows to another faculty member of equal or higher rank to that of the faculty owner¹.

Fourth, if the company will be utilizing University owned technology, a licensing agreement must be in place to ensure the protection of the University's rights.

Finally, any University laboratory or equipment controlled by the faculty owner needed for the proposed project must be disclosed¹. In the event that University space is required by the company for use during the project, a space agreement must be executed.

The Conflict of Interest Committee may consider exceptions to the above guidelines; however, compelling justifications would be necessary¹.

1. A "University of Maryland Research or Development Interest Disclosure Forms" was developed as the instrument by which faculty and staff disclose real or potential conflicts of interest to the Committee.