

Policy on Declarations of External Interests

Any external interest must be disclosed and any potential/actual conflict of interest must be avoided or managed.

Effective from 1st June 2019

1. Purpose

Conflicts of interest or perceived conflicts of interest can be damaging both to the reputation of the University and to the reputation of University employees. University employees have a responsibility to respect and promote the financial, educational and research interests of the University, acting with integrity at all times and not taking inappropriate advantage of their position. This Policy aims to facilitate this and to prevent any reputational damage to the University and/or its employees, by requiring University employees to declare any external interest(s) that might raise or might be perceived to raise a potential/actual conflict, so that any potential/actual conflict(s) of interest are disclosed, and avoided or managed.

2. What is covered by the policy?

An “external interest” is defined as an individual or organisation with whom an employee has a personal or business relationship.

A “conflict of interest” is defined as a conflict between the external interest (including interests of relatives, friends and close associates) and the institutional responsibilities of a University employee. This can include conflicts of duty, commitment, rights, obligations, time, interests and similar.

3. Who does the policy apply to?

This policy applies to Executive Board members, Deans and all Heads of Unit as well as any other members of staff designated by their Head of Unit as ‘relevant employees’. Guidance in this regard can be found in the attached procedure. Lay members of Governance Committees i.e. Council, Senate, Court and their designated sub-committees, and other advisory boards as directed by the Registrar, are also expected to comply with the policy (see attached procedure).

4. Roles and responsibilities

It is the responsibility of relevant employees to recognise and declare any external interest, and to discuss any external interest with their line manager as soon as it arises. It is also the employee’s responsibility to notify their line manager if an interest, which has already been declared, changes in circumstance, raising a new potential/actual conflict.

It is the line manager’s responsibility to determine if any external interest raises a potential/actual conflict of interest and, if so, whether the external interest should be permitted and how the conflict would be managed. Where there is any uncertainty as to whether an external interest should be permitted the line manager must liaise with the relevant Professional Service lead eg Director of Business Development & Enterprise, Director of Research Strategy & Development, Head of Procurement or Director of Faculty Operations as appropriate in order to ensure that an informed decision is made.

It is the Head of Unit’s responsibility to verify that every relevant employee in their unit has made a Declaration of External Interest, and check that the line managers in their unit are aware of any external interests declared by their employees.

5. Policy

On appointment to Newcastle University, or on moving positions within the University, relevant employees are required to make a declaration of external interests (specifying any external interests, or confirming that they do not have any).

From the start of their employment onwards, employees are required to declare and discuss any new external interests, changes to existing external interests, or a potential conflict which has arisen with their line manager, before pursuing or continuing the external interest.

The line manager (liaising as appropriate – see 4 above) must determine if any external interest raises a potential/actual conflict of interest and, if so, whether the external interest should be permitted and how the conflict would be managed.

The line manager must observe the following when making their decision:

- (i) Any external interest must not result in significant rescheduling of lecture, tutorials or other University duties.
- (ii) Where the time commitment to the external interest is substantial, the University may need to be financially compensated (at the full commercial rate for the employee involved) or may require the employee to reduce their hours pro rata.
- (iii) Where the external interest involves an individual or organisation that has financial relationships with the University, the line manager, as well as either the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor or Registrar (as appropriate) must be consulted as to whether the interest raises a conflict, prior to any approval.
- (iv) The implications for any additional responsibilities that the employee holds (e.g. Chair of a Committee) must be considered.

If permitted, a record of the conflict and of the decisions reached must be retained. Written agreement is required prior to commencement of the external interest.

Employees have a right to appeal the decision made with respect to the management of any potential/actual conflict, via [Newcastle University's Grievance Procedure](#).

Before engaging in any University decision-making processes, committees or meetings, relevant employees and lay members of governance committees are also required to declare any external interest(s) which might be or might be perceived to be in conflict with the process or decision to be undertaken or considered. The Named Person must determine whether the employee/lay member should be permitted to be involved, where the Named Person refers to:

- The 'owner' of the decision-making process
- The chair of the committee
- The chair of the meeting

Where the Named Person makes such a declaration, the other members present must determine whether the Named Person should be permitted to continue being involved.

Periodically the University may require all relevant staff to review their external interests.

6. Related regulations, statutes and policies

- Procedure on Declarations of External Interests
- Data Retention Policy
- Policy on Gifts and Hospitality
- Privacy Notice: Newcastle University collects data about the external interests of Newcastle University employees, in adherence with this policy. Newcastle University have to process this data to meet their employees' contractual obligations. Data will not be shared with anyone outside the University, unless required to by law, and it will be stored securely within the European Economic Area (EEA), and in line with Newcastle University's Data Retention Policy. For further information, and/or the contact details of the Data Protection Officer, please see <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/data.protection/PrivacyNotice.htm>

7. Procedure to implement the policy

See Procedure on Declarations of External Interest.

8. Monitoring and reporting on compliance

Heads of Unit receive a biannual report identifying all employees in their unit and the date of their last declaration. Heads of Unit must verify that every relevant employee within their unit has made a Declaration of External Interest (specifying any external interests, or confirming that they do not have any). In addition, dipstick audits will be carried out as appropriate.

What will be monitored?	Frequency	Method	Who by	Reported to
Completion of Declaration of External Interest	Biannually	Report	Heads of Unit	Registrar

9. Failure to comply

Failure to comply with the requirements of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Document control information		
Does this replace another policy? Yes: Declarations of Interest and Conflicts of Interest 2014		
Approval		
Approved by:	Council	Date: 11 th February 2019
Effective from:	1 st June 2019	
Review due:	28 th February 2024	
Responsibilities		
Executive sponsor:	Dr John Hogan	
Policy owner:	Mr David Hill	
Policy author:	Mr David Hill	
Person(s) responsible for compliance:	Dr John Hogan	
Consultation		
Version	Body consulted	Date
	Executive Board	October 2018 and January 2019
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Analysis:		
Does the policy have the potential to impact on people in a different way because of their protected characteristics? Yes/ No/ Unsure		
If yes or unsure please consult the Diversity Team in HR for guidance		
Undertaken by:	Date: 4/6/18	
John Hogan, David Hill, Sara Garcia		
Key changes made as a result		
Document location		
<i>(eg www.ncl.ac.uk/ XXXXX etc)</i>		