

POLICYI003 CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Manual: Policies	Document ID: PI003	Date Created: Jun 08
Section: Investigator	No. Pages: 1	Review Date: Jun 17
		Future Review Date: Jun 19

PURPOSE

To define conflicts of interest and outline disclosure responsibilities relating to researchers.

A conflict of interest in the context of research exists where:

- A person's individual interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of his or her institutional role or professional obligations in research; or
- An institution's interests or responsibilities have the potential to influence the carrying out of its research obligations. Refer to National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, incorporating all updates), Chapter 5.4. Also refer to The Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research Section 7.2 *Conflicts of Interest - Responsibilities of Researchers*.

Conflicts may relate to financial interests, private, professional or institutional benefits or advantages that depend significantly on the research outcomes. A conflict of interest, real or perceived, may compromise the research process itself and the institutional processes governing research.

Bellberry undertakes careful ethical scrutiny of research applications, and requires disclosure of any real or potential conflict of interest via the Declarations page of the eProtocol application form.

This involves an assessment of whether any incentives or benefits could:

- Bias analysis and/or reporting of results,
- influence the selection process for research participants,
- affect the rigour of the review process.

A financial interest is not intrinsically wrong, but it must be assessed with regard to its potential to influence the conduct of the study.

In cases where there is a potential conflict of interest, applicants are to disclose the nature of the potential conflict. The committee may request further information on what steps are to be taken to minimise any potential bias.

The committee requires full disclosure of financial or personal, professional or institutional benefits that depend significantly on the research outcomes. Full disclosure of any financial involvement between a sponsoring company and those involved i.e. shares, options, payments, or other direct benefits such as gratuities to researchers/institutions involved in the research or sponsored travel to researchers.

Where a conflict of interest is disclosed, this will be discussed by the committee to determine the best course of action as per the National Statement Chapter 5.4.

Where a conflict of interest is not disclosed, but is discovered, Bellberry may undertake a further review. Withdrawal of ethical approval may result. Researcher/Institution will be advised accordingly.