

Osaka University Policy on Conflicts of Interest

The document below is an English translation of Policy on Conflicts of Interest, originally composed in Japanese. The English version of the Policy has been provided merely as a reference for international researchers and employees. Therefore, it should not be considered an official document.

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1. Purpose

Under our motto of “Live Locally, Grow Globally,” the mission of Osaka University is to contribute to research, education and society as a whole. In the coming “Age of Knowledge,” the role that Osaka University is called upon to play will grow ever more important, and in turn we will be called upon to make an even greater contribution to society.

Aiming at the progress of humanity and the development of our region, Osaka University shares its research findings with the public and giving back to the community, and we seek to become a university open to the world around us. Deploying high-level research to achieve industrially meaningful knowledge and know-how as intellectual property to be shared in common by humankind, and giving back to the community through the industry-academia-government collaboration initiative, Osaka University understands contributing to the promotion of industry as one of its most important missions.

The purpose of a university is the pursuit of truth, while the purpose of business is the legitimate pursuit of profit; therefore, in order to successfully implement the industry-academia-government collaboration initiative, it is necessary for each partner to transcend its differences from the others in purpose and role, and to cooperate in a spirit of respect for each other’s position. However, in activities and initiatives of this type, conflicts of interest arise for the University and for Osaka University’s faculty members, etc.

Therefore, while proactively moving forward to contribute to society through initiatives such as the industry-academia-government collaboration, Osaka University’s faculty members, etc. must be fully aware that conflicts of interest unavoidably arise, and they must handle these conflicts of interest appropriately.

The purpose of this policy is to lay out a basic approach toward the issue of conflicts of interest, thus giving Osaka University’s faculty members, etc. a clear understanding of the distinctive features of conflicts of interest, and putting in place an environment in which, on the basis of this understanding,

they are enabled to move forward impartially and positively in contributing to society through initiatives such as those involved with the industry-academia-government collaboration initiative.

2. Defining Conflict of Interest

(1) Conflict of interest in a narrow sense

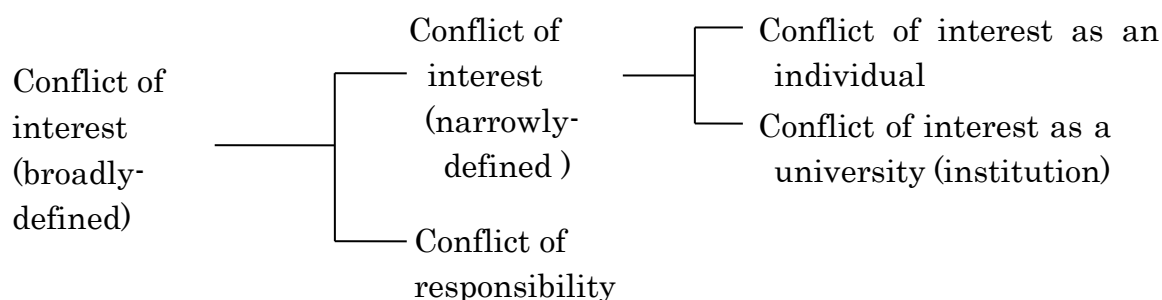
This refers to a situation in which, for Osaka University's faculty members, etc., there are conflicts and clashes between the profits that can accompany initiatives to implement the industry-academia-government collaboration, on the one hand, and their university responsibilities in education and research, on the other. There is both conflict of interest as an individual, and conflict of interest as a university institution.

(2) Conflict of responsibility

This refers to a situation in which, by engaging in side jobs for businesses, etc. at the same time as working at the University, Osaka University's faculty members, etc., are put under pressure to fulfill work duties in business, making it an incompatible task to fulfill both their work responsibilities at university and their work responsibilities in business.

(3) The occurrence of a conflict of interest issue

A conflict of interest occurs when it can be objectively thought that a member of Osaka University's faculty members, etc. is giving priority to their profits and obligations as an individual.



In this policy, management of conflict of interest applies to broadly-defined conflict of interest in which narrowly-defined conflict of interest are combined with conflict of responsibility.

3. Handling Conflict of Interest

In order to prevent acts of conflict of interest by Osaka University's faculty members, etc., and in order to manage the resolution of acts of conflict of interest in the unlikely event that they occur, Osaka University has put in place a management system for conflicts of interest in addition to drawing up this policy. Also, so as to make it possible for Osaka University's faculty members, etc. to conduct initiatives to implement the industry-academia-government collaboration with greater motivation, we have also drawn up the Guidelines on Conflict of Interest, and disclose them inside and outside the University. Please note that a separate set of guidelines on conflict of interest in clinical research has also been drawn up.

4. The Management System for Conflict of Interest

- ① A Conflict of Interest Committee (hereinafter referred to as the “Committee”) has been established, with the Executive Director in charge of Co-Creation Bureau as Chairperson, in order to deliberate and judge on major matters in relation to conflict of interest.
- ② A Conflict of Interest Advisory Board has been established as a consultative body to deal with conflict of interest as a university, to reply to inquiries from the Committee.
- ③ In order to prevent problems of conflict of interest from happening before they become full-blown, a Conflicts of Interest Consultation Office has been set up. The Conflicts of Interest Consultation Office operates under the Committee.
- ④ The Director of each Faculty etc. gives guidance, so that Osaka University’s faculty members, etc. will not cause problems of conflict of interest.
- ⑤ In the management of conflicts of interest, cooperation is sought from key figures outside the University and experts in various fields, such as legal advisers.

5. University Staff covered under Provisions on Conflict of Interest

“Faculty members, etc.” covered by this policy consist of the following persons:

- ① Trustees
- ② Full-time Osaka University’s faculty and staff
- ③ Other persons who the Committee determines to be covered

6. Information which Needs to be Self-Reported

Faculty members, etc. are required to make regular reports about a range of information needed to decide on their situation in regard to conflict of interest. Reporting is done using a questionnaire form drawn up by the Committee, which covers the following list of points:

- ① Side jobs (nature of the work involved, and income);
- ② Financial gains such as remunerations and shareholding, etc.;
- ③ Income from technology transfer of inventions which belong to the faculty members personally and associated royalties;
- ④ The individual’s situation in regard to taking on joint research and contract research;
- ⑤ Donations and provision of equipment;
- ⑥ Provision of facilities and equipment to persons/bodies with whom the individual has a relationship of interest; and
- ⑦ Purchase of goods from persons/bodies with whom the individual has a relationship of interest.

7. Information which Needs to be Gathered on Conflict of Interest as a University

Osaka University is required to gather the following information on the business operators etc. in which the University holds shares, etc. (including any Specified Business for Support of the Application of Research Findings in which the University is investing, along with cases in which a Specified Business for Support of the Application of Research Findings hold shares through an investment business limited partnership doing business as a member of an unlimited liability partnership):

- ① Financial gains from shareholding;
- ② Technology transfer of intellectual property belonging to the University, and associated royalties for such;
- ③ The University's situation in regard to undertaking joint research and contract research;
- ④ Donations and provision of equipment;
- ⑤ Provision of facilities and equipment to persons/bodies with whom the University has a relationship of interest; and
- ⑥ Purchase of goods from persons/bodies with whom the University has a relationship of interest.

8. Objections to Conflict of Interest Investigations and to Investigation Findings

- ① The Committee investigates the circumstances of conflict of interest based on information disclosed by faculty members, etc.
- ② When there are concerns that a problem may arise, the Committee holds hearings with the relevant faculty members, etc., and issues recommendations for improvements in cases where necessary.
- ③ Private information is not disclosed.
- ④ In cases where there are objections to the investigation outlined above, it is possible to request the Committee to discuss the matter again. The Committee will discuss the matter again, the President will make the final decision. The related parties must obey this decision.

9. Disclosure of Information

Both within the University and publicly, the Committee discloses the following information about the situation in regard to conflict of interest management:

- ① The Committee publicly discloses the situation in regard to the initiatives it is undertaking on conflict of interest policy etc. It also regularly discloses its management situation.
- ② The Committee informs faculty members, etc. about policies and guidelines etc., and also regularly discloses its management situation.

10. Issues Education for faculty members, etc.

- ① The Committee organizes training sessions for faculty members, etc. by experts in the field in order to raise their awareness about problems involving conflict of interest.
- ② A Conflicts of Interest Consultation Office has been set up, and a system is in place where people can voice their concerns at any time.

11. Policy Revisions

This policy may be revised, where necessary, in line with factors such as changes in the domestic and international socioeconomic situation, changes in the circumstances in which initiatives are made to implement the industry-academia-government collaboration, and the impact of new and emerging case examples of conflict of interest.