Introduction
The University of Wisconsin – River Falls (UWRF) is committed to overseeing the conduct of research in a manner that ensures the integrity of the research process and maintains the public trust and that of sponsors in the integrity and credibility of its faculty, its staff, and its research programs. This commitment requires the university to ensure that there is no reasonable expectation that research results are biased by the external commitments and financial interests of persons who are responsible for the design, conduct, reporting, or direct administration of university research. Such individuals are, for the purposes of this policy, referred to as “researchers” or “research personnel.” Research, for the purpose of this policy, includes all sponsored projects and all non-sponsored university research.

This policy identifies and addresses the real or perceived financial conflicts of interest presented by the intersection of research activities and personal financial interests, and defines the requirements of all research personnel to ensure that those activities are conducted objectively and without consideration of personal financial gain.

Policy Scope
This policy requires that each researcher disclose to a responsible representative of the institution all significant financial interests (including those of the researcher’s spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children) that could reasonably appear to be affected by his/her research.

This policy sets forth procedures to manage, reduce or eliminate conflicts of interest. In the case of federal sponsorship of a project, all financial disclosures must be updated at the time the proposal is submitted. Financial disclosures must also be updated before the expenditure of grant funds, during the period of the award, either on an annual basis, and/or as new reportable significant financial interests are obtained (i.e. an “event-based report”). A satisfactory conflict management plan must be in place prior to UWRF’s expenditure of any funds under a grant award.

Authority
The UW-River Falls Chancellor issues this policy in accordance with the Administrative Policy process. The Provost, hereafter referred to as the “compliance officer,” has authority for reviewing external commitments and financial interests reported under this policy, in order to identify real or perceived financial conflicts of interest (fCOI) related to research, and address them in accordance with this policy and federal regulations.

Guiding Principles
In addition to the core values of integrity and credibility described above, the following principles guide the university’s design and implementation of this policy:

• **Partnerships and Research**: The university recognizes the value of engagement with external organizations and activities. Such activities and relationships enable the transfer of knowledge and skills that enhance teaching, research, service, and the administration of university programs, as well as inspire solutions to benefit the world. Entrepreneurial endeavors and productive relationships with
businesses can stimulate inquiry and provide opportunities to further academic research. However, the financial interests that accompany such relationships may lead to real or perceived financial conflicts of interest (fCOI).

- **Academic Freedom and Responsibility:** The university thrives when research and scholarship activities are pursued with vigor and unencumbered by constraint and censorship. At the same time, individuals conducting these activities have a primary responsibility to the university and are expected to perform their duties faithfully, legally, and ethically. Real or perceived fCOI will be managed appropriately to allow research personnel the latitude needed to pursue both their academic and external commitments, while ensuring that research is conducted with objectivity and integrity.

- **Entrepreneurship:** The university contributes to the economic development of Wisconsin, the region, and the nation and can be a catalyst to bringing important scientific discoveries to the marketplace for the benefit of the public. Consistent with the Bayh-Dole Act of 1980, the university strongly encourages and supports the efforts of its research personnel to participate in the development and dissemination of intellectual property by entering into relationships with existing business entities or by starting their own. These relationships, however, also present situations where some degree of real or perceived fCOI is inevitable. These situations must be appropriately managed, therefore, to ensure the integrity of the research process, the unbiased and effective development of intellectual property, and the appropriate entrepreneurial participation and external engagement of its research personnel.

- **Human Subjects Research:** Protecting the rights and welfare of human research participants is of the utmost importance and a requirement of all research personnel and the university. Of particular concern are external commitments and financial interests that compromise or appear to compromise the rights and well-being of human research participants. The university has instituted a rebuttable presumption that research personnel who are involved in the design, participant selection, informed consent process, or the management of a clinical trial cannot have a financial interest in an entity whose interest could be affected by the research. In other words, the default position is that participation in clinical human participant research by conflicted research personnel is not allowed. However, there may be compelling circumstances in which conflicted research personnel would be permitted to participate in the research. In these cases, the management strategies for the involvement of conflicted researchers must be carefully adjusted to the level of anticipated risk. All financial interests and external relationships related to human-participant research that are not eliminated must be disclosed to all participants in the related research. The management plan must be implemented before research personnel can participate in the design or conduct of the research, enrollment of participants, or analysis of the results.

- **University Commitment:** The University commits to the following principles in the process of review of reports of external commitments and financial interests: (1) respecting the confidentiality of reported information to the extent permitted by law, (2) managing rigorously both real and perceived fCOI, and (3) achieving consistency across the university in the way that fCOI are identified and managed. All conflicts of interest must be managed in accordance with applicable State of Wisconsin and Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System statutes, rules, or policies, including, but not limited to Wisconsin Administrative Code chapter UWS 8.

1 https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/8
Definitions

A. **Conflict Management:** Measures taken to address the risk of bias or the appearance of bias, protect research subjects, and maintain public trust in the institution's research and its personnel.

B. **Conflict of Commitment:** The situation that arises when a university employee engages in an outside activity that interferes with their ability to fulfil their primary university employment obligations.

C. **Disclosure:** The providing of relevant information about research personnel’s financial interests related to a research project to parties inside and outside the university to assure full awareness of potential conflicts.

D. **Equity Interest:** An ownership interest in a business or enterprise.

E. **External Entity:** An entity other than the university.

F. **External Commitment:** An obligation or activity (such as a management, employment, advisory, or consulting role) that is not related to primary commitments to the university.

G. **Financial Conflict of Interest-Real, Perceived:** A *real* fCOI arises when a financial interest, or other opportunity for personal financial gain, is likely to compromise or influence the objective design, conduct, reporting, or direct administration of research. A *perceived* fCOI arises when there is a reasonable apprehension, which reasonably well-informed persons are likely to have, that an individual's opportunity for personal financial gain could compromise or influence the design, conduct, reporting, or direct administration of research.

H. **Financial Interest:** Anything of monetary value, whether or not the value is readily ascertainable.

I. **Public Health Service (PHS):** The following collection of agencies:
   - The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality
   - The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
   - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
   - The Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
   - The Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
   - The Indian Health Service (HIS)
   - The National Institutes of Health (NIH)
   - The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

J. **Research:** All sponsored projects and all non-sponsored university research.

K. **Researcher/Research Personnel:** The principal investigator, co-principal investigators, and any other person at the institution who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of research or educational activities.

L. **SBC:** Small Business Concern
M. **SBIR/STTR:** The Small Business Technology Transfer Program/The Small Business Technology Transfer Program

N. **Significant Financial Interest (SFI):** A financial interest consisting of one or more of the following interests of the researcher (and those of the researcher’s spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children) that reasonably appears to be related to the researcher’s UWRF responsibilities:

1. With regard to any **publicly traded entity**, a significant financial interest (SFI) exists if the value of any remuneration received from the entity in the twelve months preceding the disclosure and the value of any equity interest in the entity as of the date of disclosure, when aggregated, **exceeds $5,000.** For purposes of this definition, remuneration includes salary and any payment for services not otherwise identified as salary (i.e., consulting fees, honoraria, paid authorship); equity interest includes any stock, stock option, or other ownership interest, as determined through reference to public prices or other reasonable measures of fair market value.

2. With regard to any **non-publicly traded entity**, an SFI exists if the value of any remuneration received from the entity in the twelve months preceding the disclosure, when aggregated, **exceeds $5,000,** or when an individual or his or her immediate family holds **any equity interest** (i.e., stock, stock option, or other ownership interest).

3. Related to intellectual property rights and interests (e.g., patents, copyrights), upon receipt of income related to such rights and interests.

4. As required by the federal regulations and **only for research personnel on PHS funded awards or cooperative agreements** issued on or after August 24, 2012, any travel that is reimbursed or paid on the individual’s behalf, related to the individual’s UWRF responsibilities, and determined by UWRF to constitute or contribute to an SFI. This excludes any travel that is reimbursed or sponsored by UWRF University, a federal, state, or local government agency; a U.S., non-profit institution of higher education as defined at 20 U.S.C. 1001(a), an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with an institution of higher education.

The term significant financial interest (SFI) **does not include** the following types of financial interests:

- Salaries, royalties, or other remuneration paid by UWRF to an individual, including intellectual property rights assigned to the institution and agreements to share in royalties related to such rights.

- Income from investment vehicles, such as mutual funds and retirement accounts, as long as the individual does not directly control the investment decisions made in these vehicles.

- Income from seminars, lectures, or teaching engagements sponsored by public or non-profit entities; or

- Income from service on advisory committees or review panels for public or nonprofit entities.

O. **Sponsor:** An external entity that funds or supports research.
P. **Travel Disclosure:** A regulation for PHS-sponsored projects that requires the disclosure of all reimbursed or sponsored travel within 30 days of completing travel.

**Reporting**
University research personnel are required to report fully and accurately all external commitments and all research-related financial interests, in order to provide sufficient information for the identification of real and perceived fCOI. Researchers must include the external commitments and financial interests of his/her immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, or dependent children).

Reports of external commitments and financial interests must be made at regular intervals, as required by university policy and federal regulation, to allow the university to identify and manage real and perceived fCOI in a timely manner. Additional reporting events are prescribed by federal regulation, agency- and award-specific terms, and human subject protocol submission requirements. All research personnel must report (1) annually, (2) when external commitments and financial interests materially change, (3) at the time of submission of a grant proposal, (4) at the time of a grant award account set-up, (5) when required by the sponsor or by the specific terms of an award, (6) upon appointment, (7) when newly assigned to a research personnel role, and (8) when otherwise required by the university.

**What Must Be Reported:**
- For determination of a conflict of commitment: Irrespective of dollar amount, a reporter’s external commitments or financial interests with an external entity, such as employment, service or consulting; equity interest; or intellectual property or licensing.
- Significant financial interest (SFI), as defined in this policy.
- Intention to partner with a Small Business Concern (SBC) as a PI on a UWRF subaward if the researcher has an interest or relationship with the SBC.

1. **Annual Report of Outside Activities and Interests**

**Required Reporting:** All required personnel (as defined by Section UWS 8.025 Wisconsin Administrative Code) must update their reports of outside activities and interests annually by completing the Faculty, Academic Staff, and Limited Appointees Report on Outside Activities and Interests form (“annual report”). This form is distributed through department chairs each Spring. Typically the forms are due by April 30th each year.

**Handling of Annual Reports:** The Provost’s office will coordinate the solicitation and collection of the annual reports and review reports for the purpose of identifying real and perceived conflicts of interest related to research. Information relevant to conflicts of commitment and non-research-related conflict of interest is distributed to the Department Chairs, which have responsibility for identifying and managing all such conflicts.

2. **Financial Disclosure for Grant-funded Research (Event-based Report)**

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2 [https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/8/025](https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/admin_code/uws/8/025)
**Externally-Sponsored Project Proposals:** All key research personnel listed on a sponsored project proposal must disclose any external commitments or financial interests that could impact the design, conduct, or reporting of the research, including significant financial interests of immediate family (spouse, domestic partner, and dependent children), using the UWRF Financial Disclosure form ("event-based report"). By signing the Proposal Routing and Approval form, the PI confirms responsibility for ensuring that any financial interests related to the design, conduct, or reporting of the project have been disclosed by all project research personnel.

The event-based report is electronically submitted to the Provost’s Office. The compliance officer will review the report in conjunction with the most recent annual report(s) of all research personnel before signing the Proposal Routing and Approval Form.

**Externally-Sponsored Project Awards:** Research personnel are required to update financial disclosures before the expenditure of grant funds, during the period of the award, either on an annual basis, and/or as new reportable significant financial interests are obtained. A satisfactory conflict management plan must be in place prior to UWRF’s expenditure of any funds under a grant award.

**Record Keeping**
The Provost’s Office will maintain records of all disclosures made via the Annual Report of Outside Activities and Interests and the Financial Disclosure for Grant-funded Research and all actions taken to resolve conflicts of interest for at least three years beyond the termination or completion of the project to which they relate, or until the resolution of any sponsor action involving those records, whichever is longer.

**University Oversight**
The compliance officer and/or one or more designees, such designee(s) hereafter referred to as the ad hoc financial conflict of interest committee (fCOIC), will review all annual and events-based reports to determine whether a conflict of interest exists, and determine what conditions or restrictions, if any, should be imposed by the university to manage, reduce or eliminate such conflict of interest. The compliance officer and/or fCOIC may call on department chairs to supply additional information about reported external commitments and financial interests, and to assist in the development and implementation of management plans.

The university will disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with applicable Federal awarding agency policy.

**Training**
The Compliance Officer and fCOIC members will receive appropriate training and continuing education in the identification and management of fCOI, including related university policies and procedures and federal regulations.

Research personnel funded under PHS awards/cooperative agreements must complete training on their responsibilities for disclosure of external interests and other aspects of the NIH regulations under 42 CFR

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3 [https://www.uwrf.edu/GrantsAndResearch/](https://www.uwrf.edu/GrantsAndResearch/)

4 [https://www.uwrf.edu/GrantsAndResearch/](https://www.uwrf.edu/GrantsAndResearch/)
50 (Subpart F) prior to engaging in NIH-funded research and at least every four years, and immediately under the designated circumstances:

- Institutional fCOI policies change in a manner that affects the requirements for research personnel;
- UWRF finds that the key personnel are not in compliance with UWRF’s fCOI policy or management plan.

The above or a similar training requirement may be required of other research personnel as determined by the compliance officer and/or the fCOIC.

**Management of Conflicts**

Real or perceived fCOI are addressed through a management plan. The plan must be designed to remove the bias, or the reasonable perception of bias, in research that the conflict raises, while allowing that degree of personal financial and professional freedom that is consistent with research integrity, the public trust, and the protection of human participants.

Real and perceived fCOI often can be managed, in whole or in part, by disclosing the implicated external commitments and financial interests to, as applicable, the university, journal publishers, granting agencies, conference organizers, audiences at presentations, colleagues, collaborators, students, or human participants. Other possible management plan measures include, but are not limited to, the monitoring by independent reviewers of the related research and/or of the student participation; the inclusion of an unconflicted co-PI to a grant project; and modification of the research plan.

Special attention is paid when research personnel have academic oversight responsibilities for undergraduates or graduate students who are working on projects that are funded by, or conducted in collaboration with, an external entity in which the research personnel have a financial interest.

1. **Management Plan Development:** The compliance officer and/or the fCOIC will develop a management plan. Management measures may, as appropriate, include, but are not limited to, the following:

   - public disclosure of significant financial interests;
   - conflict of interest training;
   - monitoring of research by independent reviewers;
   - modification of the research plan;
   - disqualification from participation in the portion of the research that could be affected by significant financial interests;
   - divestiture of significant financial interests; or
   - severance of relationships that create conflicts.

If the management plan prescribes monitoring of the activity, it will describe specifically how the monitoring shall be performed, who shall perform it, what records are to be kept, and what reports are made to the compliance officer and/or the fCOIC.
If the reviewer(s) determines that imposing conditions or restrictions would be either ineffective or inequitable, and that the potential negative impacts that may arise from a significant financial interest are outweighed by interests of scientific progress, technology transfer, or the public health and welfare, then the reviewer(s) may allow the research to go forward without imposing such conditions or restrictions. Sponsors, including NSF, will be appropriately informed if the university organization finds that it is unable to satisfactorily manage a conflict of interest and if the organization finds that research will proceed without the imposition of conditions or restrictions when a conflict of interest exists.

2. **Management Plan Notification**: The compliance officer and/or the fCOIC communicates the management plan to the research personnel. In addition, sponsors will be notified of the existence of a managed conflict if the regulations of that agency or award so require.

3. **Institutional Review Board (IRB) Review**: The IRB has the authority to recommend, as a condition of protocol approval, adding human participant protection measures to an approved management plan, but does not have the authority to delete or modify other items approved by the compliance officer and/or the fCOIC.

4. **Appeals Process**: After receiving a notification of the compliance officer’s and/or the fCOIC’s decision, research personnel must, within a time frame required by the compliance officer and/or the fCOIC, acknowledge in writing an agreement to comply with any required management plan or submit a written request for reconsideration. The Chancellor will be the final arbitrator for appeals. The Chancellor or designee will notify the research personnel of the result of the appeal.

**Reporting and Conflict Management Compliance**

Persons subject to this policy are required to report fully and accurately their external commitments and financial interests and to comply with any plans developed to manage their real or perceived fCOI. Disciplinary measures and sanctions will be imposed when they fail to report as required or when they fail to comply with management plans.

**Confidentiality**

The university is committed to maintaining the confidentiality of reported information as far as is feasible and consistent with legal obligations. All information and written materials provided will be shared only with committee members and staff who are involved in the processing and review of the information, as well as those who create and implement management plans. Other individuals, including department chairs, dean, and IRB members and staff, receive this information on a need-to-know basis. Individuals with access to confidential information may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

**Related Resources:**


Wisconsin Administrative Code, Chapter UWS 8: [https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/code-of-ethics/](https://www.wisconsin.edu/regents/policies/code-of-ethics/)

Conflict of Interest – Financial Disclosure Policy Page 8

Links in PDFs don’t always function. Please copy and paste URL in a new browser tab to visit the web page.
UW System Administrative Policy 346: Patents and Inventions: https://www.wisconsin.edu/uw-policies/uw-system-administrative-policies/inventions-and-patents/

UWRF Faculty Handbook: https://www.uwrf.edu/FacultySenate/FacultyAndStaffHandbook.cfm

UWRF Policies and Procedures Affecting Research: https://www.uwrf.edu/GrantsAndResearch/PoliciesandProceduresAffectingResearch.cfm
### Appendix. Management Plan Development Guide

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>External Relationship with UWRF Researcher</th>
<th>UWRF Researcher has the following Significant Financial Interest (SFI)(^1) with the entity</th>
<th>Allowable Researcher Role: for Research NOT Involving Human Participants</th>
<th>Management Plan Terms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Company does not fund UWRF research.</td>
<td>-remuneration and/or -licensing activity</td>
<td>* No conflict exists</td>
<td>No Management Plan</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>* No management plan required</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Company does not fund UWRF research.</td>
<td>-equity interest and/or -management or employment role</td>
<td>* Conflict management plan required</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Limited Conflict Manager (CM) oversight:</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>review of disclosures &amp; address concerns</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Level 1 plan</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Company funds UWRF research through</td>
<td>-remuneration and/or -equity interest and/or -management or employment role</td>
<td>* Conflict management plan required</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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<td>subaward of a government agency funding</td>
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<td>* Researcher may be the only PI on the project</td>
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<td>(includes SBIR/STTR)</td>
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<td>* Conflict Manager (CM) oversight: review</td>
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<td>disclosures, address concerns, budget</td>
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<td>and expenditures review</td>
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<td>* Level 1 plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>4 Company funds UWRF research either</td>
<td>-remuneration BUT -NO equity interest -NO management or employment role</td>
<td>* Conflict management plan required</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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<tr>
<td>directly or through subaward of a</td>
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<td>* Researcher may be the only PI on the project</td>
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<td>non-governmental (i.e. private) entity</td>
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<td>* Conflict Manager (CM) oversight: review</td>
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<td>and expenditures review</td>
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<td>* Level 2 plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Company funds UWRF research either</td>
<td>-remuneration AND -an equity interest or management or employment role</td>
<td>* Conflict management plan required</td>
<td>Disclosure</td>
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<td>directly or through subaward of a</td>
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<td>* A non-conflicted co-PI must be</td>
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<td>non-governmental (i.e. private) entity</td>
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<td>* Level 3 plan</td>
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\(^1\) SFI includes total equity and income over $5,000 (for public) or income over $5,000 and/or any equity interest (for private). For full definition see UWRF Policy AP-01-204, Financial Conflict of Interest.