

# Research Conflicts of Interest Frequently Asked Questions

1. [What is a conflict of interest?](#)
2. [Is a financial interest automatically a conflict of interest? Are all conflicts of interest harmful?](#)
3. [Where can I find more information about Conflicts of Interest in research?](#)

## 1. What is a conflict of interest?

**A:** A conflict of interest is a situation where an investigator's outside financial interests (e.g., salaries; consulting income; equity interests; honoraria; gifts; loans; or travel payments) or paid or unpaid obligations (e.g., director, officer, partner, consultant or manager of an entity) bias or have the potential to bias a research project. When a financial interest constitutes a financial conflict of interest, the COIOC will work with the disclosing individual to develop a management plan before the disclosure can be approved.

## 2. Is a financial interest automatically a conflict of interest? Are all conflicts of interest harmful?

**A:** Not necessarily. First, the threshold for reporting excludes financial interests that are of such minimal value that they do not meet the definition of disclosable financial interests. Please refer to the [Disclosure Chart](#) for the different thresholds.

Second, some disclosable interests are so minimal or have sufficient mitigating factors protecting the research from bias that they do not require any further action to reduce, eliminate or manage the possible conflict of interest. In such cases, the COIOC will determine there is no harmful conflict of interest and will recommend that research support be accepted with no further action.

Finally, almost all disclosed financial interests and any potential resulting harmful conflict of interest can be reduced, eliminated or managed so that the research support can be accepted. To date, there have been very few exceptions to this. The exceptions represent very unusual and complex situations in which the disclosing individuals played multiple roles.

## 3. Where can I find more information regarding Conflicts of Interest in Research?

**A:** For a complete list of conflicts of interest in research Frequently Asked Questions, visit the [webpage](#).