



Conflicts of Interest in Research Policy

Office of the Vice President for Research

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Policy Purpose: The purpose of this document is to protect the integrity, trust, and respect of New Mexico Tech, its academic community and its research activities. The policy is intended to inform investigators of their disclosure obligations and to assure funding agencies of New Mexico Tech's compliance with applicable regulations and requirements.

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POLICY STATEMENT

New Mexico Tech (NMT) is committed to maintaining the integrity, trust, and respect of its academic community and research activities. This policy ensures compliance with laws and regulations while guiding investigators in identifying and managing conflicts of interest (COI). Investigators must disclose any potential conflicts arising from financial or personal interests that could affect their research responsibilities.

Collaborations with external entities are encouraged to contribute further to research and professional growth at NMT. However, these relationships must not compromise objectivity or harm the institution's credibility. Disclosure (as early as possible) of potential conflict is essential for maintaining transparency and protecting the investigator and the institution.

The Conflicts of Interest Committee oversees disclosures, determines whether conflicts exist, facilitates the resolution of conflicts of interest, and collaborates with investigators to implement management plans. Investigators unsure of the policy's application should seek guidance from the Office of the Vice President for Research.

GENERAL POLICY

This policy applies to all investigators, including non-NMT investigators, and covers actual and potential conflicts of interest associated with participation in NMT research, which includes:

- Research funded by or through NMT (including outside-sponsored funding)
- Research conducted at NMT, regardless of funding
- Non-sponsored research conducted off campus by NMT employees
- Non-sponsored NMT research that is:
 - Human subject research
 - Animal subject research
- Research funded by a formal award from internal NMT sources based on submission of a proposal.

Every NMT investigator and non-NMT investigator working on NMT research must disclose all conflicts of interest and appearances of conflicts of interest:

- Annually, at the beginning of the fall semester during the “disclosure window”
- When submitting a proposal for funding
- Whenever there is a material change to their most recent disclosure

Noncompliance: Failure to comply with this policy occurs when an investigator:

- Fails to complete the required annual Conflicts of Interest (COI) Disclosure during the disclosure window
- Fails to update the annual disclosure when a material change occurs
- Submits a disclosure that is inaccurate or untruthful
- Does not cooperate with the Conflicts of Interest Committee

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- Does not cooperate with a required management plan

Noncompliance with this policy may result in:

- NMT disallowing the investigator to utilize sponsored research funds
- Work stoppage on non-sponsored research
- Disciplinary action up to and including termination

Conflicts with legal requirements: If a policy or portion of a policy conflicts with a state or federal regulation, law, statute or rule, the conflict will be resolved in favor of the regulation, law, statute or rule.

DEFINITIONS

- **Conflict of interest** means a situation associated with an investigator's participation in NMT Research where it reasonably appears, on an actual or potential basis, that:
 - o investigator's significant financial interest could directly and significantly affect the design, conduct or reporting of NMT research activities; or
 - o The investigator's situation could directly and significantly compromise their professional commitments or allegiance to NMT.
- **Investigator** means the principal investigator, the co-principal investigator, and any other person (including faculty, staff, and students) who are responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of NMT research. Any individual responsible for a task that could have an effect on the research design, conduct, or reporting is considered to be an investigator, even if the individual does not have sole or primary responsibility for the task or the research.
- **Non-NMT Investigator** means any person who is responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of NMT research; and employed by an entity other than NMT, working pursuant to a sub-award with another entity, working as an independent contractor or collaborator, or otherwise not employed by NMT.
- **Significant financial interest** does not include the following:
 - o Salary, royalties or other remuneration from NMT
 - o Income from seminars, lectures or teaching engagements sponsored by public or nonprofit entities.
 - o Income from service on advisory committees or review panels for public or nonprofit entities.
- Interests in widely held investment funds if:
 - o The investigator does not exercise control over or have the ability to exercise control over the fund's financial interests; and either
 - o fund is publicly traded or available, or
 - o Its assets are widely diversified; for example, if the fund holds no more than 5% of its portfolio value in the securities of any one issuer, other than the federal government, and no more than 20% of its portfolio value in any particular economic or geographic sector
 - o Interests in blind trusts if the investigator has no knowledge of the trust assets
- **Significant financial interest** means anything of monetary or non-monetary value belonging

to the investigator, their spouse or domestic partner or their dependent children, including, but not limited to:

- o Salary, royalties, or other payments for services, such as consulting fees or honoraria, unless
- o they are expected to total less than the allowable annual threshold (see procedure document) for the investigator and their spouse or domestic partner, or dependent children.
- o Equity interests, such as stocks, stock options or other ownership interests, unless they are expected to total less than the allowable annual threshold (see procedure document) for the investigator and their spouse or domestic partner, or dependent children
- o Intellectual property rights, such as patents and copyrights, and royalties from these rights.
- o Any reimbursed or sponsored travel (paid on behalf of the Investigator and not reimbursed to the Investigator so that the exact monetary value may not be readily available) related to their institutional responsibilities. This disclosure requirement does not apply to travel that is reimbursed or sponsored by a federal, state, or local government agency located in the United States, a United States institution of higher education, an academic teaching hospital, a medical center, or a research institute that is affiliated with a United States Institution of higher education.
- **NMT Research** means a systematic investigation designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge, including basic and applied investigations and product development, that is:
 - o Funded by or through NMT (including outside sponsored funding)
 - o Conducted at NMT, regardless of funding
 - o Non-sponsored and conducted off-campus by NMT employees

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