



Policy Supporting Document:	E-3.2.6
Policy Holder:	President

RESEARCH GUIDELINES: CONFLICTS OF INTEREST IN RESEARCH

IN SUPPORT OF POLICY E-3.2 *ETHICAL CONDUCT FOR RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS*

Please Note: This document forms part of the set of research related policies at Camosun College. Its function is to serve as explanation and elaboration only. Should there be a discrepancy between this guideline and any Camosun Policy, the Policy will supersede.

A. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The researcher and the Research Ethics Board (REB) members hold trust relationships which can be compromised by real or perceived conflicts of Interest. For actions taken in the course of performing their functions related to research, neither party may cause or suggest the reality or perception that there is private gain or interests.

The researcher and the Research Ethics Board (REB) must identify and address conflicts of interest—real or perceived—to maintain the public confidence and trust, discharge professional obligations, and ensure accountability.

B. RESPONDING TO CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Researchers and REB members must disclose real or perceived conflicts of interest to the Chair of the REB. If the conflict involves the Chair, he/she will raise it with the full REB Board.

1. Conflicts of Interest Involving Researchers

The REB will assess the likelihood that the researcher's judgement may be influenced, or appear to be influenced, by private or personal interests, and will assess the seriousness of any harm that is likely to result from such influence or from the mere appearance of undue influence. Competing interests may arise from family relationships, financial partnerships or other economic interests. The decision of the REB is final.

The following can act as a guide when examining real or perceived conflicts of interest:

- a) Would the researcher be biased in any way that would affect the goals of the research?
- b) Would an outside observer question the ability of the individual to make a proper decision despite possible considerations of private or personal interests?
- c) Would the public believe that the trust relationship between the relevant parties could reasonably be maintained if they had accurate information on the potential sources of conflicts of interest?

2. Conflicts of Interest Involving REB Members

To maintain the independence and integrity of ethics review, it is of the highest importance that members of the REB avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest. For example, REB members are in a clear conflict of interest

- a) when their own research projects are under review by their REB; or
- b) when they have been in direct academic conflict, have collaborated with, or have provided support to the researcher whose proposal is under review.

In the cases where a member of the REB has a conflict with the research under review, that person should not be present when the REB is discussing or making decisions on that research. (See *E-3.2.1 Guidelines for the Research Ethics Board (REB)*, Section A4.)