

Research ethics and research integrity

Conflicts of interest

Federal offenses: research misconduct

Fabrication -- making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

Falsification -- manipulating research materials or research subjects, equipment, or processes, or changing, or omitting data or results, such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record.

Plagiarism -- appropriating and using as one's own the documented ideas, processes, results, or words of another without giving appropriate credit

Conflicts of interest

- Do I have an interest or loyalty that will interfere with or bias my employment or research?
- Hard: gang, spouse, lawyer
- Soft: employment for university/company, being a Vol/Gator fan (except Saturday → hard)

Not all COI are bad

- University start-up companies
- Consulting: allotted 2 days/month @UTIA
- Scientific advisory boards
- Expert witnessing

Sometimes management of COI instead of avoidance is best choice

Some examples of COI for university employees

- Directorship or employment outside UT
- Honorarium/salary >\$10,000
- IP/patents from outside UT
- Investments >5% ownership
- UT employees/students performing personal services

All of the above also applies to spouse/children

Disclosure

- When in doubt, disclose
- Disclosure form is a tool for compliance for employee
- Newspaper rule

Conflicts of commitment

- Commitments that might not be COI that interfere with job performance: examples
- Volunteer efforts
- ‘Other’ scholarly activities

Case study: new drug

- Dr. R is an immunologist whose NIH-funded research found that a compound that can be used to treat lupus—patented by the univ.
- Her univ also received funding from Arthrid, a local company, who is developing her compound into a drug
- Univ licensed IP to Arthrid—payments + royalty stream
- Dr. R received \$50k consulting/ year + stock + royalties
- Dr. R works 60 hr/week, including 12 hr/week at Arthrid (as typical, her univ allows 20% consulting)
- Arthrid wants to run clinical trials at univ hospital with Dr. R as PI
- Dr R. strongly encourages her postdoc to help run the clinical trials and PD will get consulting + stock (2%)

How many conflicts of interest/commitment can you find?