Declaration of Interest Policy - Staff and Affiliates

Section 1 - Background Information

(1) Australian Catholic University Limited (ACU) is a public company limited by guarantee regulated by the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Act 2012 (Cth). ACU has particular legal obligations with regards to managing conflicts of interests and related party transactions.

(2) Whilst Directors of a company have duties to comply with legislative requirements concerning the disclosure and appropriate management of transactions which involve their interest, employees of a company have an obligation under common law and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for Staff to avoid conflicts of interest between their personal interests and those of their employer.

(3) All staff members and affiliates of ACU are required to adhere to Australian laws, especially those that can impact the activities of universities, such as the National Security Legislation Amendment (Espionage and Foreign Interference) Act 2018 (Cth) and Australia's Foreign Relations (State and Territory Arrangements) Act 2020 (Cth).

Section 2 - Policy Statement

(4) The primary goal of declaring and managing conflicts of interest including risks of foreign influence or interference is to ensure that all staff and affiliates carry out their responsibilities in a manner that is and is seen to be appropriate, for reasons that are legitimate and free of bias or other interests that could compromise their judgement and decision making, with an emphasis on protecting the integrity of ACU.

(5) Declaring an interest that has the potential to become a foreign interference helps protect ACU's reputation and promotes cooperation with the Australian Federal Government.

Section 3 - Policy Purpose

(6) This Policy helps to provide a framework of principles for conducting ACU activities with other current or prospective, staff, affiliates, students, volunteers, partners and suppliers.

(7) This Policy has been developed to enable, where conflicts of interest or potential risks of foreign influence or interference arise, open and early disclosure, declaration, assessment and effective management. The purpose of this Policy is to:

a. ensure staff recognise and disclose conflicts of interest or foreign interference risk, if and when they arise;
b. provide a mechanism so that all staff and affiliates identify,and disclose potential, perceived or actual personal or material interests, including any risks of foreign influence or interference, to an appropriate person acting on behalf of ACU as soon as they arise;
c. provide a mechanism so that all potential staff (preferred candidates) and potential affiliates identify and disclose any potential, perceived or actual personal or material interests, including any risks of foreign influence

or interference, for assessment at entry point, and consent to mandatory screening checks as identified from time to time;

d. develop sound practices for ACU to appropriately manage and monitor conflicts of interests and potential foreign interference risks;

e. ensure that ACU meets its legal and regulatory obligations

(8) This Policy also supports ACU's Fraud and Corruption Control Framework. Purposely failing to declare a significant conflict of interest or significant potential foreign interference situation could amount to corrupt conduct.

Section 4 - Definitions

Term	Definition
Affiliate	A contractor, supplier, consultant and agents engaged by ACU (including a person who has a contract for the supply of services or goods to ACU) and their employees
COI	An acronym for Conflict of Interest
Disclosure Form	The form used to make a declaration involving a conflict of interest (Professional, Academic, or Research and Enterprise) or a potential foreign interference
Policy	Means Declaration of Interest Policy - Staff and Affiliates
FI	An acronym for Foreign Interference
Register	Refers to COI , Research COI and FI Register.
Relevant ACU Representative	Refers to the staff member who is responsible for overseeing the work performance and/or contractual obligations of an affiliate
Staff or Staff Member	Consistent with the Constitution of Australian Catholic University Limited, the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2026-2029, and Statute 1.1 - General Provisions: Interpretation, includes: • academic staff and professional staff members; • staff employed on a full-time, part-time, casual or honorary basis; • staff employed under the ACU Enterprise Agreement or pursuant to a senior staff, Executive or any other form of employment contract.

Section 5 - Application of Policy

(9) This Policy applies to all staff and affiliates of ACU. For Senators, please refer to the Senator Declaration of Interest Policy.

(10) For matters involving a conflict of interest in research, please contact the Research Ethics and Integrity Unit for advice.

Section 6 - Conflicts of Interest

Identifying Conflicts of Interest

(11) A conflict of interest involves a conflict between the private (personal) interests of a staff member or affiliate (or their duties to another person) and their functions, duties and responsibilities as an ACU staff member or affiliate. The existence of such a conflict may improperly influence or be perceived to improperly influence decisions or actions of an ACU staff member or affiliate, or a potential ACU staff member or affiliate.

(12) A conflict of interest can be actual, perceived, or potential and can occur when the private interests of a staff member cross over into the business interests of ACU.

For more detailed information on the categories and types of conflicts of interest, please refer to the Declaration of Interest Procedure - Staff and Affiliates.

Disclosure of Interests

(13) Staff and affiliates must take reasonable steps to avoid any conflict (actual, potential or perceived) arising out of their personal interests. If a staff member or affiliate is uncertain as to whether a matter constitutes an interest that should be disclosed in accordance with this Policy, they should disclose the interest for the avoidance of doubt to enable assessment.

(14) All prospective staff or affiliates will be required to declare any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest for assessment and consideration in accordance with the Recruitment & Selection Policy and Procedure. As part of this process, prospective staff and affiliates will also be required to declare foreign interference risks and any matters relevant to the University's commitment to prevent gender-based violence.

a. make full and ongoing declarations of any potential, perceived, actual or no conflicts of interest on an annual basis in the form prescribed in the Declaration of Interest Procedures. As part of this process, staff and affiliates must also declare foreign interference risks and any matters relevant to the University's commitment to prevent gender-based violence;
b. take responsibility to identify any conflict of interest that may exist for themselves and disclose this to their supervisor or relevant ACU representative in a timely manner;
c. participate in discussions with their supervisor or relevant ACU representative to assess and create a management plan that minimises or eliminates any risk associated with the conflict of interest where feasible, or if the conflict of interest cannot be eliminated or managed, relinquish the activity that conflicts with their employment or engagement;
d. submit a disclosure form of potential, perceived, actual or no conflicts of interest with any approved management plan for record keeping in the relevant Register;
e. submit an updated disclosure form as soon as possible after a staff member or affiliate acquires or become aware of a potential, perceived or actual conflict of interest at a time after their most recent annual declaration and before the next annual declaration is due;
f. keep their supervisor or relevant ACU representative updated on any changes to their declared conflict of interest, including when the declared conflict of interest ceases; and
g. notify their supervisor or relevant ACU representative of any potential, perceived or actual conflicts of interest held by other staff or affiliates where they suspect on reasonable grounds that a conflict of interest has not previously been disclosed.

(15) Supervisors and relevant ACU representatives are required to promote awareness of the Policy to all staff or affiliates they are required to manage.

Managing Conflicts of Interest

(16) All staff and affiliates are required to:

a. Declare any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest or conflict of duty as soon as concern arises;
b. limit the extent to which a private interest may compromise, or be seen to compromise, their impartiality when carrying out their ACU duties;

c. remove themselves from involvement in work decisions and actions that could be compromised by other private interests and relationships;
d. avoid activities of a personal nature or commitments which could, or could be seen to, provide an improper advantage from using confidential or privileged ACU information;
e. not use their official position at ACU or the ACU's resources for personal gain or for the gain of others with whom the staff member or contractor has a relationship or personal association;
f. eliminate any perception that they have received an improper benefit that may impact upon the performance of their ACU duties;

Monitoring Conflicts of Interest

(17) All staff and affiliates are required to monitor any conflict of interest previously declared by them and report any changes to their line manager or relevant ACU representative in accordance with this Policy. The responsibility for monitoring conflicts of interest for each register is defined in clause (50) of the Declaration of Interest Procedure - Staff and Affiliates (Procedure).

Section 7 - Foreign interference

Introduction

(18) Foreign interference has the potential to threaten the reputation of Australian universities and jeopardise their international collaboration. It is essential that ACU takes a proactive approach to safeguard its reputation and protect its staff, students and research from potential foreign interference exposure.

(19) All staff members and affiliates are required to identify and disclose the details of any activities they are involved in which could subject ACU's staff, students, research and data security systems to foreign interference.

Definition of Foreign Interference

(20) According to the Guidelines to Counter Foreign Interference in the Australian University Sector (the Guidelines), foreign inference is defined as follows (quoted):

a. "Foreign interference occurs when activities are carried out by, or on behalf of a foreign actor, which are coercive, clandestine, deceptive or corrupting and are contrary to Australia's sovereignty, values and national interest".

Application of Process

(21) The process for declaring, managing, or monitoring a disclosure concerning a foreign influence or interference risk follows the same approach as declaring a conflict of interest.

Section 8 - Roles and Responsibilities

Approval Authority

(22) Vice-Chancellor and President

Governing Authority

(23) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate)

Responsible Officer

(24) Chief People Officer

Staff

(25) All ACU staff are required to familiarise themselves with and adhere to this Policy and the Procedure and participate in any approved conflict of interest or foreign interference training provided by ACU.

Other Relevant Stakeholders

(26) Affiliates of ACU are required to declare any conflict of interest or potential foreign interference situation to the relevant ACU representative any time a conflict arises, changes or ceases to exist. For the purpose of this Policy, the relevant ACU representative is the ACU staff member that approved their employment / engagement with ACU.

Section 9 - Compliance with this Policy

(27) All staff and affiliates must adhere to this Policy. A failure to do so may result in an investigation into the circumstances of the matter and further action as determined by the delegated officer e.g., the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate). Please refer to the Procedure for further information on failure to disclose a conflict of interest.

Section 10 - Privacy and Confidentiality

(28) All declarations of interest from staff members and affiliates will be kept confidential in accordance with the relevant legislation and ACU policies. Please refer to the Procedure for more detail.

Section 11 - Policy Review

(29) In line with the Policy Development and Review Policy, this Policy is scheduled for review every five years or more frequently if appropriate.

(30) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Section 12 - Further Assistance

(31) For further assistance, please contact the Chief People Officer.

Section 13 - Associated Information

(32) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	17th December 2025
Review Date	17th December 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	16th December 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Patrick Woods Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Corporate)
Responsible Manager	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Enquiries Contact	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer --- People and Capability