

# **MANSFIELD COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD**

## **Statement of Policy and Procedure on Conflicts of Interest**

### **Preamble**

Principles of good governance in public life require the officers and senior staff of a public body to uphold high standards of transparency and objectivity in the way in which they make or influence decisions and policy for that organisation. Fellows of Mansfield College who have the role of charity trustees have a legal duty to act only in the best interests of their charity. They must not put themselves in any position where their duties as trustee may conflict with any personal interest they may have. They must therefore be aware of potential conflicts of interest, declare them and manage them. The same applies to senior staff to whom authority to manage the business of the College is delegated.

A conflict of interest is defined by the Charity Commission as "any situation in which a trustee's [or senior staff member's] personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent them from making a decision only in the best interests of the charity". The requirement to declare such conflicts recognises that they can arise legitimately but that they must be managed in a transparent manner.

The policy which follows is binding on a) all Fellows and b) senior staff of Grade 7 and above. In declaring interests which may be in conflict with the College, Fellows and staff must include interests of family members and close friends or associates. The Charity Commission provides the following guidance on where conflict of interests usually arise:

1. There is a potential financial or measurable benefit directly to a trustee, or indirectly through a connected person<sup>1</sup>; or
2. A trustee's duty to the charity may compete with a duty or loyalty they owe to another organisation or person.

### **Policy**

It is the policy of Mansfield College, Oxford ("the College") that all Fellows and senior staff of the College must keep to the absolute minimum all unavoidable conflicts of interest between the interests of the College on the one hand, and the personal, professional and business interests of the individual concerned on the other. This includes avoiding as far as possible perceptions of conflicts of interest, as well as potential and actual conflicts of interest.

The purposes of this policy are:

1. to protect the integrity of the College's decision-making process;
2. to enable all outside parties dealing with the College to have confidence in the College's integrity;  
and
3. to protect the integrity and reputations of the College's Fellows and staff.

From the adoption of this policy, or upon being appointed, whichever is later, all Fellows and senior staff members (being those who influence actions and policies of the College) have a personal responsibility to declare conflicts of interest and make a full written disclosure of their interests, gifts/hospitality received, relationships and holdings that could potentially result in a conflict of

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<sup>1</sup> In broad terms this means family, relatives and business partners of a trustee [or senior staff member], as well as businesses in which a trustee [or senior staff member] has an interest through ownership or influence.

interests. This should include their own interests as well as those of connected persons. A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose. These written disclosures will be kept on file by the Bursar/their PA, and all Fellows and senior staff will be required to update their disclosure annually and as soon as practicable after their circumstances change. The register will be accessible by Fellows and the auditors.

### **Data Protection**

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be processed only to ensure that Fellows and all staff act in the best interests of the College. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

### **Procedure**

In the course of meetings and all other activities (for example, appointing suppliers and professional service providers and in recruitment), all Fellows and senior staff will be required to disclose any interests they have in a transaction or decision where they, or any connected person, will or may receive a financial or measurable benefit, or where it may compete with a duty or loyalty they owe to another organisation or person.

If there is a failure to declare an interest that is known to the Principal and/or the Chair of any such meeting or the person responsible for organising such activities, the Principal/Chair or other such person will declare that interest.

After disclosure of any such interest, in the case of a meeting, the Fellow or staff member concerned will be asked to leave the room (unless expressly invited to remain, possibly in order to provide information on the matter in hand) whilst the matter is discussed, will not be counted in the quorum for that part of the meeting, and will not be permitted to vote on the issue. In the case of all other activities, the Fellow or staff member concerned will not be permitted to comment on the matter other than to disclose their conflict of interest.

All decisions taken under a known conflict of interest will be reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

1. the nature and extent of the conflict;
2. an outline of the discussion;
3. the actions taken to manage the conflict.

Where a Fellow benefits from any such decision, this will (if the College's auditors advise this to be necessary) be reported in the annual report and accounts in accordance with relevant accounting requirements.

This conflict of interest policy will be reviewed annually or more frequently should circumstances change.

### **Further guidance**

Trustees and senior staff members can obtain further guidance (e.g. definitions of terms and examples of conflicts) from the Charity Commission publication CC29 "Conflicts of interest: a guide for charity trustees" published May 2014 (new format February 2017).

**APPROVED BY THE GOVERNING BODY OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE 27<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2019**

**Declaration of Interests Form**

I ..... as a Fellow/staff member of Mansfield College, Oxford have set out below my interests in accordance with the College's conflicts of interest policy.

<b>Category</b>	<i>Please give details of the interest and whether it applies to yourself or, where appropriate, a member of your immediate family or some other close</i>
Current employment or previous contractual relationships other than with the College in which you continue to have a financial interest (e.g. directorships, partnerships, offices or advisory appointments or lobbying appointments)	
Appointments (voluntary or otherwise) e.g. trusteeships, directorships, local authority memberships, tribunals etc.	
Membership of any professional bodies, special interest groups, lobbying groups or mutual support organisations.	
Gifts or hospitality in excess of £50 accepted from any individual or organisation in respect of your position within the College in the last twelve months.	
Any contractual relationship with the College other than a contract of employment.	
Any other conflicts that are not covered by the above.	

To the best of my knowledge, the above information is complete and correct. I undertake to update as necessary the information provided, and to review the accuracy of the information on an annual basis and as soon as practicable after any changes. I give my consent for it to be used for the purposes described in the conflicts of interest policy and for no other purpose.

Signed: .....

Position: .....

Date: .....