

## Overview

The University of Queensland guidelines on thesis examination COI are consistent with Go8 policies initially developed by the University of Western Australia. While these guidelines have been used at UQ for a number of years, multiple requests have been received that specific examples of COI's and their impact be developed to provide greater clarity. As a result, a list of detailed COI guidelines has been developed within the framework of the Go8 policy and will replace our current broad guidelines (see: <http://www.uq.edu.au/grad-school/conflict-of-interest>)

Please note the following points:

- A conflict of interest may be with the institution, the advisor or the candidate
- The existence of a conflict of interest does not automatically preclude a nominee being approved by the Dean of the UQ Graduate School as a thesis examiner. When considering a nominee, the Dean looks at the nature and severity of any conflict(s) of interest.
- The aim of the COI guidelines is to protect the candidate, examiner and the university against potential negative perceptions during the thesis examination process. It is not a presumption that an individual will behave inappropriately.

In the interest of clarity the examples of conflict of interest have been divided into two groups:

- Conflicts that are considered substantial and would normally result in the non-appointment of the examiner
- Minor conflicts that should be declared and explained but should not inhibit the appointment of the examiner. However, please be aware that several conflicts of interest that are individually minor may in combination be considered substantial.

## **1. MAJOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST RESULTING IN NON-APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINER**

### **(A) Conflict with the Candidate**

#### **Working relationship**

- A1.** Examiner has co-authored a paper with the candidate within the last five years
- A2.** Examiner has worked with the candidate on matters regarding the thesis e.g. previous member of the advisory team
- A3.** Examiner has employed the candidate or been employed by the candidate within the last five years
- A4.** Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the candidate
- A5.** Examiner has acted as a referee for the candidate for employment

#### **Personal relationship**

- A6.** Examiner is a known relative of the candidate
- A7.** Examiner is a friend, associate or mentor of the candidate
- A8.** Examiner and the candidate have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household

#### **Legal relationship**

- A9.** Examiner is or was married to the candidate
- A10.** Examiner is legally family (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) to the candidate
- A11.** Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the candidate or has power of attorney for the candidate

#### **Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships**

- A12.** Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the candidate in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business or employment)
- A13.** Examiner is in a social relationship with the candidate, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent

### **(B) Conflict with the Advisor**

#### **Working Relationship**

- B1.** Examiner was a candidate of the advisor within the past five years

- B2.** Examiner has co-supervised with the advisor in the past five years
- B3.** Examiner holds a patent with the advisor granted no more than eight years ago and which is still in force
- B4.** Examiner had directly employed or was employed by the advisor in the past five years
- B5.** Examiner holds a current grant with the advisor (this is a severe case of COI but mitigating circumstances may exist)
- B6.** Examiner has co-authored a publication with the advisor in the past five years (this is a severe case of COI but mitigating circumstances may exist)

### **Personal Relationship**

- B7.** Examiner is in negotiation to directly employ or be employed by the advisor
- B8.** Examiner is a known relative of the advisor
- B9.** Examiner and the advisor have an existing or a previous emotional relationship of de facto, are co-residents or are members of a common household

### **Legal Relationship**

- B10.** Examiner is or was married to the advisor
- B11.** Examiner is legally family (for example, step-father, sister-in-law) to the advisor
- B12.** Examiner is either a legal guardian or dependent of the advisor or has power of attorney for the advisor

### **Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships**

- B13.** Examiner is currently in or has had a business relationship with the advisor in the last five years (for example, partner in a small business or employment)
- B14.** Examiner is in a social relationship with the advisor, such as co-Trustees of a Will or god-parent

### **(C) Conflict with The University of Queensland (UQ)**

#### **Working Relationship**

- C1.** Examiner is currently in negotiation with UQ for a work contract (other than examining thesis)

#### **Other Relationship**

- C2.** Examiner has received an Honorary Doctorate from UQ within the past five years
- C3.** Examiner graduated from UQ within the past five years
- C4.** Examiner has/had a formal grievance with UQ

**Professional Relationship**

**C5.** Examiner is a current member of staff or has a current Honorary, Adjunct or Emeritus position with UQ or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past 5 years (this is a severe case of COI but mitigating circumstances may exist)

**(D) Conflict with the subject matter**

**Research**

**D1.** Examiner has a direct commercial interest in the outcomes of the research

**(E) Conflict with other examiners**

**Working Relationship**

**E1.** Examiner works in the same department/school as another examiner

**Personal Relationship**

**E2.** Examiner is married to, closely related to or has a close personal relationship with another examiner

## **2. MINOR CONFLICTS OF INTEREST THAT SHOULD ADVISED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL**

These conflicts of interest are considered minor in isolation and would not normally inhibit the appointment of an examiner. However, please be aware that several conflicts of interest that are individually minor may in combination be considered substantial.

### **(A) Conflict with the Candidate**

#### **Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships**

- A14.** Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the candidate
- A15.** Examiner has had personal contact with the candidate that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner

### **(B) Conflict with the Advisor**

#### **Business, Professional and/or Social Relationships**

- B15.** Examiner has a current professional relationship, such as shared membership of a Board or Committee (including editorial and grant decision boards), with the advisor
- B16.** Examiner has had personal contact with the advisor that may give rise to the perception that the examiner may be dealing with the candidate in a less than objective manner

### **(C) Conflict with The University of Queensland (UQ)**

#### **Working Relationship**

- C6.** Examiner is currently working for UQ pro bono (for example, on a review)
- C7.** Examiner has examined for UQ 2 or more times in the past 12 months and/or 5 or more times in the past 5 years (mitigating circumstances may involve examination for candidates across different Schools/Institutes of the University. Multiple use of one examiner within a School/Institute or by one advisory team will not be approved)

**Professional Relationship**

**C8.** Examiner has a current professional relationship with UQ (for example, membership of a Board or Committee)

**C9.** Examiner has a current Visiting position with UQ or has had such a position during the candidature of the candidate or in the past 5 years.

**(E) Conflict with other examiners**

**Professional Relationship**

**E3.** Examiner has a professional relationship with another examiner