

Conflict of Interest Policy

1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The Conflict of Interest Policy outlines AIAT's expectations regarding the identification and management of actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and to assist staff in addressing conflict of interest issues. It should be read in conjunction with the Conflict of Interest Procedure.
- 1.2 This policy applies to:
 - 1.2.1 all non-academic and academic staff of AIAT whether full-time or fractional, continuing, fixed-term, or casual (known as staff in this document); and
 - 1.2.2 members of the Board of Directors, Academic Board and respective committees (known as Board Members in this document).

2. Definitions

Refer to *Glossary of Terms*.

3. Policy Statement

- 3.1 AIAT has a responsibility to ensure that its official activities and those of its staff and Board Members conform to acceptable standards of integrity and good conduct. It recognises that a well-established system for identifying, declaring and managing conflicts of interest increases its public accountability and reduces the risk of corruption, misconduct and bias in its operations and decision-making processes. AIAT also recognises that conflicts of interest are not unusual in the exercise of public responsibility and cannot always be avoided.
- 3.2 While conflicts of interest are not wrong in themselves, the potential for a conflict of interest exists in all aspects of AIAT's operations, including governance, teaching, assessment, staffing, board and committee representation, and administration. It is important that staff and Board Members act, and are seen to act, with integrity and are not inappropriately benefited by improperly using their position at AIAT when interacting with other organisations, companies and institutions.
- 3.3 AIAT's Code of Conduct places an overarching obligation on all staff and Board Members to act in the best interests of AIAT at all times. Staff and Board Members have obligations with respect to their personal and professional conduct, including an obligation to act appropriately when a conflict arises, or may be seen to arise, between their private interests and their duty to AIAT.

4. Policy Principles

- 4.1 All AIAT staff and Board Members, when performing their duties, are required to act in good faith towards AIAT and where conflicts of interest do arise, to manage those conflicts appropriately in accordance with these principles:
 - 4.1.1 to protect AIAT's interest ensuring that all decision making is impartial and objective;
 - 4.1.2 to protect the reputation of AIAT by maintaining ethical standards of good judgement, fairness and integrity in all its dealings;
 - 4.1.3 to ensure that staff and Board Members always observe the highest standard of professional ethical conduct;
 - 4.1.4 to avoid any activity or interest that might reflect unfavourably upon a staff or Board Member's own integrity and good name, or upon the integrity and good name of AIAT; and
 - 4.1.5 where a conflict of interest occurs, the interests of AIAT will be balanced against the interests of the staff or Board Member. Unless exceptional circumstances exist, the balance of interests will be resolved in AIAT's favour.

- 4.2 The following types of conflicts of interest will create an obligation to disclose and manage the interest:
 - 4.2.1 Actual conflict of interest: Where a person working for or with AIAT does not act in AIAT's best interests because they have another interest that they prioritise over AIAT's interests.
 - 4.2.2 Perceived conflict of interest: Where a person working for or with AIAT has other interests that could cause other people to think that they cannot act in AIAT's best interests - even if, in fact, they do act in AIAT's best interests.
 - 4.2.3 Potential conflict of interest: Where a person working for or with AIAT has other interests, which may influence their ability to act in AIAT's best interests in the future.

- 4.3 AIAT will:
 - 4.3.1 act promptly to identify, manage and mitigate actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest and put in place arrangements that protect the integrity of AIAT's processes and decision-making;
 - 4.3.2 define and communicate a best practice approach to the identification, disclosure and management of conflicts of interest; and
 - 4.3.3 ensure any breaches of this policy are investigated confidentially, transparently and professionally.

- 4.4 AIAT academic staff occupy a position of trust in respect of AIAT's students. AIAT discourages sexual or other intimate relationships between its staff and students in view of the unequal positions. Members of academic staff are expected to remove themselves immediately from any supervisory, teaching or assessment roles involving students with whom they have or have had a sexual or intimate personal relationship.

- 4.5 Breaches of this Policy and Procedure

- 4.5.1 Staff and Board Members have an obligation to declare and manage conflicts of interest. Failing to comply with the provision of this policy and procedure, including refusal to take any reasonable action as directed to resolve a conflict of interest may constitute a breach of the Staff Code of Conduct, which may result in disciplinary action or termination of employment.
- 4.5.2 Breaches of this policy and procedure may also result in referral to, and action being taken by, an external statutory authority and/or agency including the police.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- 5.1 Staff and Board Members are responsible for
 - 5.1.1 disclosing conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of its existence;
 - 5.1.2 engaging in discussion with the managing authority regarding the disclosure and actions to be taken;
 - 5.1.3 undertaking actions to avoid conflict of interest as agreed;
 - 5.1.4 reviewing disclosures every 12 months and making adjustments in consultation with the managing authority; and
 - 5.1.5 notifying the managing authority as soon as they become aware of a change related to the previous disclosures.
- 5.2 A managing authority is responsible for
 - 5.2.1 ensuring staff or Board Members have the opportunity to disclose conflicts of interest;
 - 5.2.2 enquire into the conflict of interest disclosed and advise what action is to be taken;
 - 5.2.3 ensuring documentation associated with conflict of interest is accurately recorded in a timely manner; and
 - 5.2.4 ensure all declared conflicts of interest are treated with sensitivity and in accordance with the Privacy Policy.
- 5.3 The Risk, Quality and Audit Committee is responsible for
 - 5.3.1 Authorising access to the Conflict of Interest Register; and
 - 5.3.2 Annually reviewing compliance reports regarding this policy and procedure.

6. Policy Details

Institution	Australian Institute of Advanced Technologies (AIAT)
Policy name	Conflict of Interest Policy
Policy Reference No.	POL – 05
Policy Approval	Board of Directors
Policy Authority	Executive Management Group
Responsible Officer	CEO
Governance Reference Threshold Standards	HESF 6.1.3.b, 6.3.2.b

Related Documents	Academic Inquiry and Academic Freedom of Speech Policy Conflict of Interest Procedure Discrimination, Bullying and Harassment Prevention Policy Health and Safety Policy Intellectual Property Policy Privacy Policy Staff Code of Conduct Staff Performance Policy
Related Legislation	Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021 (HESF)
References	AIAT has referred and benchmarked with the following institutions and policies during the creation of this policy: James Cook University (2020) Conflict of Interest Policy University of New South Wales (2021) Conflict of Interest Disclosure and Management Policy
Date of approval	31 March 2022
Review date	December 2024
Policy Category	Governance

6. Document Version Control

Document No	POL - 05	Last Modify Date	Summary of Changes
Version No	1.0	NA	Initial version approved by Board of Directors
	1.01	31/3/2022	Removed policies that don't exist
Created Date	Dec 2021		