

Basic Policy Regarding Conflict of Interest in Industry-Academic-Government Cooperation

As a “center for knowledge,” the University has a duty to apply its intellectual achievements to benefit society. To this end, the University and its officers, teaching and administrative staff, and students (hereinafter, “faculty and staff”) must act together with external organizations, institutions, and individuals (hereinafter, “organizations and individuals”). This Basic Policy provides necessary perspectives to avoid inviting the mistrust of society, which may arise when the University and its faculty and staff collaborate with external organizations and individuals to positively promote activities in which the University has applied its intellectual achievements for the benefit of society, and the interests of the University and its faculty and staff conflict with the interests of external organizations and individuals.

Waseda University has contributed and continues to contribute to society by offering education and conducting research under its founding principles: “independence of learning,” “practical utilization of knowledge,” and “To create good citizenship.” The faculty and staff continue to make efforts to serve as model citizens to support society and comply with the law. They also actively collaborate with external organizations and individuals in order to promote the application of their intellectual achievements to benefit society.

In doing so, however, the University’s social mission or the private interests of faculty and staff may conflict with the interests of partnering organizations or individuals. If a member of the faculty and staff receives dubious money or other favors from partnering organizations or individuals, for example, the reputation of the University will be damaged and the faculty and staff may lose the trust of society. Thus, such conduct must be avoided. Furthermore, if a member of the faculty and staff acts in a manner contrary to the interests of the University or public order and morals for receiving dubious money or other favors, he/she may be severely criticized from both within and without the University.

These situations are collectively referred to as “conflict of interest” and can generally be divided into the following three categories.

1. Conduct by a member of the faculty and staff to further his/her private interests which impairs the interests of the University or damages the reputation of the University (Conflict of interest in terms of the individual)
2. Conduct by a member of the faculty and staff unbecoming of the behavior expected of him/her by the University (Interference with operations in terms of the individual)
3. Conduct which impairs fulfillment of the mission or duties expected of the University by society (Conflict of interest in terms of the organization as well as interference with operations)

This Policy targets the somewhat vague “mistrust of society” because the University, by its creation of new knowledge through research, has earned the trust of society by transmitting such knowledge to society through education. What must be emphasized here is that even when something is in strict compliance with the law as well as University regulations, including the “Regulations for Service Inventions,” “Service Regulations,” and “Side Job Regulations,” attention must still be paid so that the conduct of the University and its faculty and staff is not viewed with mistrust by society. If such a situation occurs, various risks may arise. For this reason alone, the social responsibility of the University as a corporate body, as well as that of the faculty and staff constituting the same, is significant. This must be sufficiently understood when making social contributions, and above all when implementing an Industry-Academic-Government Cooperation project.

Faculty and staff should keep in mind that compliance with the law and strict observance of University rules and regulations can prevent the occurrence of conflicts of interest. Further, faculty and staff should act sensibly as model citizens, and make efforts to gain trust for the University and its faculty and staff.

This Policy is intended for the University as a corporate body (institution), its officers, faculty and staff, and researchers who have entered into a contractual relationship with the University. As a rule, graduate and undergraduate students are excluded. Application of this Policy to graduate or undergraduate students shall be limited to only those cases where special conditions have been fulfilled, and maximum value shall be assigned to the rights of such students to receive an education.

At issue here are those actions which harm the reputation of the University, or matters which conflict with the University's social mission to provide education and conduct research. As for the acts of faculty and staff, those involving the receipt of money or provision of favors and the like beyond socially accepted limits are targeted, even if such acts concern private financial interests. Accordingly, when the University and its faculty and staff collaborate with external organizations and individuals, such cooperation should be offered prudently so as not to affect the role expected of the University. If an act is likely to affect the university's role in any way for any reason, consultation should be made in advance with the relevant University office or University-designated COI advisor, etc.