

Conflict of Interest Policy

Category: Executive

Version 1

First ratified June 2025

Last ratified June 2025

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to ensure executive members recognise, disclose, and manage any Conflict of Interest they may have, and act in a manner consistent with their responsibilities to the Otago University Students' Association.

2. Interpretation

- 2.1. In this policy, unless the context otherwise requires:
 - 2.1.1. OUSA means the Otago University Students' Association.
 - 2.1.2. Motion to request resignation means a motion by the Executive requesting an Executive member's resignation.
 - 2.1.3. Executive means the OUSA Executive.
 - 2.1.4. Executive Officer means a member of the OUSA Executive;
 - 2.1.5. Ex-Officio means an ex-officio member of the OUSA Executive
 - 2.1.6. Executive meeting means a meeting of the Executive or the Standing Committee.
 - 2.1.7. Special Resolution of the Executive means a motion which passes with two-thirds majority.
 - 2.1.8. A conflict of interest is a perceived, potential, or actual conflict between the private or personal interests and the official responsibilities of someone in a position of trust.
 - 2.1.9. Supervision period means a four (4) week period of which an Executive Officer is supervised.
 - 2.1.10. Privacy Act refers to the Privacy Act 2020;
 - 2.1.11. Political Conflict of Interest means a public official's personal interests could improperly influence their decision making in the course of their official duties.
 - 2.1.12. Financial Conflict of Interest means a person has financial interests or relationships that could compromise, or appear to compromise, their judgement, decisions, or actions in their professional or official capacity.
 - 2.1.13. Personal Conflict of Interest means an individual's private interests, relationships, or obligations have the potential to interfere with their ability to act impartially or in the best interests of their role or organisation.

3. A Conflict of Interest occurs when any of the following apply:

- 3.1. A person is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity;

- 3.2. A person's responsibilities are, or could be affected by some other personal, financial or academic interest or duty;
- 3.3. An Executive Officer's activities outside their professional duties with OUSA lead, or could lead, to material benefit for the person concerned, either directly or indirectly, to the detriment, or potential detriment, of OUSA;
- 3.4. A person's activities interfere, or could interfere, with the fulfilment of their professional duties.

4. Identification and Management

- 4.1. At all times and Executive Officer must behave and be seen to behave in an impartial and transparent manner.
- 4.2. The existence of a perceived or potential Conflict of Interest does not necessarily imply wrongdoing on the part of any person. However, any interest which could give rise to a potential Conflict of Interest must be promptly disclosed and managed and documented, in accordance with this policy as though they were an actual Conflict of Interest.
- 4.3. The President of OUSA needs to be alerted to situations in which they, or the people that they manage or supervise, may have a Conflict of Interest and ensure that the situation is recognised and handled appropriately.
- 4.4. If an Executive Officer has any doubt as to whether a potential Conflict of Interest exists, they must disclose the matter to the President and the President must disclose the matter to the Executive.
- 4.5. Potential Conflict of Interest may raise complex issues. Executive Officers must judge each situation that arises in a prudent manner.
- 4.6. Disclosure of potential Conflict of Interest may involve disclosing personal information. This information must be handled with due regard to the privacy of all individuals concerned and in accordance with the Privacy Policy and in accordance with the Privacy Act.
- 4.7. If a person has a potential Conflict of Interest in a matter under consideration, they must not take part in any discussion or decision on the matter giving rise to the conflict, unless the Executive decides otherwise.
- 4.8. Where a person has a direct or indirect financial interest in a matter being considered, they must not take part in any decision about the matter, unless the Executive decides otherwise.
- 4.9. Individuals who do not comply with the OUSA requirements regarding the management of potential Conflict of Interest, as described in this policy, or other policies or procedures, may be subject to a Supervision Period.

5. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest

- 5.1. Conflicts of Interest must be dealt with quickly and transparently with Executive Members disclosing within five (5) working days.
- 5.2. Executive Officers will be asked to disclose Conflict of Interest on a regular basis.
- 5.3. Conflicts of interests may come in various forms, including but not limited to
 - 5.3.1. Financial Conflict of Interest
 - 5.3.2. Personal Conflict of Interest
 - 5.3.3. Political Conflict of Interest
- 5.4. Other Conflicts of Interest

- 5.4.1. Where an Executive Officer considers a Conflict of Interest may exist, they must disclose this in an Interests Register.
- 5.4.2. Where the President determines that a Conflict of Interest exists, or is perceived to exist, the President will acknowledge the Conflict of Interest and either:
 - 5.4.2.1. Authorise the Executive Officer to continue in their current duties;
 - 5.4.2.2. Put in place additional processes to ensure the impartiality of the Executive Officer in performing their duties
- 5.5. The record of the decision made in relation to a disclosed Conflict of Interest under this policy must be lodged in the Interests Register, which is maintained by the Association Secretary. The President is responsible for ensuring that the Conflict of Interest is recorded in the Conflicts of Interest Register.