

Association for Veterinary Informatics Conflict of Interest Policy

Board members, committee chairs, task force chairs, and members of policy-setting groups must live up to their public trust, which they do so by exercising reasonable care in their oversight of the organization. The board's legal obligations depend on the actions of its individual members to meet standards of personal conduct on behalf of their organization known as the duty of care, the duty of obedience, and the duty of loyalty. The board and agents have an obligation to understand and implement this conflict of interest policy and adopt procedures in accordance with it.

A real or apparent conflict of interest may arise when a leader has some other interest that might suggest divided loyalty on the part of the leader between obligations to AVI, on one hand, and to some other organization or cause, on the other. There is no monetary threshold for a COI. The AVI COI policies extend to relationship that a spouse, domestic partner, parent or child of an affected individual.

While financial conflicts of interest often receive the greatest attention, other kinds of conflicts pose equally serious risks to objectivity. Conflicts of commitment are usually not financial and do not generally involve gifts or other tangible benefits. A leader has a conflict of commitment if s/he has or believes one has duties or obligations to more than one entity, goal, or outcome; or has personal, social, political, or professional hopes for a particular outcome or result. The proper response to conflicts of commitment is similar to or the same as that for conflicts of interest--management of the conflict by disclosure, recusal, or elimination of the conflict. In order to proactively address any potential conflicts of interest, each leader is required to annually complete and submit a disclosure form. The leader also must update the disclosure form if any material changes or additions to the submitted information arise during the course of the year. The leader is encouraged to disclose a relationship if there is any uncertainty as to whether the relationship should be disclosed.

Leaders must indicate how disclosed conflicts will be managed. Disclosure are published in the members only section of the AVI website allowing all AVI members to review the COI disclosures of all leaders.