

Conflict of Interest Case 2

Overview of this session

In this session, learners will consider the implications of having a conflict of interest and the importance of disclosing this information. Learners will review a brief case study and respond to questions related to the presented scenario.

Learning objectives

Through this case, learners will:

- 1) learn about conflicts of interest
- 2) learn the importance of disclosing conflicts of interest

Lesson description

Instructional Event	Action		Time	Technology
	Instructor	Learner		
1. Introduce learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Give an overview of this session– State learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Listen and react to instructions– Recognize the necessity of this session	5 min	
2. Observe the case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Present the case study and review discussion questions with audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Watch the presentation and review discussion questions	1 min 11 sec	Internet capability
3. Talk about discussion questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask learners for feedback and discuss questions/topic– Facilitate discussion and provide answers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask questions related to the case study– Share ideas or experiences related to discussion questions/ topic	~11 min	
4. Explain essential concepts that learners should know	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Summarize discussion points– Reiterate core concepts of session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Listen	5 min	
5. Provide feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask for feedback and address any remaining questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Ask anything related to this session	5 min	
6. Enhancing retention and transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Provide additional materials including links to other resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Review additional materials as needed	2 min	

Overview of case study

While serving as an NSF panelist, Dr. Cloud provided a very favorable written grant review. The proposal in question involved collaborators and co-authors of Dr. Cloud. Dr. Cloud failed to disclose this information and was informed by the NSF's Office of Inspector General (OIG), that they violated NSF's conflict of interest rules for failing to disclose the COI and attempting to positively influence a funding decision.

Discussion questions

1. What are the issues with this scenario?

Dr. Cloud should have not provided a favorable grant review considering the fact there is a clear COI.

2. How should the alleged conflict of interest have been handled?

Once Dr. Cloud disclosed a COI, another reviewer should have been selected by the funding agency to review the proposal.

3. Can a reviewer provide both a positive and a negative review?

Yes, it is possible for a review to contain both negative and positive feedback. A reviewer may find parts of the application that are encouraging as well as parts that need significant work. It is a reviewer's duty to point out these aspects of a proposal to further assist the researcher.

4. Why would a reviewer fail to disclose a potential conflict of interest?

While there are many malicious reasons a reviewer may hide such information, there are potentially innocuous reasons as well. A reviewer may have a relationship with another researcher, but they may fail to objectively reason why this may cause a biased review of their work.

5. Are there reasons that are excusable?

While there may be reasons that are understandable, there are no reasons that could excuse a biased review of an application or manuscript with a COI.

Additional discussion prompts

- How should you approach a situation in which you have a clear conflict of interest?
- What should you do if you are unsure you have a conflict of interest?

Additional resources

- UK ORI's conflict of interest Q&A webpage: [Conflict of Interest \(COI\) Questions/Answers | University of Kentucky Research \(uky.edu\)](https://www.research.uky.edu/conflict-of-interest/)
- UK's Office of Sponsored Projects COI resources:
 - <https://www.research.uky.edu/office-sponsored-projects-administration/conflict-interest>
 - <https://www.research.uky.edu/office-sponsored-projects-administration/training-resources>
- ORI Resources on conflicts of Interest:
 - [Conflicts of Interest and Commitment | ORI - The Office of Research Integrity \(hhs.gov\)](https://ori.hhs.gov/conflicts-of-interest-and-commitment)
 - [Chapter 4 - Conflicts of Interest \(COI\) - Definitions \(hhs.gov\)](https://ori.hhs.gov/chapter-4-conflicts-of-interest-coi-definitions)
 - [A Brief Overview on Conflict of Interests | ORI - The Office of Research Integrity \(hhs.gov\)](https://ori.hhs.gov/a-brief-overview-on-conflict-of-interests)
 - [RCR - Lab Management | RCR Training | Conflict of Interest \(hhs.gov\)](https://ori.hhs.gov/rcr-lab-management/rcr-training/conflict-of-interest)