Register of Interests Policy

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1 Background

The University's Register of Interests has been established in response to the recommendations of the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life and should be viewed as one of the important steps taken by the University to encourage openness and to emphasise the need for the highest standards of honesty and impartiality.

In addition, financial reporting audit standards require inquire of the identity of related parties (including immediate family members) as well as transactions with those parties (separately). The accounting framework places a duty on management and those charged with governance to ensure completeness of related party disclosures.

Specifically, the International Standard on Auditing (UK) 500 places a duty on the external auditor to inquire of management:

- The identity of the entity's related parties, including changes from prior period
- The nature of the relationships between the entity and these related parties; and whether the entity entered into any transaction with these related parties during the period.

2 Principles

The general principle is that individuals should disclose in the Register a list of immediate family members and then separately, any interest, financial or otherwise, which is likely or would, if publicly known, be perceived as being likely to influence the exercise of independent judgement. The Register does not cover all interests, but specifically those relevant or potentially relevant to an individual's role as a Governor of the University or as a member of staff. Individuals are in the best position to know whether any particular interest should be disclosed. Interests of Immediate Family Members should be declared where they have entered into transactions with the University Group. If in doubt, on any issue, advice should be sought from the University Secretary or the People Services Casework Team.

3 Process

3.1 **Completion of Declaration Form**

University Governors, members of the Executive, and senior members of staff (i.e. staff who hold a senior management contract) are expected to complete and return a signed form, including a nil return where appropriate.

In addition, any other members of staff who are in an advisory position, exercising influence on large resource or policy decisions and believe there may be potential conflicts of interest are expected to complete a Declaration Form and follow the process outlined in 3.2 (ii) below.

3.2. **Processing of Forms**

(i) **Governance & Legal Services Department**

The **Governance & Legal Services Department** will request that new Members of Court complete a Register of Interests Declaration form. Once received, the information on the Declaration will be reviewed and entered into the Register of Interests. Individuals should then notify the Director of Governance & Legal Services of any changes in their circumstances.

(ii) **People Services**

People Services will request that all new members of staff being appointed to Executive and senior management positions complete a Register of Interests Declaration Form which will be sent out with the contract of employment.

The Executive Declarations will be sent to the **Governance & Legal Services Department** for review and then entered into the Register of Interests.

All other completed declarations will be reviewed by People Services. Where a completed declaration form includes a potential conflict of interest, People Services will forward this to the relevant line manager to review and comment. Where a conflict is identified, the line manager will identify controls to manage the conflict and can obtain advice from the Casework team (within People Services) where required.

People Services will retain copies of completed declaration forms in staff personal files, and will send original forms containing potential conflicts to the Governance & Legal Services Department for inclusion in the Register of Interests.

3.3 Annual check

On an annual basis the Governance & Legal Services Department will write to all Members of Court and Executive Board to confirm if the details held are up-to-date and accurate.

People Services will remind all senior managers annually about the Register of Interests Policy and ask them to submit an updated declaration form in the event that their circumstances have changed.

Failure to send or receive a reminder, however, does not relieve individuals from their obligation to inform either the Governance & Legal Services Department or People Services of any changes.

3.4 Access

The Register of Interests is compiled from the individual declarations and is maintained by the Governance & Legal Services Department. The Register will be available at any time for consultation by members of Court, members of the Executive and administrative staff involved in servicing Committees of Court.

A summary of the Register of Interests for members of the University Court and Executive is published on the University web site and can be accessed at:

http://www.gcu.ac.uk/theuniversity/universitycourt/registerofinterests/

Any Declarations, other than the above, held on the Register may be made available if requested under a Freedom of Information request.

Access to the Register is guaranteed to internal and external auditors and officers of the Scottish Funding Council.

3.5 Declaration at Meetings

The Register is consulted by the Secretary in advance of meetings of Court and its committees, where contracts or other matters with important consequences are to be considered. The Chair of the meeting will be informed by the Secretary if there is information within the Register which raises the possibility of a conflict of interest.

The Register does not obviate the duty of Governors to declare relevant interests at meetings in accordance with Section 4.2 of the Court's Standing Orders. Declarations made at meetings will be minuted.

3.6 Discipline

Whilst the Governance & Legal Services Department and People Services will endeavour to identify all individuals likely to be subject to this policy, it is ultimately for individuals to assess whether or not any of their external activities could give rise to conflicts of interest and disclose these interests to either the Governance & Legal Services Department or People Services.

As such, any failure by a member of staff to fulfil their obligations under this policy may be a disciplinary matter and in the case of others, an event justifying removal from the office or position held in the University.

4. Guidance on completion of the Register of Interests Declaration Form

Employment

This covers both paid and voluntary employment and includes any agreement to provide personal services. Name of employer, post held and the nature of the business should be stated. In the case of staff members, paid employment refers to employment other than by the University.

Appointments, Offices and Directorships

Name of the bodies in which a position of authority (whether remunerated or voluntary) is held and the nature of the office held, including:

- Trusteeships or participation in the management of charities and other voluntary bodies
- Public Appointments, including for example appointments as a governor at another educational institution
- Elected Offices
- Appointments within other organisations whose decision-making could affect the University's interests and which could give rise to duality or conflict of interest
- Paid and unpaid directorships and non-executive directorships in companies which are likely, or may be seeking, to do business with the University

Immediate Family Member

To enable the University and external auditors to be able to discharge their duties around related party transactions. The University must first capture in line with the financial and auditing standards a complete list of potential related parties. This definition captures immediate family members as defined below.

You should note, that when completing this form, there is no legal obligation to disclose this information but should indicate this on the return.

An immediate family member means:

- Your spouse or domestic partner;
- Your children (over age 16);
- Children (over age 16) of your spouse or domestic partner;
- Your dependents;
- Dependents of your spouse or domestic partner

Kinship Relationship

Details of any kinship relationship with any member(s) of staff or students of the University should be provided. Individuals should indicate the area within the University that the relation is working/ studying.

Membership of Professional Bodies

Details of membership of professional bodies should be provided.

Significant shareholdings in public/private companies

Details should be provided of:

- Companies in which the individual owns 5% or more of the issued shares or securities,
- Businesses which the individual owns or partly owns, which are not companies,
- Partnerships and consultancies in which the individual is a partner (or equivalent).

Contracts

Details should be provided of any involvement in contracts (including the duration) which are not fully discharged and which are:

- Contracts for the supply of goods, services or works to the University or on the University's behalf and
- Between the University and either the individual or any body or person which the individual requires to identify under this policy.

Formal positions or connections with other educational establishments

Details of any remunerated or honorary positions and other connections with educational establishments which may give rise to a conflict of interest should be disclosed.

Any Other Material Interest

Details should be disclosed of any other material interest which reasonably could be regarded as potentially prejudiced to the open and impartial discharge of the individual's role as a governor or member of staff.

Where a nil return is appropriate, then N/A should be entered against each section on the declaration form. The declaration should then be signed and dated by the individual making it.

Appendix 1: **Register of Interests Declaration Form**

Please refer to the Register of Interests Policy before completing this form. Should you have no declared interests under each section then please put N/A in answer to each statement.

Personal details

Title:	Forename(s):	Surname:
Position in the University:		

Immediate Family Members over age 16

Please provide details of Immediate Family Members over the age of 16.

Forename(s):	Surname:

If you do not wish to declare the above information, please note this above.

Declared Interests

Employment (details of any employment, including voluntary, and any agreement to provide personal services):
Appointments, Offices and Directorships (details of bodies in which a position of authority is held and the nature of the office held):
Kinship Relationship (indicate the area within the University where the relation is working and/ or studying).
Related party transactions involving immediate family members listed above

Membership of Professional Bodies:
Significant Shareholdings in Public / Private Companies:
Involvement in Contracts:
Formal Positions or Connections with other Educational Establishments (other than external assessorships):
Any other Material Interest:

Register of Interests Declaration

All decisions should be taken solely in terms of the University and the public interest. They should not be influenced by financial or other material benefits for the decision-makers, their families or their friends.

I confirm that I have read and understood the University's guidance on its Register of Interests and that I have completed the Declaration in accordance with that guidance and underlying principles.

I confirm that I understand and agree to this information being held on the Register of Interests and disclosed to third parties for reasons given in the Register of Interests Policy and in compliance with Data Protection legislation.

Signed _____

Date _____