

Faculty of Medicine
Policies for Graduate Students in an Industry-Supported Environment

SUMMARY

1. Disclosure

a) Conflict of Interest

Supervisors are required to inform their student in writing if the personal interests of the supervisor conflict or might reasonably be expected to conflict with his or her role in assisting the student in the pursuit of a graduate degree, in which case the student must be free to seek alternate arrangements. Copies of the letter must be forwarded to the student's supervisory committee and graduate advisor and the Dean's office.

b) Source of Funding and Conditions of Research

Students should know the source of their research funding, and if funding is subject to a contract, must be informed in writing of the general terms and conditions of the contract that relate to their work. This communication must be copied to the student's supervisory committee and graduate advisor and the Dean's office.

2. Contract Research

a) Contractual agreements involving students should have minimal restrictions on students' work.

b) Students should not be engaged on a contract-related research project until the contract is negotiated.

c) Students should not be involved in service agreements.

3. Communication of Thesis and Related Research

An objection by a corporate research sponsor to publication of a student's work should be made within 30 days of receipt of the work, and publication should be delayed no more than 90 days subsequently.

4. Composition of Supervisory Committee

A majority of a student's supervisory committee must not have a personal association with the same industry sponsor.

5. Confidential Information

Students must be advised of the implications associated with the use of confidential information or the signing of confidentiality agreements that apply to their work. Members of the student's supervisory and examination committees must have access to any confidential information used in the student's research.

Faculty of Medicine Policies for Graduate Students in an Industry-Supported Environment

Research in the Faculty of Medicine is increasingly being funded by corporate sponsors (25% of projects totaling \$31.5 million in 2002-03), and graduate students in Medicine are frequently engaged in research in environments with an industry association. Industry-supported environments involving graduate students include those where:

- The student's research is funded by an industry contract
- The student's research is funded by an industry grant
- The student's stipend or award is funded by industry
- The laboratory is industry-linked (eg, Blood Research Centre, Genome BC)
- Other research in the laboratory is industry-sponsored
- The student's supervisor has a personal or financial association with industry
- The student makes use of in-kind contributions from industry
- The student is an industry employee for a period of time during his/her program of study
- The student has a personal or financial association with industry

Although UBC policies address many of these situations (specifically Policies 85, Scholarly Integrity; 87, Research; 88, Patents and Licensing; 97, Conflict of Interest), particular circumstances relating to graduate students are not always specified. Scenarios that would be captured by this policy include the following:

- i) A student proceeds through her degree program with a supervisory committee, all of whom have a personal association with the same spin-off company.
- ii) A student has prepared a poster for presentation at a conference; the day before leaving he learns from his supervisor, to his surprise, that the company that has sponsored a part of this research is not allowing him to present his poster or talk of his work to any conference attendee.
- iii) A student agreed to embark on a research project in her first year involving the biological testing of a product. She discovered in the middle of her second year that her research is funded by a contract from the manufacturer of the product, which was supplied on condition of confidentiality. She was perturbed by the long-term consequences of this with respect to publication, but felt it too late to change research topics.
- iv) A graduate student is carrying out a research project funded through a grant from a company in which his supervisor has a financial interest. At the end of his 4th year his supervisor tells him he needs three more experiments for an adequate thesis. The student believes his peers have not been held to as rigorous as standard. He does not want to bring up the subject of his supervisor's interest in the company with his committee or the graduate advisor (who don't know) as he feels that would be seen as disrespectful or mistrusting.

The principle involved in the development of this policy is that, irrespective of the association a student may have with industry, s/he is first and foremost a student of UBC and his/her academic needs are paramount. These include the right to communicate research findings with minimal delay, and the right to guidance free from bias related to personal financial considerations.

1. Disclosure

a) Conflict of Interest

With increasing involvement of faculty with industrial sponsors of research, it is not always possible to avoid conflict of interest situations. Disclosure of the potential conflicts to the student and to those responsible for the student's research supervision, and the freedom of the student to make alternative arrangements, are necessary to guarantee a student's ability to develop their research in accordance with normal academic criteria and scholarly integrity.

Potential conflict of interest situations include:

- The student's supervisor has a personal or financial association with an industrial sponsor of the student's research. Association may consist of ownership, paid consulting arrangements, membership on the company's advisory committee or board of directors, or significant personal financial investment in the company by the supervisor or his/her immediate family.
- A student may have a personal or financial association with an industry sponsoring his/her research.

Supervisors (both tenure-track and clinical faculty) are required to inform their student in writing if the supervisor is in a potential conflict of interest situation, as outlined above.

This communication must occur at the time the student and supervisor agree on the relationship (if applicable) and if the situation changes over the course of the student's tenure. The student at this point must be free to seek alternate arrangements of either project or supervisor. The letter of communication shall be initialed by the student and copies sent to the student's supervisory committee, graduate advisor and Assistant Dean, Graduate Education. Similarly, the student is required to inform the same parties if s/he is in a potential conflict of interest situation. The supervisory committee helps to evaluate and direct students' research, and needs to be informed of potential conflicts for the same reasons that many journal reviewers of research papers now also require full disclosure.

b) Source of Funding and Conditions of Research

UBC policy 85 stipulates that students be informed in writing of the conditions under which their research will be conducted. These include issues relating to compensation, supervision, use of data, authorship, etc. Students should be fully aware of the source of funding for their project and, if involved in research funded through a contractual agreement, must be informed in writing of the general terms and conditions of the sponsored research contracts that could potentially affect the student's work, including but not limited to confidentiality, publication, intellectual property, and remuneration (see attached form). The completed form shall be signed by the student, with copies sent to the supervisory committee, graduate advisor, and Assistant Dean, Graduate Education.

2. Contract Research

a) The University and graduate student supervisors should endeavour to minimize restrictions relating to the student's research in any contractual agreements.

b) Supervisors should not engage students on a specific research project for which a contract is to be arranged until the agreement has been negotiated, as the students may be put in a

position of having to accept restrictive conditions or forfeit the time spent undertaking the initial research.

c) Supervisors are strongly discouraged from involving graduate students in service agreements due to the nature and conditions of the work implicated in these contracts.

3. Communication of Thesis and Related Research

UBC policy 87 states that i) “Results of all research undertaken in the University shall be fully publishable at the discretion of the principal investigator”, subject to delays of up to a maximum of 12 months for approval by a sponsor under the terms of a contractual agreement; and ii) “No restriction shall prohibit or delay in any way the use of research results by graduate students for theses or other academic purposes.” The Faculty of Graduate Studies allows restriction of public access to a thesis for a limited period (typically 6 months) to allow a patent application to be filed.

Corporate sponsors of a student’s research may request review of draft publications (public oral, poster, or written form) prior to submission for either i) use of the sponsor’s confidential information, or ii) potential patentable subject matter. An objection to publication on the basis of the above should be made within 30 days of receipt of the material. If an objection is made on the basis of the potential for patent protection, publication should be delayed no more than 90 days subsequently. A maximum of 12 months is allowed by UBC policy. Members of the supervisory committee and readers of a student’s thesis up to the time of the final examination are expected to consider all material confidential. The final examination, however, is considered a public disclosure.

4. Composition of Supervisory Committee

In order to avoid a potential conflict of interest situation within the student’s supervisory committee (the supervisor and two or more other faculty), the majority of the supervisory committee must not have a personal association with the same industry sponsor.

5. Confidential Information

If students engage in research involving the use of confidential information they must be advised beforehand by their supervisor as to the potential constraints this places on publication and in the development of their research (use attached form, *Corporate Sponsorship of Graduate Student Research*). Members of students’ supervisory and departmental examining committees must have access to the confidential information; those without UBC appointments may have to sign confidentiality agreements.

UBC students and faculty asked to sign confidentiality, or non-disclosure, agreements may not be authorized to do so, and should contact the University-Industry Liaison Office for advice.

Graduate Student Research Conditions

UBC policy 85 stipulates that the conditions for all involved in a research project be outlined at the start of the relationship. The following document was created to be read and discussed by a graduate student and his/her supervisor at the onset of the student's program, to be added to if necessary, and to be signed by both parties. This may be re-visited and modified over time as necessary, and a copy should be kept in the departmental student file.

Graduate student/supervisor relationship:

The items below in bold are considered unalterable (many of these are derived from the UBC Handbook of Graduate Supervision); those in normal print are subject to modification or may be deleted.

You, the student, can expect me, the supervisor to:

- Be committed to your research and educational program, and offer stimulation, respect and consistent encouragement.**
- Not assign tasks or research unrelated to your thesis topic.**
- Be accessible for consultation and discussion of your academic progress and research.** [On average, our meetings will be held _____.]
- Establish a supervisory committee which will meet at least once a year to review your progress and provide guidance for future work.**
- Respond thoroughly and in a timely fashion to submitted written work.**
- Make every effort to ensure that sufficient resources needed for your thesis project are available.**
- Ensure that your research environment is safe and free from harassment and conflict.**
- Help you to be aware of your program requirements, deadlines, etc.**
- Encourage you to present your research results within and outside the University.** [Approximately how often? _____]
- Assist you in planning your research program, setting a time frame, and adhering as much as possible to the schedule. Encourage you to finish up when it would not be in your best interest to stay longer.**
- Acknowledge your contributions, when appropriate, in published material and oral presentations.** [Discuss policy regarding authorship, etc. of papers]
- Ensure that you receive the minimum stipend (currently \$xxx per year).
- Other: _____

I, the supervisor, can expect of you, the student to:

- ❑ **Be committed and show dedicated effort in gaining the necessary background knowledge and in carrying out your research project.**
- ❑ **Develop, in conjunction with myself, a plan and a timetable for completion of each stage of the thesis project, and to work assiduously to adhere to a schedule and to meet appropriate deadlines.**
- ❑ **Meet with me when requested and to report fully and regularly on progress and on results.**
- ❑ **Give serious consideration to and respond to advice and criticisms received from myself and other members of the supervisory committee.**
- ❑ **Contribute to the maintenance of a workplace that is tidy and safe, and where each individual shows tolerance and respect for the rights of others.**
- ❑ **Be thoughtful and reasonably frugal in using resources.**
- ❑ **Conform to the University and departmental requirements for your program. This includes ensuring that you meet at least yearly with your supervisory committee.**
- ❑ **Meet agreed standards and deadlines of the funding organization to the extent possible when financing has been provided under a contract or grant.**
- ❑ **Take the required safety training programs (if applicable).**
- ❑ **Record data in your notebook in a manner consistent with standard practices (see *Intellectual Property Guide*, UBC Faculty of Graduate Studies) and comprehensible to others. The records are the property of UBC, and when you leave, must remain with the lab. You may, however, take copies with you.**
- ❑ **Apply to the University or to granting agencies for financial awards, if you have not already done so.**
- ❑ **Work at least regular workday hours on your research project after course-work has been completed, with at least 2 weeks vacation annually.**

Discuss policy on:

- ❑ Use of computers and equipment for personal reasons
- ❑ Lab etiquette and attire
- ❑ Career plans

❑ Other: _____

Intellectual Property:

If a patentable or commercializable development arises from your work, intellectual property rights will belong to UBC under the terms of the Patent and Licensing Policy (www.policy.ubc.ca/policy88.htm). If there is a patent or other commercial application that emerges from your work, income is shared equally between the University and the inventors.

When you leave UBC, you must consider the legal implications of any intellectual property developed during your stay at UBC from the points of view of the University and of any industrial partners. Full disclosure of any plans and potential conflicts of interest should be made to me at the earliest opportunity. We will involve the University-Industry Liaison Office in our discussions if needed.

Ethical Conduct of Research:

We all share responsibility for the ethical conduct of research. You should familiarize yourself with UBC policies dealing with research (87), conflicts of interest (97) and scholarly integrity (85). Full texts may be found at www.policy.ubc.ca

Corporate Sponsorship of Research:

If some or all of your research is funded by a corporate sponsor, a separate document (“Corporate Sponsorship of Graduate Student Research”) will accompany this.

I have read the contents of this document and understand them.

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

Student Name

Supervisor Name

Date _____

Corporate Sponsorship of Graduate Student Research

The following document outlines the conditions under which some of your (the graduate student) research will take place. Copies of the signed document will be sent to the program Graduate Advisor, supervisory committee members, and Assistant Dean, Graduate Education. If you have any questions about this document, please contact the University-Industry Liaison Office.

Confidential Information:

You will be using material or information that has been provided to me on condition of confidentiality.

This material/information is

You may not, therefore, disclose any part of this information to any individual, with the exception of your co-workers and members of your supervisory committee. The corporate sponsor may deny the publication of the details of the confidential information.

Contract Research:

The research you will be undertaking is funded through a contract with _____, which carries the following conditions:

- a) Publication of your research findings, either orally or in written form, must be approved by the sponsor and may be delayed for a fixed period for patenting purposes or for review for the inclusion of confidential information.
- b) Ownership of intellectual property arising from the research may be shared with the sponsor, and commercialization rights may be granted to the sponsor.

Potential Conflicts of Interest:

- I have no personal financial interest in the company sponsoring your research.
 - I have a financial interest in the company sponsoring your research, specifically:
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I have ascertained that a majority of your supervisory committee does not have a personal financial interest in the same company.

Student Signature

Supervisor Signature

Student Name

Supervisor Name

Program/Department Name

Date _____