



Research&Innovation

COI Guidance on Consulting and Other External Engagements

The University unequivocally supports the efforts of its faculty and research staff to foster productive relationships with the world outside Cornell, including acting as consultants and in other external engagements. In undertaking such activities, faculty and research staff must be attentive to their obligations to Cornell and take appropriate steps to ensure that such activities do not take precedence over their primary commitment to the University.

The Financial Conflicts of Interest Committee has developed guidance for the **Ithaca Campus (including Cornell Tech)**. Since no guidance can address every instance of outside professional activities, the faculty or research staff member must engage in those professional outside activities that promote and support Cornell's commitment to pedagogy, research, and service. Whenever uncertainty exists, guidance and prior consent from the appropriate University office must be obtained.

For guidance specific to the Weill campus, please contact the [WCMC Office of Research Integrity and Assurance](#).

Contractual Agreements

Cornell's Contract Addendum, unaltered, must be included in all consulting and other external contracts.

- Individual faculty members and research staff are responsible for reviewing the business terms associated with consulting or other external engagements.
- If faculty members and research staff intend to use information - including data or material- gathered while consulting or other external engagements for Cornell research, the Cornell [Office of Sponsored Programs \(OSP\)](#) must review the terms or conditions for accepting such information for use in Cornell research, even if the data are provided free of charge. The terms of any such agreement must not conflict with Cornell University policy.

Separation of external engagements and Cornell activities

In any consulting or other external engagement, **faculty and research staff may not:**

- Enter into any external agreements imposing obligations or liability upon Cornell.
- Involve those Cornell staff or students for whom they have direct supervisory or academic responsibilities, as it may create a conflict of interest between the academic or supervisory responsibilities and their personal interests.
- Use Cornell letterhead, name, or other identification to imply University support for a personal viewpoint.
- Use University resources (including lab space) to conduct or support consulting or other external engagements, with the only exceptions being the use of library resources; the use of Cornell facilities and services that are openly available to outside commercial entities (at the standard external commercial user rate); or the use of an assigned office, office computer, or software routinely provided to all faculty and research staff.
- Seek to provide access to University resources to individuals from entities with which they have a consulting or other external engagement, by sponsoring Visiting or Courtesy appointments unless in support of Cornell's mission as an academic research institution.

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For questions, contact the Office of Conflict of Interest at coi@cornell.edu.



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Required Permissions

University policy states that Cornell faculty may consult for up to the equivalent of 1 day per week during the period for which they are paid for service. This time allowance does not accumulate from year to year. Any consulting or other external engagements involving a greater commitment or necessitating an absence from campus longer than 7 consecutive days require approval by the Dean of the faculty member's school or college.

- As noted in the [Faculty Handbook](#), **faculty must inform their department Chair of any plans to engage in consulting or other external engagements**, in accordance with the policies and procedures of their unit or department.
- **Faculty members in the contract colleges should consult with their department Chair before engaging in consulting or other external engagements** since engaging in consulting or other external engagements with the New York State corporations or organizations may be part of faculty members' Cornell duties in the contract colleges.
- **Non-professorial and research staff should consult with their supervisor and the Research Division's human resources office prior to engaging in consulting or other external engagements.** Individual schools, colleges, or divisions may promulgate additional limitations and rules.

Disclosure, Research Integrity and Academic Freedom

- **Faculty and research staff should clarify that opinions they express in work prepared in the course of any consulting or other external engagements are their own and are not official positions of the University.** Whenever a faculty or research staff member is listed as an author on a publication or engages in speaking activities related to consulting or other external engagements, this or a similar disclosure is recommended:
"Dr./Professor [NAME]'s contribution to this publication/speaking event was as a paid consultant/ representative of an external entity, and is not related to his/her Cornell University duties or responsibilities."
- Transparency is particularly needed when a faculty or research staff member's University research supports or could reasonably be concluded by a neutral observer to support, a position or agenda beneficial to or favored by an entity with which that faculty or research staff member consults or has another external engagement. **Publications and presentations reporting such research should always disclose the arrangement using this or a similar disclosure:**

"Dr./Professor NAME is a paid consultant/representative of ENTITY, which has activities or interests to which this research is directly related or might be reasonably inferred as directly related."

- Cornell's commitment to academic freedom includes freedom from direction and restraint in scholarship, University research, and creative expression, and in the discussion and publication of the results thereof. Research projects that do not permit free and open publication, presentation, or discussion of results are not acceptable. The principal and co-principal investigators of all Cornell research must have (and may not relinquish) the final authority on what is to be published or presented.

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Intellectual property concerns

Faculty and research staff **must not** sign consulting, employment, facility access, non-disclosure, or confidentiality agreements containing terms that conflict with the faculty or research staff member's obligation to confer rights to Cornell for certain inventions, specifically all those that result from activity conducted during an appointment with the University and all those produced using University resources.

Related Policies and Resources

- [University Policy 1.5 Inventions and Related Property Rights](#)
- [University Policy 1.7 Financial Conflict of Interest Related to Research](#)
- [University Policy 4.10 Use of Cornell's Name, Logos, Trademarks, and Insignias](#)
- [University Policy 4.14 Conflicts of Interest and Commitment \(Excluding Financial Conflict of Interest Related to Research\)](#)
- [The Faculty Handbook](#)