

Management of conflicts of interest and academic freedom within the C3P program of the Fonds de recherche du Québec

Researcher commitment form

The principal investigator (CP1), as well as the principal investigator at the beginning of their career (CP-DC) must be aware of the details regarding the standards in matters of conflicts of interest and academic freedom, before individually signing the commitment.

C3P chair's name: _____
Principal investigator: _____
Application number: _____
Managing institution: _____
List of industrial partners: _____

1. Details regarding conflicts of interest's standards

The Fonds de recherche du Québec's ("FRQ") *Policy for the Responsible Conduct of Research* provides among the highest standards of research that of "**avoiding conflicts of interest, or if they cannot be avoided, address them in an ethical manner**". Any unavoidable situation of real, potential or perceived conflict of interest should be identified, disclosed, carefully examined and properly managed. Under this Policy, constitutes a breach of research integrity "the failure to appropriately manage any real, potential or apparent conflict of interest **in accordance with the institution's policy on conflict of interest in research**".

A conflict of interest arises when a tension exists between the duties or responsibilities of a person or an institution regarding research activities and, on the other hand, their personal, professional, institutional interests or others. Conflicts of interest may be real, potential or apparent.

Considering that the C3P program relies on the involvement of the industrial partner (s), it is essential to pay attention to conflicts of interest that may exist between:

- the research team and the industrial partner(s), and ;
- the managing institution and the industrial partner(s).

Particularities of non-arm's length relationship

Any industrial partner not dealing at arm's length with a principal investigator will be considered to be in a conflict of interest which makes them automatically ineligible to act as an industrial partner in the program.

By way of example and in a non-exhaustive manner, there is a non-arm's length relationship if the principal investigator is:

- owner or co-owner of the industrial partner (s);
- employed or under a consulting contract with the industrial partner (s) (with or without remuneration);
- member of the Board of Directors of the industrial partner (s);
- family member of a person who controls or owns the industrial partner (s) or of a member of the Board of Directors of the industrial partner (s) (these family ties may result from blood, marriage, a de facto union or adoption), or;
- in a situation where there is a tension between their duties with regard to research and its interests (personal, professional, institutional or financial) regarding the industrial partner (s), and when it is impossible to manage adequately this conflict of interest.

2. Details regarding academic freedom's standards

The *Common General Rules* adopted by the FRQ require the protection of academic freedom in the conduct of all the research they support. This means that research must be free from undue influence aimed at guiding its conduct or publication of results. Scientific research must be conducted in a spirit of intellectual freedom in order to protect the independent judgment of scientists.

In accordance with the *Common General Rules*, the FRQ does not fund research whose results must remain secret or which are subject to a confidentiality agreement that would preclude the dissemination of the results (subject to a reasonable delay to secure intellectual property rights, such as a patent).

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Considering that the C3P program is based on the involvement of at least one industrial partner, it is essential to pay attention to any infringement of academic freedom that could emerge in particular:

- from the apprehension of negative impacts for the industrial partner (s) resulting from results contrary to the research hypotheses;
- from the restrictions on the publication of results to protect the intellectual property of the industrial partner (s) (eg: trade secrets);
- from the desire of the industrial partner (s) not to give an advantage to competing companies, and;
- from the difficulty for the industrial partner (s) to subscribe to the neutrality of scientific research while protecting its own interests.

3. Commitment and signature

Commitment and signature of the researcher (CP1; CP-DC):

As part of this research, I commit to:

- avoid conflicts of interest, or where they are unavoidable, to appropriately manage them under the conflict of interest policy of the managing institution;
- ensure that I deal at arm's length with the industrial partner to avoid rendering them automatically ineligible to act as an industrial partner, and;
- protect academic freedom at all stages, including when the results are published.

Identification of the researcher:

Role of the researcher within the C3P:

CP1

CP-DC

Date :

Signature :