UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Research Policy Analysis & Coordination

Guidance Memo

26-02

August 13, 2026

To: Vice Chancellors for Research
Conflict of Interest Coordinators
Contracts and Grants Directors

Subject: Interim Implementation Guidance for the U.S. Department of Energy Financial Assistance Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Requirements

Executive Summary

On July 16, 2026, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) issued a new Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy (DOE COI/COC Policy) applicable to recipients of DOE financial assistance awards. The policy establishes comprehensive requirements governing the disclosure, review, management, reporting, and oversight of conflicts of interest (COI), conflicts of commitment (COC), and organizational conflicts of interest (OCOI) involving individuals participating in DOE-supported activities. The Policy goes into effect on August 17, 2026. It replaces the DOE Interim Conflict of Interest Policy Requirements for Financial Assistance (Interim DOE COI Policy) issued on December 20, 2021. It is applicable to proposals submitted to, and financial assistance awards received from, DOE on or after August 17, 2026. Existing awards will continue to follow the COI requirements specified in the award terms and conditions, i.e., the Interim DOE COI Policy) until such time as DOE modifies the award terms and conditions to include the new DOE COI/COC Policy.

This memorandum establishes interim UC implementation guidance. **All UC Locations administering DOE financial assistance awards must comply with the requirements of the DOE COI/COC Policy and establish procedures necessary to identify covered individuals, obtain and review required disclosures, manage conflicts, satisfy DOE reporting obligations, and comply with all other applicable DOE requirements**.

This interim guidance is effective August 17, 2026, and will remain in effect until withdrawn by RPAC or superseded by revised UC policy or guidance.

Background

On July 16, 2026, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) published its Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy (DOE COI/COC Policy) applicable to recipients of DOE financial assistance awards. The DOE COI/COC Policy also applies to financial assistance from the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA). It does not apply to financial assistance from the DOE Office of Indian Energy. The DOE COI/COC Policy substantially expands recipient responsibilities beyond the Interim DOE COI Policy issued on December 20, 2021.

The DOE COI/COC Policy is applicable to proposals submitted to, and financial assistance awards received from, DOE on or after August 17, 2026. Existing awards will continue to follow the COI requirements specified in the award terms and conditions, i.e., the Interim DOE COI Policy, until such time as DOE modifies the award terms and conditions to include the new DOE COI/COC Policy. Similarly, applications submitted to Notices of Funding Opportunities that refer to the Interim DOE COI Policy will still follow the Interim DOE COI Policy.

UC is evaluating revisions to existing UC Policy, including the UC PHS & DOE COI Policy, and related campus policies and procedures necessary to implement these requirements. This memorandum establishes interim implementation guidance until the UC policy revision process is complete.

UC Implementation

Effective August 17, 2026, every UC Location receiving DOE financial assistance awards, including Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) awards, must comply with the requirements of the DOE COI/COC Policy.

UC Locations must administer DOE-funded projects in accordance with:

1. the DOE COI/COC Policy;
2. applicable DOE award terms and conditions;
3. existing UC conflict of interest policies, to the extent they are consistent with the DOE COI/COC; and
4. this interim guidance.

Where an existing UC policy conflicts with or is less comprehensive than the DOE COI/COC Policy, the DOE requirements take precedence for DOE-funded activities.

Each UC Location must establish procedures complying with the DOE COI/COC Policy, including:

- identifying Covered Individuals;
- collecting required Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment disclosures from Covered Individuals;
- reviewing disclosed interests and commitments;
- determining whether disclosed interests constitute Conflicts of Interest or Conflicts of Commitment under the DOE COI/COC Policy;
- developing and implementing management plans where required;
- satisfying DOE reporting obligations;
- maintaining required records; and
- complying with applicable training requirements.

Covered Individuals

For proposals submitted to and awards received from DOE on or after August 17, 2026, UC Locations must identify individuals defined as Covered Individuals in the DOE COI/COC Policy. DOE defines a Covered Individual as an individual, regardless of title or position, who contributes in a substantive, meaningful way to the development or execution of the scope of work of the project and is designated as a covered individual by DOE.

DOE designates the following as Covered Individuals:

- Any PI, project director, co-PI, co-project director, project manager, or anyone functionally performing those roles.
- Any additional persons designated by DOE in the Notice of Funding Opportunity or award terms and conditions.
- Any person for whom a current and pending support disclosure and/or biosketch/resume is submitted.

Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Disclosure, Reviews, Determinations, and Management Plans

UC Locations may use or update existing mechanisms such as Conflict of Interest disclosure systems, Conflict of Commitment systems, or other institutional processes to comply with the DOE COI/COC Policy. The processes to update include, but are not limited to, those needed to collect the disclosures conduct reviews, make determinations regarding the existence of COIs and COCs, and implement management plans, as necessary, to manage, reduce, or eliminate COIs and COCs.

UC Locations must evaluate potential Conflicts of Commitment of Covered Individuals using the standards established in the DOE COI/COC Policy. This is separate and distinct from reporting and approval of conflicts of commitment under UC conflict of commitment policies, such as APM-025 and APM-671, which remain in effect. However, compliance with those policies alone may not satisfy DOE requirements where the DOE COI/COC Policy imposes broader disclosure or review obligations.

Disclosures are required to be signed and dated by the covered individual and include the certification statement provided in Appendix A to Part 910, Subpart C, which is as follows:

> "I understand that this Disclosure is required to obtain funding from the U.S. Government. I, [Full Name and Title], certify to the best of my knowledge and belief that the information contained in this Disclosure Statement is true, complete, and accurate. I understand that any false, fictitious, or fraudulent information, misrepresentations, half-truths, or omissions of any material fact, may subject me to criminal, civil or administrative penalties for fraud, false statements, false claims, or otherwise. (18 U.S.C. 287, 1001, and 1031, and 31 U.S.C. 3729-3733 and 3801-3812). I further understand and agree that:
>
> (1) The statements and representations made herein are material to the U.S. Government's funding decision, and

> (2) I have a responsibility to update the disclosures during the period of performance of the Federal financial assistance award should circumstances change which impact the responses provided above."

If a UC Location finds that a COI or COC exists, the UC Location must take steps to eliminate, or where appropriate, manage or reduce the conflict. Management measures may include, but are not limited to, as appropriate:

- public disclosure, e.g., when presenting or publishing;
- disclosure to participants for projects involving human subjects
- independent oversight or monitoring
- modification of the project plan
- change of personnel or personnel responsibilities
- disqualification of personnel from part of the project
- reduction or elimination of the financial interest (e.g., sale of equity) or commitment
- severance of the relationship that is creating the conflict

UC Locations must disclose to DOE in writing any actual, apparent, or potential COI or COC, including any actual, apparent, or potential COI or COC reported to the recipient by a subrecipient, if such conflict cannot be eliminated or appropriately managed or reduced.

In addition, UC Locations must disclose to DOE in writing any actual, apparent, or potential COI or COC, including any actual, apparent, or potential COI or COC reported to the recipient by a subrecipient, involving any foreign governments, their instrumentalities, or any other entities owned, funded, or otherwise controlled by a foreign government, as well as any measures the entity has taken to eliminate or, where appropriate, manage or reduce the COI or COC.

Organizational Conflicts of Interest (OCOI)

For the purposes of the DOE COI/COC Policy, an OCOI occurs when the relationship with a parent, affiliate, or subsidiary organization, prevents the recipient or subrecipient from being impartial in conducting a procurement action involving a related organization. In the event that a UC Location finds that it has any potential or actual OCOI, then it must disclose the OCOI to DOE in writing within 15 business days. If locations have questions regarding OCOI and a procurement action, the location should seek advice from campus counsel or UC Legal.

Training and Communication

Each location must take reasonable steps to inform affected personnel of the DOE COI/COC Policy and the UC implementation guidance provided by this memorandum. Where training is required by the DOE COI/COC Policy, UC Locations must ensure that such training is made available and tracked as appropriate.

Subrecipient and Collaborator Oversight

Where DOE-funded projects involve subrecipients, collaborators, or other outside entities, UC Locations must establish procedures to ensure that the applicable DOE COI/COC Policy requirements are communicated and addressed in subaward terms, collaboration agreements, or other applicable documents. This may include updating subrecipient commitment forms and other subaward templates.

Reporting

UC Locations must establish procedures to ensure timely reporting to DOE of required COI, COC, or OCOI determinations, management actions, or other information required under the DOE COI/COC Policy, coordinating with the appropriate sponsored projects, conflict of interest offices, and other administrative offices to fulfil these obligations in a timely way.

Existing UC Policies

Nothing in this memorandum supersedes existing UC policies except to the extent necessary to comply with the DOE COI/COC Policy. Existing UC policies remain applicable unless inconsistent with DOE requirements.

Future UC Policy

RPAC, in consultation with UC Location representatives and other UC stakeholders, is evaluating revisions to UC policies, including the UC DOE Conflict of Interest Policy and related guidance documents, to fully implement the DOE COI/COC Policy.

Additional implementation guidance and UC policy revisions will be issued as they become available.

Effective Date

This interim guidance is effective August 17, 2026, and will remain in effect until withdrawn by RPAC or superseded by revised UC policy or guidance.

Additional Information

Financial Assistance Regulations-Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment Policy Requirements, 91 Fed. Reg. 43511 (Jul. 16, 2026).

Contact

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