

IDEA² Global
Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Agreement

Confidentiality

Through the IDEA² Global process, there may be disclosure of confidential information about the participants and their work. The purpose of these guidelines is to enable the greatest amount of cross-fertilization of ideas while protecting intellectual property, minimizing the risk of premature disclosure, and ensuring that advice given to participants is and can be perceived as fair and objective.

Intellectual property (copyrights, inventions, trade marks, etc.) may be developed during the course of the program. Review Panelists, Faculty and Expert mentors of the IDEA² Global program do not receive any ownership interest in any intellectual property by participating.

Meetings and activities of IDEA² Global are by invitation only, are not public, and are conducted with the understanding that Review Panelists, Faculty and Expert Mentors are specially invited by the IDEA² Global program for the review of new ideas and projects, and for mentoring of program participants on a privileged basis. By agreeing to take part, Review Panelists, Faculty and Expert Mentors in these activities agree to:

- * Maintain privileged information in confidence;
- * Not use the information for personal gain;
- * Notify IDEA² Global program staff of any potential conflict of interest; and
- * Recuse themselves from participating in any activity where there might be or appear to be a conflict of interest.

Managing Conflict of Interest

According to Wikipedia:

"A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone in a position of trust...has competing professional and/or personal interests. Such competing interests can make it difficult to fulfill his or her duties fairly. Even if there is no evidence of improper actions, a conflict of interest can create an appearance of impropriety that can undermine confidence in the ability of that person to act properly."

The IDEA² Global program depends on ensuring and sustaining a culture of trust. Accordingly, participants must avoid positions of conflict of interest wherever possible and notify IDEA² Global program staff any time there is a potential conflict.

Conflict of interest becomes a problem in situations where one tries to (or appears to) influence a decision for personal gain or use information for personal gain at the expense of the pre or postdoc or their research supervisor. Examples of such situations encountered in IDEA²-type programs include, but are not limited to, receiving privileged information or giving advice on a project when the participant has a financial stake in a potential competitor, or an expert mentor giving advice on a project when he/she has a potential financial stake in a spin-out from the research.

Any time a potential conflict of interest arises, the Review Panelist, Faculty or Expert Mentor must step away from his/her role causing the conflict, IDEA² Global program staff must be notified right away, and together we will determine the next steps.

Interactions between participants beyond that expected by IDEA² Global

These guidelines are in place only during IDEA² Global and are not intended to limit or prevent interactions that might occur afterwards. In some instances, participants may wish to expand the relationship beyond that of the program. (Examples we have encountered have included a new collaboration between the participant and a research team and requests for the participant to serve formally as an advisor to a start-up resulting from a project.) The MIT IDEA² Global program leadership is happy to help, if needed, but generally these agreements exist between the involved parties and are arranged after the conclusion of the trainee's participation in IDEA² Global, in which case the expectations described here are not applicable.

When accepting to be a participant in the IDEA² Global program, I agree to follow the above guidelines.

Date: _____

Expert mentor's signature: _____

Expert mentor's name: _____

