



a place of mind
THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



Conflict of Interest Policy

A conflict of interest is defined as “a situation in which a person, such as a public official, an employee, or a professional, has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties.” There are many situations within the program in which faculty, students, and preceptors may potentially have a conflict of interest. Awareness, appropriate planning, and intervention can prevent problems from developing.

Conflicts of interest include those situations which may provide students with access to confidential information about a midwifery practice or other students who have been in a practice, or impede the ability of a preceptor or faculty member to provide an unbiased opinion or judgment.

The midwifery community in British Columbia is relatively small. It is therefore important that the program make every effort to ensure that pre-existing relationships or knowledge do not bias the admission, education, evaluation of an individual student, or the treatment of midwives and midwifery practices.

Examples of a potential conflict of interest may include, and should be disclosed:

- A relative or friend, or where a significant prior relationship exists.
- A prior or current caregiver or client.
- An employer or employee of the midwife or the midwife’s practice, including second attendants, administrators, and staff.
- An employee of any agency related to funding or governance of the midwife’s practice.
- Any circumstance that may be construed as having influence over the fair and impartial evaluation of a student.

Conflicts of Interest in Clinical Placements

Students and preceptors are required to notify the Placement Coordinator by email as soon as possible and no later than 3 – 4 days after the student’s name has been identified, if they believe there may be a potential conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of both preceptor and student to report any potential relationship that may fall into these categories, or others not yet described, whether or not either party feels that the relationship may compromise the ability of the preceptor to adequately assess the student.

The Placement Coordinator will review potential conflicts on a case-by-case basis.

In the event of a potential conflict of interest between tutor and student or preceptor, the tutor will discuss with the course lead and decide whether to assign the student to another tutor. When this is not possible a written disclosure to mitigate bias may be undertaken, and/or faculty will meet and decide the best course of action.

A formal offer of employment should NOT be given by a preceptor/ practice to a student at any time prior to midterm in Clerkship.

Conflicts of Interest in Assessments

The student and instructor/clinical faculty are asked to advise the course lead where a perceived conflict of interest may exist in assessments (e.g. grading assignments or examining OSCEs), as soon as possible. Conflicts of this kind will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, and where a conflict is determined to be of concern, appropriate solutions will be determined by the course lead.

In some communities, the number of midwives is very few. Therefore, in the interest of making assessments (like OSCEs) more accessible to students in some distributed locations (like Kelowna, Victoria, or Prince George, for example), the program may be required to draw on the same pool of midwives to act as preceptors, skills instructors, and OSCE examiners. The program holds the expectation that clinical faculty will exhibit appropriate professional behavior and boundaries at all times, whatever their relationship with students.

In cases where either a clinical faculty member or a student expresses concern about a conflict of interest, possible solutions are: that a third party join the assessment remotely, or that the student relocate for these assessments.

Generally, a student will not be assigned to a Tutor who works in the same practice where a student is placed.

¹ <https://ethics.ubc.ca/people/mcdonaldconflict-htm/>