

DESHPANDE CENTER CATALYST GUIDELINES FOR CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The Deshpande Center's mission is to make a greater impact with MIT innovation. It is important for the Center to engage volunteers in order to assess ideas, identify the most effective path to commercialization, and assist the teams in advancing their research. Additionally, privileged information may need to be shared at these early stages of innovation.

We acknowledge that conflict of interest and premature disclosure are risks to be managed. 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 faculty and researchers is fair and objective.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING PRIVILEGED INFORMATION

Meetings and activities identified as privileged are by invitation only, are not public, and are conducted with the understanding that volunteer participants are specially invited by the Deshpande Center staff for the academic review of new ideas and mentoring of researchers on a privileged basis. By agreeing to take part, participants in these activities agree to:

- Maintain privileged information in confidence;
- Not use the information for personal gain at the expense of MIT researchers or the Deshpande Center;
- Notify Deshpande Center staff of any potential conflict of interest; and
- Recuse themselves from participating in any activity where there might be a conflict of interest.

A note on Intellectual Property

When you advise a research team, intellectual property (copyrights, inventions, trade marks, etc.) may be developed. Ownership of intellectual property is governed by MIT policy: If the research leading to an invention was supported by sponsored research funding or made significant use of MIT facilities and/or MIT-administered funds, then MIT owns the intellectual property. If MIT licenses a patent or copyright on which you are an inventor/author, you are entitled to receive a portion of the royalty and/or equity MIT receives from the licensee in accordance with MIT's royalty distribution policy. Volunteers do not receive any ownership interest in any intellectual property defined above by participating as a volunteer.

Information received through Deshpande Center activities concerning a technology should not be construed as a representation or warranty that such technology is patentable or does not infringe on the rights of any third parties.

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING CONFLICT OF INTEREST

According to the 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."

Catalysts and volunteers must avoid positions of conflict of interest wherever possible and notify Deshpande Center staff any time there is a potential conflict. Conflict of interest becomes a problem in situations where the volunteer tries to influence a decision for personal gain, or to use information for personal gain at the expense of the researcher or the Deshpande Center. Examples of such situations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Receiving privileged information or giving advice on a project when the volunteer has a financial stake in a potential competitor.
- Giving advice on a project when the volunteer has a potential financial stake in a spin-out from the research. As a result, if a Catalyst decides he/she wants to be involved with the project on a professional level, he/she must notify the researcher and Deshpande Center staff immediately and step back from advising the project.
- Reviewing a proposal when the volunteer has a financial stake in the success of the proposal (such as an interest to invest or a financial stake in a competitor), has a proposal under consideration in the same grant round, or if he/she has a relationship with the team that would make an objective review difficult. On the other hand, someone in a mentoring role (e.g., MIT VMS mentor or Deshpande Center Catalyst) could lead to very valuable insight, as long as this relationship is disclosed to the Deshpande Center during the review process.

Any time a potential conflict of interest arises, the volunteer must step away from his/her role causing the conflict, Deshpande Center staff must be notified right away, and we will together determine the next steps.

I understand the roles and responsibilities of the Catalyst program, and agree to follow the guidelines set forth above.

Catalyst name

Signature

Date