

The Griff's guidelines on conflicts of interest

Adapted from CBC's conflicts of interest policy (Feb. 22, 2024)

Who does this apply to?

These guidelines apply to all Griff editorial staff and volunteer contributors.

Definitions

Editor: A staff member of the Griff.

Contributor: A volunteer with the Griff.

Editor-in-chief: The manager of the Griff's editorial staff and the in-direct overseer of all contributors.

Conflict of interest: Arises when the personal interests of a staff member or contributor affect or has the potential to affect their judgement and ability to fulfill their duties at the Griff in accordance with the Griff's ethics and standards of accuracy, transparency, fairness, impartiality, compassion, professionalism, and inclusivity.

Perceived conflict of interest: Arises when people could reasonably conclude that a conflict of interest exists, even if that is not the case.

Outside employment or activities: Involvement or direct association with activities or work outside of an editor or contributors work with the Griff.

Close personal or business relationship: a person, such as a close friend or associate, who can reasonably be perceived as receiving preferential treatment and/or influencing an editor or contributor's judgement and ability to fulfill their duties at the Griff in accordance with the Griff's ethics and standards of accuracy, transparency, fairness, impartiality, compassion, professionalism, and inclusivity.

Guidelines and statement

Although a conflict of interest may not always lead to misrepresentation or manipulation of a story, it is important to ensure transparency by continuously identifying and disclosing any potential conflicts of interest. Avoiding conflicts of interest is always preferable.

It's important to note that not all situations that arise can be accounted for. The lives of university students are as diverse as they are robust, and the Griff strives to provide a credible and reliable service to all students. As such, the spirit of this document is not to limit the opportunities of students who choose to work with the Griff, but to provide guidelines that protect the integrity and reputation of those students, as well as that of the Griff.

Adherence to these guidelines is expected of all editors and contributors of the Griff as per the Griff's code of conduct. Failure to adhere may result in disciplinary action.

- Tokens of appreciation, gifts, and benefits:

Tokens of appreciation, gifts, and benefits can manifest in a variety of ways, such as free meals, products, services, tickets, gift cards/cash, or benefits such as job opportunities, invitations, free travel, and more. Tokens may possibly hinder the delivery of objective and impartial news reporting.

Editors and contributors should avoid tokens of appreciation, gifts, and benefits that could influence or be perceived to influence their work

- Outside employment or activities

Griff editors and contributors are allowed to pursue and engage outside employment and activities so long as they do not result in a conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest, or if they inform the editor-in-chief of a conflict of interest, or perceived conflict of interest, and it is deemed acceptable.

As all editors and contributors of the Griff are students, except for the editor-in-chief, it is acceptable for editors and contributors of the Griff to engage in outside employment or activities that may traditionally be perceived as a conflict of interest. This is due to the limited scope of the Griff and the belief that students deserve to have the opportunity to have a rich and fulfilling university experience. *Example: an editor or contributor may act as an executive of a student group and work with the Griff if they proactively disclose their position and responsibilities to an editor or the editor-in-chief.* In a case such as this, the editor or contributor would not be permitted and should make an active effort to not make any recommendations, any suggestions, or convey views on relevant work. The editor or contributor will not be permitted to take part in any work surrounding their outside employment or activities.

Griff editors and contributors are not to inappropriately exploit their position and/or connection with the Griff.

- Relationships and favouritism

Editors and contributors of the Griff must not give, or be perceived to give preferential treatment to someone they have a close personal or business relationship with. Past relationships should be disclosed as well so as to avoid perceived conflicts of interest. The editor or contributor with a close personal or business relationship will not be permitted to take part in any work surrounding the person they have a close personal or business relationship with.

- Personal interest

Editors and contributors must ensure that no conflict, or perceived conflict, occurs between their personal interests and those of the Griff and their work with the Griff.

Editors and contributors should not:

- Use their position at the Griff to solicit others
- Gain preferential treatment from businesses or suppliers for the purpose of personal gain
- Collect and use confidential information for personal advantage
- Use equipment, supplies, or services provided by the Griff or another editor or contributor at the Griff to further personal interest without express permission

Exceptions

Exceptions to these guidelines may occasionally be authorized if the interests of the Griff are better served. All exceptions to these guidelines must be approved by the editor-in-chief.