

Conflicts of Interest Policy for Members of the Medical Research Committee and Lay Research Panel

Members of the Medical Research Committee and Lay Research panel are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest either in advance to the Charity, or at the beginning of meetings. If a committee or panel member is unsure whether a situation is a conflict of interest, they should get in contact with the Charity as soon as possible to discuss the matter. When required, individuals may be asked to leave the room and take no part in the discussions of the application. If necessary, the Panel or Committee may wish to debate and decide who should or should not take part in the discussion, and the ultimate decision will be made by the Chair or the Vice Chair if the Chair has a conflict of interest.

Automatic exclusion:

An individual should be automatically excluded from participation in a funding decision in cases where that individual has a direct interest in the funding proposal under discussion. Individuals who have been excluded from discussing a grant will not be allowed to participate in the scoring and decision making around that grant. If the Chair is excluded from the discussion of a grant, the Vice Chair is nominated and if he/she has a conflict of interest the Panel or Committee should nominate another member to chair the meeting for the duration of this discussion. A direct interest applies to any of the following situations:

- The individual concerned is the Principal Applicant, Co-applicant, Supervisor or Collaborator on the funding proposal. In this case, the individual will not receive names of reviewers or reviewer reports relating to the application.
- The individual concerned works in the same research group or department as the Principal Applicant or Co-applicant.

- A relative (including, but not limited to, spouse (current or past), siblings, children and parents) of the individual is the Principal Applicant or Co-applicant.
- An applicant on the proposal is a business partner of the individual.
- The individual concerned serves on the board of a pharmaceutical or other company that may have an interest in the grant being discussed.

Exclusion at the Chair's discretion:

In certain situations, an individual may be excluded from discussion of a proposal at the discretion of the Chair. Examples of such situations include:

- An applicant on the proposal is a member or employee of the same institution, but not the same department, as the individual concerned.
- The individual concerned can be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant; i.e. they are currently being funded or are currently applying for funding on a project of a similar nature to the proposal under discussion
- The individual has acted as an external reviewer, or on a funding panel/committee in respect of the proposal under discussion, at a time when the proposal was being discussed by another funding body.
- The individual has collaborated or published with the applicant within the past three years.
- The individual is aware of any other issue that might reasonably be expected to give rise to, or give rise to the perception of, a conflict of interest.
- In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the Charity. The Charity shall discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Chair, who will make a decision.

- If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of a Panel or Committee, then he or she should raise the matter with the Chair.