

Conflicts of Interest Policy for Research Awards Panel Members

General

This policy relates to all members of the Research Awards Panel. The purpose of this document is to minimise the potential for conflicts of interest arising and to protect the charity and those who work for it from any perception, real or otherwise, that the external interests and affiliations of its committee members might interfere with their ability to work towards the furtherance of the Charity's.

Declaration of Interest

All Research Awards Panel members must declare any disclosable external interests on their appointment to the charity, including other offices held, financial or equity interests, and any other relevant information. A register of interests will be kept up to date by the charity.

Interests which should be disclosed by such individuals include:

- Equity interests (if worth £10,000 or more, or more than 1% of the total issued capital) in enterprises with involvement in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, biotech or related areas, or in any other enterprise that may have a real or perceived interest in the work of the charity. Third party investments (e.g. ISAs) should be held exempt from this.
- Consultancies and other external appointments (paid and unpaid), together with details of any remuneration or other benefits arising from these.

Discussion of Proposals

The Crohn's & Colitis UK Research team will endeavour to identify all potential conflicts of interest prior to review of any applications by the Research Awards Panel. Panel members must make the Crohn's & Colitis UK Research team aware of any additional conflicts as soon as possible.

The Co-Chairs of the Research Awards Panel will then make a decision based on the below criteria:

Automatic Exclusion from participation in a funding decision:

- When a Panel member is an applicant, co-applicant or collaborator on a grant application.
- When a Panel member could be seen as a direct competitor of an applicant or co-applicant (e.g. they are funded or applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion).
- When a Panel member works at the same institution as an applicant or co-applicant.
- When a Panel member has collaborated with an applicant or co-applicant within the last three years. A collaboration is defined as an active funded grant or other working collaboration.
- When a Panel member has co-published with the lead applicant within the past three years. Co-authorship on publications from large consortia (in excess of 20 authors) will not be considered as a conflict of interest.

- When a Panel member has a personal or working relationship with an applicant, co-applicant or collaborator.
- When a Panel members who themselves are, or have a family member who is/has, been under the care of the lead applicant.
- When a Panel member stands to gain financially from an application being awarded.

In these circumstances, the conflicted individual will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. They must withdraw from the meeting when the application is assessed. Details of discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives. This should also apply to trustees who serve as panel members and are applicants in the grant round.

These criteria also apply to the Co-Chairs of the Research Awards Panel. In the rare event that both Co-Chairs are conflicted for an application, Crohn's & Colitis UK will appoint a Chair temporarily, normally the lead discussant(s) for that application.

Exclusion at the Charity's discretion:

- When a Panel member has co-published with a co-applicant within the last three years. Co-authorship on publications from large consortia (in excess of 20 authors) will not be considered as a conflict of interest. Co-authorship with collaborators will not be considered as a conflict of interest.
- When a Panel members who themselves are, or have a family member who is/has, been under the care of a co-applicant.

In these circumstances, the Co-Chairs of the Panel will decide on the course of action. This could include:

- The Panel member may provide written comments ahead of the Panel meeting and participate in the Panel discussion for that application but not score or vote on the outcome of that application.
- The Panel member may provide written comments ahead of the Panel meeting but must withdraw from the meeting when the application is assessed.
- The Panel member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. They must withdraw from the meeting when the application is assessed.

Resolution of conflicts of interest

- The Charity recognises that the majority of conflicts or potential conflicts will relate to a particular issue and as such will not present any long term restrictions on an individual's ability to work for the charity or to sit on its committees.
- In a small number of cases, major conflicts of interest may arise which compromise an individual's ability to continue in their position within the charity. Where such a situation relates to a member of the Panel, the matter will be discussed by the Research Awards Panel Co-Chair and Crohn's & Colitis UK staff. In cases where agreement cannot be reached through this means, the case will be referred to the Panel as a whole, whose decision should be taken as final.
- In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the Crohn's & Colitis UK Research team. This will

be discussed with the individual as necessary and reported to the Co-Chairs, who will decide on a course of action.

- If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of a funding panel, then he or she should raise the matter with the Crohn's & Colitis UK Research team and Co-Chairs of the Panel.

Updating the policy

The Charity will endeavour to review this policy, if necessary, every two years, in consultation with the Research Strategy and Funding Committee.