



## CDRF CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

This policy provides a code of conduct guidelines for everyone involved in the CDRF's research grant programme, including:

- Scientific and medical advisers, including the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) members
- External reviewers
- Applicants
- Trustees
- Staff

This policy's purpose is to minimise any potential for conflicts of interest arising, and to protect the CDRF and those who work for it from any perception, real or otherwise, that the external interests and affiliations of its members might interfere with their ability to work towards the safeguarding of the charity's objectives.

### **Definition:**

- A conflict of interest is defined as any financial, personal, professional or institutional interest of any Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) member or external peer reviewer which may, if undeclared, expose the CDRF's SAC to accusations of bias and inappropriate influence in peer review assessment, funding recommendations or scientific advice to the CDRF.
- The notion of conflict of interest does not imply an immoral action. Conflicts may arise out of the facts and not from fraudulent motivations. They do not in themselves inevitably cause harm; it is ambiguity and the possibility for damage that arouse concern.
- The SAC members and external peer reviewers are not required to declare all the associations they may have outside grant-giving functions of the capital of the CDRF. Individuals should report any relevant interest when dealing with or discussing a matter to which it is pertinent.
- Relevant interests may include both financial and non-financial interests. The test of relevance is whether the interest might reasonably be thought to affect how an individual discharges his or her duties. The test is not whether the interest will influence an individual's actions, but whether the public might reasonably think this may be the case.
- It is up to the individual, as a SAC member or external peer reviewer, to decide whether a conflict of interest could exist and, if so, to declare the conflict. When deciding on such matters, consideration must be given to how things could appear to others and, in all cases, the individual should yield on the side of caution, declaring an interest if there is any possibility that a conflict of interest may exist.

### **Examples of conflict:**

- **Financial conflict** - anyone who has a direct or indirect financial interest with a grant application submitted to the CDRF.
- **Applicant and co-applicant(s) conflict** - anyone listed as main applicant or co-applicant(s) on a grant application submitted to the CDRF.
- **Collaborators conflict** - anyone listed as a collaborator or having recently collaborated with the named main applicant and/or co-applicants in a grant application submitted to the CDRF.
- **Same institution conflict** - anyone working in the same institution as the main applicant or co-applicant(s) listed on a grant application submitted to the CDRF.
- **Competition conflict** - anyone who has competing interests with a grant application being reviewed that may result in a strong decision bias during the time of his/her commitment to the CDRF.



### **Code of Conduct:**

As a condition of participation reviewers agree that documents and correspondence relating to applications for funds and funding are strictly confidential and therefore:

- Should not be disseminated.
- Should not be discussed with anyone else during, before or after the review process.
- Should a reviewer have a vested interest - organisational, collaborative, personal or other - in the outcome of a grant application, they should declare it. The reviewer must not assess the application or take part in any discussions regarding a funding decision.
- Feedback to candidates, successful or unsuccessful, will be provided by the CDRF. SAC members and external peer reviewers should not, under any circumstances, provide feedback directly to the candidate.
- Any printouts should be kept secure and disposed of securely after the decision has been reached.
- Reviewers have a right to expect that their comments will be treated in confidence by both the CDRF staff and other members of the review panel.
- Grant applicants will receive anonymised feedback.
- While membership of the CDRF's SAC will be publicly available, the identity of reviewers concerning specific grants will be kept confidential.

### **Resolving conflicts of interest.**

- The CDRF recognises that most 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 with the charity.
- In a small number of cases, significant conflicts of interest may arise which compromise an individual's ability to continue in their position as a reviewer. Where such a situation relates to a member of the SAC or external reviewer, the matter will be discussed by the Chair of the SAC together with a CDRF staff member. In cases where agreement cannot be reached through this means, the case will be referred to the SAC Chair, 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 CDRF. The CDRF shall discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Chair of the SAC, who will decide on a course of action.
- If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of the review committee, then he or she should raise the matter with the Chair of the SAC.

### **Updating the Policy.**

The CDRF will endeavour to review the policy every two years in consultation with the Board of Trustees.

Policy last updated: September 2020