

Declaration of Interests: Applicants

Research Councils' Code of Conduct and Policy on the Governance of Good Research Conduct¹ outlines the expectation that applicants for Research Council funding are expected to observe the highest standards of integrity, honesty and professionalism and to embed good practice in every aspect of their work. As part of this, any private, personal or commercial interests relating to an application for funding to the Research Councils **must be declared in a covering letter included as an application attachment.**

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person named on the application (or a senior member of the lead organisation who may be involved in the management of the grant) is in a position to derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their capacity as grant holder, or has interests which might influence their objectivity in conducting the research or reporting the findings.

What interests should be declared?

Applicants should declare any interests which anyone named on the application (or a senior member of the lead organisation who may be involved in the management of the grant) has with any individual, organisation, project partner or supplier involved in the research, or any interest that might be perceived to influence the applicant's objectivity in conducting the research.

Where the applicant or research organisation considers that an interest does give rise to a clear conflict, a proposed plan for managing that conflict should be included in the covering letter.

Interests to declare:

- 1. Personal Remuneration from organisations or project partners involved in the proposed research (other than the named employing organisation)**
Includes consultancies, directorships, honoraria (both past and present) from organisations other than that listed within the application as the employer.
- 2. Significant Shareholdings or other Financial Interests in organisations which are involved in or might benefit from the research**
Include the name of the company and the nature of the interests e.g. shareholdings with a market value equal to or greater than £10,000 or represent more than 1% of the total shares in the company.
- 3. Research support (financial or in kind) from commercial organisations involved in the grant or which might benefit from the outcome of the research that are not mentioned in the application**
Also include ownership of intellectual property whose value may be affected by the outcome of the research
- 4. Un-remunerated involvement with any organisation named on the application or which might benefit from the research or its outcomes**

¹ <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf>

This may include non-executive and advisory positions, directorships and other positions of authority.

5. **Political/pressure group associations**

Any relevant political/pressure group associations of the applicants (including paid posts and high-profile unpaid roles) should be declared.

6. **Family**

Declarations should also include any relevant known interests of immediate family members and any persons living in the same household. Applicants should also consider whether they need to disclose relevant known interests of any other person with whom they have a relationship which is likely to appear, to a reasonable person, to influence his/her independence and objectivity.

Please indicate which category of interest applies. Family members do not need to be identified, either by name or their relationship to the applicants.

Examples of relevant interests that should be declared (and how they might be managed):

- A consultancy, directorship or significant research collaboration with a company that makes a drug, treatment or piece of equipment that will be evaluated or used during the research
- Direct shareholdings in relevant companies should be declared if they are valued at greater than £10,000 or represent more than 1% of the total shares in the company. Indirect shareholder interests (eg via unit trusts or pension funds managed by others) need not be declared.
- A family member or close friend who works in sales for (or has a significant financial interest in) a company that is a potential supplier of major equipment or materials that will be purchased using the grant funding.
- Trusteeship of a charity with interests relevant to the area of research in the application.

Managing Conflicts

Interests declared will be scrutinised by Research Council staff and drawn to the attention of members of panels or boards making the decision on funding. Conditions relating to how conflicts should be managed may be attached to awards.

Research Council terms and conditions include a requirement for research organisations to have effective processes in place to manage conflicts of interest. If new conflicts arise once an award has been made these should be declared and managed using the research organisation's established processes.