

Marie Curie Research Committees Conflicts of Interest Policy Guidelines

Introduction

Good governance requires an individual to understand why the Policy applies to him/her, what type of 'interest' should be declared, when and how to declare such interests, where the potential for conflicts of interest may arise and how such conflicts will be dealt with so they do not prejudice the activities or reputation of the Charity. Individuals should be aware that it is their personal responsibility to declare their interests to the Marie Curie Research Management Team in writing, and to immediately notify the Marie Curie Research Management Team in writing of any changes.

1. Why do we have a Policy?

Any individual who controls the Charity and influences the activities of the Charity and its Group has an obligation to act:

- (i) In the best interests of the Charity and the maintenance of its reputation;
- (ii) Not for his/her own private interest or gain;
- (iii) In accordance with the Charity's governing documents, such as the Memorandum & Articles of Association;
- (iv) To avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest between the Charity's interests and those of the individual.

Interests need to be declared in writing and registered since circumstances can arise where an individual's professional, personal or family interests and/or loyalties may conflict or be perceived to conflict with those of the Charity.

Such conflicts, if not identified and managed, can create problems such as:

- Inhibiting free discussion;
- Allowing influence or control over the Charity's activities by an individual who is not independent of his/her personal interests;
- Decisions or actions being taken that are not in the interests of the Charity;
- Risking the perception that the Charity may have acted improperly, thus damaging its reputation.

The Charity's governing documents require the disclosure and management of interests to ensure no one party can exercise undue influence or will receive an unauthorised financial benefit (whether direct or indirect) from its, his or her association with the Charity.

2. Who must complete a Marie Curie Research Committees Declaration of Interest(s) ('Declaration')?

All members of Marie Curie's Research Committees/Boards/Panels and any *ad hoc* group which controls or influences the decision making activities of Marie Curie's research funding.

3. What interests should be declared?

The Declaration of Interest(s) form lists the types of professional, commercial, political, private and other interests or benefits you should declare in order to comply with the

Policy. These include information on directorships, employment, consultancies and other financial interests; business/professional associations, and involvement with other organisations, and interests through family connections or personal friendships. For this purpose a person is treated as a member of your family if he or she lives within your household or is a close relative (i.e. spouse, partner, parent, sibling, child and grandchild).

All gifts, hospitality, services from third parties, or other benefits received by you as a result of involvement with the Charity should be declared, regardless of the amount.

By declaring all such interests it is possible for the Charity to decide which interests could be seen as, or which could give rise to, a conflict of interest.

4. When should a Declaration be completed?

The Declaration needs to be made:

- (i) Upon your appointment;
- (ii) Updated at least annually
- (iii) When any changes occur. Such changes should be immediately notified in writing to the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

To be effective the Declaration must be signed and dated by the person making it, (an electronic signature is not sufficient), and received by the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

5. What should I do if I am unsure whether to declare a matter as an 'interest'?

If you are not sure what to declare, or whether or when your Declaration needs to be updated, please err on the side of caution – “when in doubt, declare”.

To ensure that you comply with the Policy, as a general guide please ask yourself “*Are there any circumstances in which this interest could prejudice, embarrass or damage the activities of the Charity?*” If the answer is “Yes” you should declare the interest.

6. Who will keep the Register of Interests?

Interests (and any conflict arising) will be recorded in the Register of Interests, which will be maintained by the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

7. Disclosure of Interests, Conflicts & Benefits

The Register of Interests (including any recorded conflicts) will be open to inspection by the Charity's Auditors, statutory regulators and other parties as authorised by the Charity's governing documents. If an individual completing the Declaration requests that any information should not be disclosed without prior notice, any such request must be agreed by the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

Where an individual making a declaration is connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the Charity, this information may also be fully disclosed in the Annual Report and Accounts if required by the Charity's Auditors.

8. Will data protection legislation apply?

The information provided in the Declaration will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act or equivalent legislation applying from time to time. Data will be processed only to ensure that the individual acts in the best interests of the Charity. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose without the individual's prior consent.

9. Who will review the Register of Interests and decide if a conflict exists?

Completed Declarations will be reviewed by the Marie Curie Research Management Team to identify potential conflicts and to decide how to address them.

In the event that the conflict of any individual cannot be resolved by the Marie Curie Research Management Team it will be referred to a Conflicts Review Panel made up of the Chair of the meeting, the Deputy Chair or their nominee, a representative of the Marie Curie Research Management Team and such other persons as the Review Panel jointly nominates. The Panel may obtain independent professional advice. The decision of the Review Panel will be final.

In the case of unavoidable or repeated conflicts of interest between the Charity and an individual that may, in the opinion of the Review Panel, harm the reputation of the Charity, the individual may be asked to either surrender the interest that is giving rise to the conflict or resign from their position with the Charity.

Conflicts of interests affecting an employee of the Charity will be addressed in a manner that is consistent with that individual's contract of employment and in accordance with the employment policies in place in the Charity from time to time.

10. What do you to do if a conflict of interest arises at a meeting?

Before, or at the beginning of any meeting, you must declare any potential conflict of interest which may arise in relation to matters on the agenda.

A conflict of interest occurs where, in respect of the agenda item or during any discussion in the meeting, the individual has:

- A financial interest;
- A real danger of bias;
- Creates a perception that the interest could unduly influence his/her decision.

The Chair of the meeting will then decide whether the individual should withdraw from the meeting while the matter is discussed.

Individuals participating (in whatever capacity):

- Should declare at the beginning of the relevant item of business any matter in which he/she is interested;
- Will not be counted in the quorum;
- Must withdraw from the meeting whilst that matter is discussed unless expressly invited to remain and participate in the discussion (this will depend on the nature of the interest and extent of any conflict);
- May not score and/or vote on that matter unless the Chair of the meeting agrees to allow a score and/or vote.

All decisions made as to whether a conflict of interest exists will be recorded in the minutes by the Marie Curie Research Management Team.

11. Procedure Outside Meetings

Where potential for a conflict of interest exists (for example, where a person withdrew from a meeting because of a potential conflict of interest and the meeting agreed to pursue a course that gives rise to a continuing conflict), then the individual affected should ensure that in any discussion, correspondence or other dealings to which they are a party, their conflict or potential conflict is declared.

12. Further information and queries

Please contact the Marie Curie Research Management Team for further information and/or any queries at research.info@mariecurie.org.uk.

Conflicts of Interest Policy

The Policy requires that:

- (a) Any individual who controls or influences the activities of Marie Curie's Research funding must declare his/her interests, whether paid (for example; directorships or employment) or unpaid (for example; voluntary positions), together with any benefits, services, hospitality or gifts received in connection with his/her role in Marie Curie's Research Committees;
- (b) A Declaration of Interests should be completed in writing upon appointment and thereafter annually in the form prescribed and attached to this Policy. It should also be declared orally at any meetings where a conflict of interests may arise. Any changes to the Declaration should be notified in writing to the Marie Curie Research Management Team as soon as the interest arises;
- (c) The Chair of the meeting should provide confidential advice to any individual making a Declaration if required. If requested by the Marie Curie Research Management Team, the Chair will also review the Declarations to identify any real or perceived conflicts of interest and will decide how they might be dealt with, consulting with others as necessary;
- (d) The Marie Curie Research Management Team should maintain a Register of Interests declared, including any conflicts which have been identified;
- (e) Any individual with an interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting must declare their interest to the meeting. The Chair of the meeting will then decide whether that individual should withdraw during the discussion and, if not, whether the individual should be entitled to score and/or vote on the matter under discussion;
- (f) Guidelines explaining why the 'Conflicts of Interest Policy' is required, and the steps to be followed to ensure compliance with the Policy, should be issued to all those individuals required to make a declaration of interest(s); and
- (g) The Policy should be periodically reviewed to ensure it satisfies Legal and Regulatory requirements, and those of Marie Curie.

Marie Curie Research Committees Declaration of Interest(s)

Please refer to the Conflicts of Interest Policy before completing this Declaration. Please state whether the interest applies to yourself, or where appropriate, a member of your immediate family or some other close personal connection. Only the existence of an interest should be declared unless the Marie Curie Research Management Team specifically request additional information such as the amount of remuneration, the value of an investment, or the time spent on a particular “interest” in order to determine whether a real or perceived conflict may exist. If completing electronically please print out and return a signed and dated hard copy.

Please give details of:-

1.	Your relationship(s) to Marie Curie (e.g. Research Funding Committee member, Research Review Committee member, Research Strategic Advisory Committee member etc.)
2.	Paid employments, directorships, partnerships, consultancies, honoraria or other remunerated self-employment. Also, details of any organisation in which you have a shareholding of 5% or more, or from which you receive a financial benefit (other than a pension)
3.	Public sector, academic, research-related or voluntary appointments, whether paid or unpaid including any memberships of non-Marie Curie grant-giving committees or scientific advisory committees

4.	Positions, whether paid or unpaid, in any institution which deals or is reasonably likely to deal with Marie Curie (e.g. universities, NHS Trusts, medical research bodies, pharmaceutical companies)
5.	Any present, recent or anticipated interests in relation to or involvement with funding/grant giving organisations, including Marie Curie, or in receipt of grant funding from Marie Curie
6.	Any interest (national and international) that may be viewed externally as having the potential to influence decision-making (e.g. commercial research collaborations or any relationships with potential recipients of grants or potential suppliers to Marie Curie)
7.	Any present, recent or anticipated interests in receipt of funding from or to Marie Curie in relation to or involvement with the tobacco business or tobacco companies

8.	Any financial interest held by you or a family member not falling within the above criteria which might be regarded by an objective third party as giving rise to a conflict of interest with your role with Marie Curie
9.	Membership of any special interest group, political group or campaigning organisation
10.	Gifts, hospitality, services or other benefits received by you from third parties directly connected to your involvement with Marie Curie
11.	Any other interests that are not covered by answers to the questions above?

- A. I have read the Policy on 'Conflicts of Interest' and agree to abide by the terms of the Policy, which forms part of this Declaration.
- B. I have set out above, all declarable interests of which I am aware at this date and the information given is complete and accurate.
- C. I undertake to declare at any Marie Curie Committee meetings any interests that might conflict with Marie Curie's interests and which have not been listed above.
- D. I agree to update this written Declaration as further interests arise by immediately informing the Marie Curie Research Management Team in writing, and to review the accuracy of this information on an annual basis.
- E. I understand that the Marie Curie Research Management Team will hold these details in the Register of Interests which will be open to inspection by the Charity's Auditors and other authorised parties, such as the Charity Commission. I give my consent for the information to be used for the purposes described in the Policy and for no other purposes without my prior consent.

Name _____

Signature _____

Date _____

External position _____

Address _____

Please return this Declaration to the Marie Curie Research Management Team (research.info@mariecurie.org.uk) Marie Curie, 89 Albert Embankment, London SE1 7TP

Version	Summary of major changes	Effective date	Author	Approver
1	Conflicts of Interest Guidelines, Conflicts of Interest Policy & Declaration of Interest(s) form updated and standardised across all Marie Curie Research Committees	24/07/2017	Sanjay Thakrar, Research Manager	Sarah Whitelaw, Head of Legal (Interim)