



Code of Conduct and Conflicts of Interest Policy

Meningitis Research Foundation aims to ensure that research proposals are assessed objectively and impartially. We expect the research we fund to be conducted according to the highest standards of research integrity. To demonstrate our commitment to ensuring this, we are a supporter of the [Universities UK's Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#). Review by our Scientific Advisory Panel and external referees is an essential element of the decision making process. As a condition of participation, those involved in the research review process (which in addition to scientific advisors and referees includes research applicants and Foundation staff) agree that:

1. Details of research applications and related correspondence, Scientific Advisory Panel meetings papers, and the identity of external referees are strictly confidential and must be kept secure and not misappropriated, disseminated to or discussed with others outside the review process.
2. Panel members and external referees can expect that their comments will be treated in confidence by Foundation staff. Applicants can expect that Foundation staff will not disclose details of their applications to those outside the review process.
3. When we inform applicants of the outcome of their applications, we provide anonymous versions of referees' comments, and may also summarise the conclusion reached by the Panel. Information that might identify the comments of individual Panel members or referees is not revealed.
4. It is our policy to let external referees know the final outcome of applications they have reviewed after we have communicated decisions to applicants. Referees and Panel members agree to treat all details of applications and their outcomes as confidential, and once we have acknowledged receipt of comments, Referees and Panel members will destroy all paper copies and delete all electronic copies from their computer systems.
5. Panel members who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are funded or applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion) should declare an interest and would be asked to withdraw from the meeting for that application.
6. When a Panel member is connected with an application s/he must declare an interest and withdraw from any consideration of that application. We exclude Panel members from considering
 - a. their own applications.
 - b. applications where they are listed as a co-applicant or collaborator
 - c. applications where the applicants or co-applicants are from the same department as the Panel member (but not necessarily the same institution, since a Panel member might have

no more involvement with a project at the same institution but a different department than with a project somewhere else entirely).

d. applications from someone who the Panel member has recently supervised or managed, or closely collaborates with on the same topic.

e. applications where a Panel member feels they have a conflict of interest.

The member does not receive documents pertaining to that application, learn the identity of its referees or receive referees' reports, and does not score the application or see the scores awarded it by other Panel members. He or she must retire from the meeting when the application is assessed.

Details of discussion of that application are expurgated from copies of the minutes sent to that member. These conditions also apply to the Chair and in the case of the Chair having a conflict, the Vice-chair will take over chairing responsibilities for the relevant parts of the meeting. The Chair should not normally apply for funding, but if the chair applies (directly as principal or co- applicant; or would receive funding as a listed collaborator), he/she must not attend the meeting or appoint referees. In such cases the Vice-chair will chair the entire meeting. Should the chair have other conflicts of interest not related to funding (e.g. institutional, co- authorship, personal or professional relationships), they should declare these interests upfront and leave the room for the specific item(s) when they are discussed, as per the requirement for other committee members. The vice-chair should take over for these specific items.

7. Applicants should not, under any circumstances, directly approach members of the Foundation's Scientific Advisory Panel in connection with their (or another's) research application.

8. Panel members should refuse any requests for information or feedback from applicants on how a particular judgement was reached.

I [INSERT NAME] have read the Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest policy and agree to adhere to it

Date: _ _ _ _ _