



## **Scientific Advisory Committee Conflicts of Interest Policy**

SRUK aims to ensure research proposals are assessed objectively, transparently and impartially. Review by a scientific advisory committee is an essential element of the decision-making process. The board of trustees relies on the willingness of members of the research community to give time to participate and appreciates their willingness to do so. The role of advisory committee members is advisory and awards are made by the board of trustees.

As part of SRUK's commitment to impartiality and the integrity of the review process, SRUK has a declaration of conflicts of interest for scientific advisory committee members and trustees. If SRUK has reason to believe a member of the scientific advisory committee has breached this policy, he or she may be asked to step down. SRUK will endeavour to review this policy, if necessary, every 2 years in consultation with the board of trustees.

### **1: General**

The purpose of this document is to minimise the potential for conflicts of interest arising and to protect SRUK 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 SRUK's objectives.

Trustee board members are required to provide data annually for a register of interests. Scientific advisory committee members must declare any specific or potential conflicts of interest for individual applications.

### **2: Discussion of proposals**

Details of applications, meeting papers and related correspondence and the names of external referees are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with persons outside the review process.

### **3: Managing conflicts of interest**

- a) Where a scientific advisory committee member is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest and withdraw from any consideration of that application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. He or she must retire 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 scientific advisory committee members and are applicants in the grant round.

- b) Scientific advisory committee 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) or have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past 3 years, or work in the same institution, should declare an interest.

#### **4: Resolution of conflicts of interest**

- a) SRUK 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 SRUK or sit on its committees.
- b) In a small number of instances, major conflicts of interest may arise that compromise an individual's ability to continue in their position within SRUK. Where such a situation arises, the matter will be discussed by the board of trustees. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the case will be referred to the chair of the board of trustees, whose decision should be taken as final.
- c) In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the committee chair, who will decide on a course of action.
- d) If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving a member of scientific advisory committee or board of trustees, then he or she should raise the matter with the chair of the scientific advisory committee.