

Background Information on Declaration of Interests for NC3Rs Board and Panel members

Declaration of interests

1. Individuals involved in the NC3Rs business are required to declare any private, professional, political, commercial, academic or other interest that may conflict with the NC3Rs interests, or which might be seen by reasonable members of the public to influence or bias judgment when discussing or reaching decisions.
2. Declarations may also need to be made during meetings (see paragraphs 8-11 below).
3. Any changes to circumstances or new interests should be declared to the NC3Rs Office as soon as possible. Individuals will be asked to complete and submit a new Declaration of Interests form.
4. Only current interests need be declared, but it is possible that on occasion a past interest will or could influence present behaviour, in which case such an interest also needs to be declared.
5. It is impossible to prescribe a comprehensive set of rules on interests. Individuals are best placed to know their duties with the NC3Rs and with other bodies, and where these might conflict. If in doubt, individuals should discuss issues with the Board/Panel Chair or the NC3Rs Office.
6. Conflicts of interest may arise from:
 - i. Close links with, or interest in, a particular Institution from which a grant or other funding application is being considered (e.g. employment or academic collaborations);
 - ii. A commercial or pecuniary interest in an organisation or issue which comes before the NC3Rs Board/Panels e.g. where a member or an organisation with which an individual is involved may benefit financially, directly or indirectly, from a decision made;
 - iii. A non-pecuniary interest where a member has other interests that might be thought to influence them, either wittingly or unwittingly in the matter under discussion;
 - iv. Personal or family interest in an organisation or issue which comes before the NC3Rs Board/Panels with regard to both pecuniary (from connections with bodies which have a direct financial interest, or from being a business partner, or being employed by a person with such an interest) and non-pecuniary (any benefit or favour "in-kind" including arising from membership of clubs or other organisations) interests.

Resolution of declarations of interest

7. Potential conflicts of interest highlighted by declarations of interest will normally be resolved through the individual concerned not participating in the relevant discussions nor in any subsequent decisions, and having restricted access to information. The NC3Rs Office will identify and note possible individual conflicts of interests on papers prepared for the NC3Rs meetings and take necessary steps to ensure appropriate restricted access to documents.

Declarations of interest at meetings

8. All known potential conflicts of interest are recorded by NC3Rs staff on the meeting agenda for each item of business discussed at Board/Panel meetings. Members are also required to declare any other interests at meetings, if these have been omitted from the paper or become apparent at the meeting.
9. The Chair will advise on action to be taken to resolve any conflict of interest which becomes apparent at a meeting. Depending on the nature and degree of interest, the Chair will decide whether the individual should leave the room for a particular item, or remain but take no part in the discussion.
10. Board and Panel Members are required to be vigilant in raising any conflicts as soon as they become aware of them so that appropriate action can be taken to manage this. If there is any doubt, members should consult with the Chair or the NC3Rs Office for advice.
11. Actions taken in relation to declarations of interest will be recorded on the meeting agenda.

Raising concerns about the conflicts of interests of other individuals

12. An individual who is concerned about another individual's potential or actual conflicts of interest should raise the issues with the Chair or office (in private, if possible).

Publishing and updating declarations of interest

13. Following Research Council practices, Declaration of Interest forms for Board and Panel Members are published on the NC3Rs website. It is therefore vital that members contact the NC3Rs about any changes as they occur to ensure the published information is as accurate as possible.
14. When a declared interest ceases to be relevant, members need to inform the Office so that it can be removed from their Declaration of Interests form.
15. The NC3Rs Board and Panel members' Declarations of Interest forms are updated annually. A copy of each version of individual forms (and the dates on which they applied) will be retained by the NC3Rs in line with our retention policy.