



# Conflicts Of Interest Policy

## Introduction

- A conflict of interest arises where the interests of a person who works or collaborates with the Society may also have duties to or interests in other organisations. The Society, as a patient organisation, may from time to time, have interests which conflict with its trustees, sponsors, members of its research and medical boards, with other organisations it works with and with its service providers. Many BBS Persons have other professional responsibilities and therefore need to be aware that conflicts of interest can arise.
- Our healthcare professionals and researchers are under a particular duty to disclose where this may be the case, and you will see that they often do this at the beginning of presentations they give at Society events.
- In accordance with applicable laws, its constitutional documents and charity regulations, the Society is required to recognise conflicts of interest. The Society's constitutional documents have specific restrictions on the use of the Society's assets where there is a conflict of interest. This is to ensure that the charitable funds of the Society are spent for the Society's charitable purposes, are properly accounted for and are not misspent or misappropriated.

## Personal Conflicts

- It is the responsibility of all BBS Persons to serve the best interests of the Society, its members and its beneficiaries.
- BBS Persons should not compete with the Society or misuse their position or information they receive as part of their role or to the detriment of the Society or its clients. If a conflict arises, this must be disclosed, and the trustees of the Society will set out how the conflict may be avoided or minimized so as not to jeopardise the integrity and interest of the Society.
- BBS Persons must not misuse their position with the Society or information they receive in the course of their employment or association with the Society to create a personal benefit for themselves, their family, friends, or any other person; or to cause detriment to the Society or its clients.
- It is the responsibility of all BBS Persons to act with integrity and good judgement by identifying conflict of interest situations and escalating them to the Chief Executive.

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### Supplement For Research Applications<sup>1</sup>

The Scientific Advisory Board (**SAB**) of the Society reviews applications for research grants to be made by the Society. In addition to the general conflicts of interest provisions above, members of the SAB, Trustees, peer reviewers and all others who participate in the review of research applications on behalf of the Society are subject to the following additional requirements.

The Chair of the SAB will require written confirmation of the absence of conflicts of interest from all external reviewers when they begin their work. The Chair of the SAB will require confirmation of the absence of conflicts of interest when information regarding research applications is circulated to members of the SAB and at each meeting at which research applications are reviewed.

**Definition of a Conflict of Interest:** A conflict of interest in the context of reviewing research applications occurs when the decision of the reviewer might be, or might be perceived to be, influenced or affected by a real or potential personal benefit, whether professionally or financially. Conflicts of interest also include circumstances where any persons close to the reviewer or towards whom the reviewer has some loyalty or responsibility might benefit professionally or financially from the reviewer's decision. Examples of such conflicts include where the reviewer:

- Is involved in work that could compete with the work proposed in the application;
- Is a close friend or relative of the applicant;
- Is directly involved in the work that the applicant proposes and/or has assisted in the application;
- Has any form of ownership or financial stake in the applicant and/or in the success of the applicant's project;
- Has recently collaborated with the applicant (within the last three years) on a research project or publication;
- Has recently been a co-author with the applicant (within the last three years) on a publication;
- Is a member of the same research institution or academic institution as the applicant and is engaged in similar or related research;

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<sup>1</sup> This supplement is subject to formal ratification by the Trustees in July 2026.

- Has submitted an application to the same research round;
- Has already reviewed the proposal at a different funding body; and/or
- Participates in a committee connected with the research project (for example an advisory group or steering committee).

A reviewer who was approached by an applicant for assistance on an application but declined that assistance may participate in the review round, subject to disclosure of such approach to the Chair of the SAB and the approval of the Chair of the SAB for the reviewer to continue.

If a Trustee has a conflict of interest, that Trustee shall not participate in the review of any research applications in that research round, whether as a member of the SAB or as a member of the Society's board of Trustees.

**Reporting:** Conflicts of interest must be reported in writing to the Chair of the SAB as soon as they arise or may arise. In cases where a reviewer is uncertain as to whether or not a conflict of interest exists, the reviewer should err on the side of caution and should report the circumstances of the potential conflict to the Chair of the SAB.

**Management of Conflicts:** The Chair of the SAB will consider all conflict of interest reports and shall decide whether there is a conflict of interest. The Chair of the SAB may seek advice from the Vice Chair of the SAB (if a Vice Chair is in office), as well as from the Chair of the Society's Medical Advisory Board (**MAB**) and or the Society's Trustees with regard to actual or potential conflicts of interest. No reviewer shall be required to take part in a review process if the reviewer believes that such review poses a conflict of interest.

If the Chair of the SAB determines that there is a conflict of interest, the reviewer will be required to withdraw from assessing the applications in that application round, will not receive documents pertaining to the applications and will return copies of all documents the reviewer may have already received.

The Chair of the SAB may appoint additional reviewers to assist the SAB in the event of a shortage of members of the SAB who are able to review applications due to conflicts of interest. The SAB may adjust the timetable for review of a research application round if additional time is required to find additional reviewers because conflicts of interest have arisen. Conflicted members of the SAB may attend a SAB meeting and be considered in a quorum for purposes of that meeting, but must be recused from all research application discussions at such meeting.

**Conflict of Interest by Chair of SAB:** If the Chair of the SAB has a conflict of interest or may have a conflict of interest, the Chair of the SAB shall refer the matter in writing to the Vice Chair of the SAB (if a Vice Chair is in office). In the event the Vice Chair is not available, including because of a conflict of interest, the Chair of the SAB shall refer the matter to the Chair of the MAB for consideration, and if there is a conflict of interest, the Chair of the MAB shall assume the duties of the Chair of the SAB for such research funding round. If the Vice Chair (if in office) of the SAB and the Chair of the MAB should both be conflicted, the Trustees shall appoint a non-conflicted person to perform the duties of the Chair of the SAB on a temporary basis in respect of that round of research applications.