

## **DISCLOSURE AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

### **General Obligation**

1. The HRB's statutory instrument (Art 13) requires members of the Board, the chief executive, an employee of the Board, a member of a committee or any other person engaged by the Board who has a pecuniary or other beneficial interest in, or material to, any matter that falls to be considered by the Board or a committee of the Board to

- disclose to the Board or committee the nature of his or her interest in advance of any consideration
- refrain from influencing or seeking to influence a decision in relation to the matter
- take no part in any consideration of the matter
- withdraw from the meeting for so long as the matter is being discussed or considered by the Board or committee and not to vote or otherwise act as a member, chief executive or employee in relation to the matter.

2. A beneficial interest exists if

- a person or any member of his or her household, or any nominee or his or her or any member of his or her household, is a member of a company or any other body which has a beneficial interest in, or material to, the matter to be considered
- a person or any member of his or her household is in partnership with or is in the employment of a person who has a beneficial interest in, or material to, such matter
- a person or any member of his or her household is a party to any arrangement or agreement concerning land to which such a matter relates
- any member of his or her household has an interest in, or material to, such a matter

A person will not be regarded as having a beneficial interest in a matter if the interest is so remote or insignificant that it cannot reasonably be regarded as likely to influence a person in considering, discussing or in voting on, any question relating to the matter.

3. If a member of the Board is in doubt as to whether a beneficial interest exists, he or she should consult with the Chair. Members of committees should consult with the chair of the committee on which they are serving. Staff and others persons should consult with the chief executive. Particulars are to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting of the Board or any committee.

### **Additional safeguards in relation to External Research Funding**

4. The Board has adopted additional rules in relation to board members, the chief executive, staff and members of committees to prevent a conflict of interest in the carrying out of the Board's functions in relation to processing and decisions on research awards.

### **Board members, the chief executive and employees**

A conflict of interest for a board member, the chief executive and any employee shall be deemed to exist in any of the following circumstances:

- A board member is an applicant for research funding;
- A board member is working in the same department as an applicant for research funding;

- A board member, chief executive or employee is a collaborator in an application for research funding;
- A board member has supervised an applicant within the previous five years and is a staff member of the same institution;
- A board member, the chief executive or employee has, or has had, a personal relationship with an applicant;
- Any other reason considered relevant by the board member, chief executive, or employee.

Where there is any doubt about whether a conflict of interest arises, a board member and the chief executive should consult with the chair. Employees should consult the chief executive.

If a conflict of interest arises, the board member, chief executive or employee of the HRB should not involve himself or herself in the processing of the application for research funding.

### **Members of research committees/panels**

A conflict of interest will be deemed to exist for a member of one of the HRB's research committees/panels if

- A Committee Member is working in the same Department as an applicant;
- A Committee Member is an applicant or a collaborator in the project before the Committee;
- A committee member has supervised an applicant within the previous five years and is a member of the same institution;
- A committee member has, or has had, a personal relationship with the applicant;
- Any other reason as considered relevant by the committee member.

Where a conflict of interest exists, a committee/panel member must leave the room when the application is being considered and cannot score the application or take any part in its assessment.

A copy of the form that members of the research committees/panels are asked to complete before their annual meeting is attached as an appendix.

### **Decisions on research awards**

5. As an additional safeguard, the Board will decide awards on the basis of the recommendations of the committees/panels established for the purpose of the award, without knowing the names of individual awardees at the time of decision. Board members will be informed following a decision of the names of the successful applicants.

6. It is the responsibility of members of the Board, employees of the HRB and any person acting on its behalf to be aware of the HRB's rules in relation to disclosure and conflict of interest and to abide by them.

September 2002

# ***APPENDIX***

## **Health Research Board**

### **Declaration of Conflict of Interest for Committee Members**

***Please complete this form and return it to the Health Research Board.***

A conflict of interest for a Committee Member shall be deemed to exist under any of the following circumstances:

- A Committee Member is working in the same Department as an applicant;
- A Committee Member is an applicant or a collaborator in the project before the Committee;
- A Committee Member has supervised an applicant within the previous five years and is a member of the same Institution;
- A Committee Member has, or has had, a personal relationship with the applicant;
- Any other reason as considered relevant by the committee member.

**Where a conflict of interest exists, a committee member must leave the room when the application is being considered and cannot score the application or take any part in its assessment.**

Please sign below as appropriate:

**A. I declare that no conflict of interest arises in relation to any research proposal being considered by the Committee of which I am a member**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Capitals: \_\_\_\_\_

**OR**

**B. I declare that a conflict of interest arises in relation to the following research proposals (please list reference number(s) of proposal(s))**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name in Capitals: \_\_\_\_\_

Proposal reference numbers: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_