

CODE OF CONDUCT & CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY - BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAMME

1. This policy relates to anyone involved in the Action on Hearing Loss grant application process, including members and chairs of the grant scheme review panels, applicants, external referees, Action on Hearing Loss staff and trustees.
2. Research applications and related correspondence, review panel meeting papers, and the identity of external referees are strictly confidential and must be kept secure and not disseminated to or discussed with others outside the review process.
3. External referees will be selected under the criteria that they are knowledgeable in the field of the application, do not work in the same institution as the applicant and are not themselves applicants during the same grant round. Any other conflict of interests should be declared by the referee during the review process. Any conflicts of interest by referees will be declared to review panel members and taken into account when considering the application.
4. Review panel members are required to declare any conflicts of interest at the beginning of meetings. Review panels should satisfy themselves that all conflicts of interest have been declared and, when required, individuals will be asked to leave the room and take no part in the discussion of the application. If necessary, review panels may wish to debate and decide who should or should not take part in the discussion, and the ultimate decision will be made by the Chairman.
5. The Chairman cannot be involved in an application to be discussed by his/her review panel; however other review panel members can be involved in a grant application. Trustees cannot be involved in a grant application.
6. Applicants should not, under any circumstances, directly approach members of the Action on Hearing Loss review panels in connection with their (or another's) research application. To do so may lead to their application being rejected.
7. Review panel members and external referees can expect that their comments will be treated in confidence by Action on Hearing Loss staff and trustees. Applicants can expect that Action on Hearing Loss staff and trustees will not disclose details of their applications to those outside the review process.
8. When applicants are informed of the outcome of their applications, referees' comments and summarised conclusions of the review panel will be supplied upon request. Information which might identify the comments of individual review panel members or referees will not be revealed.
9. Action on Hearing Loss will inform external referees of the final outcome of applications after communicating decisions to applicants. Referees are asked to regard all details of applications and their outcomes as confidential.
10. Review panel members, Action on Hearing Loss staff and trustees will refuse any requests for information or feedback from applicants on how a particular judgement was reached.