



Updated: September 2024

Peer Reviewer Conflicts & Confidentiality Policy

Conflicts of Interest Code of Practice

All members of the Prostate Cancer UK Research Advisory Committee and any external peer reviewer must actively adhere to and support this Conflicts of Interest Code of Practice.

External peer reviewers will only be approached if the Research Team at Prostate Cancer UK does not identify any conflicts of interest based on the criteria identified below. All external reviewers must disclose any potential conflict of interest, and if a significant conflict comes to light then that reviewer shall not be used.

Definition of a Conflict of Interest:

Prostate Cancer UK considers a Conflict of Interest to arise if the potential reviewer or RAC member:

- Is a named party on the grant application, either as PI, co-applicant, collaborator, mentor, referee or Head of Department.
- Has a recent collaboration with any of the grant applicants (excluding collaborators): a recent collaboration is defined as an active funded grant, joint publication or other active working collaboration normally during the previous 5 years. Co-authorship on publications resulting from a large consortium (in excess of 20 authors) will not be considered a conflict of interest as collaboration between the two parties is considered to be minimal unless specified otherwise by the reviewer.
- Has a personal relationship with any of the named parties on a grant application, such as spouse, family member or close friendship.
- Is at the same Research Institute as the lead applicant(s) or co-applicants of the grant application. If the individual is at the same Research Institute as a collaborator on the grant it is not considered to be a significant conflict of interest; however, we will take into consideration individual cases if raised by the reviewer.

- For any Centre of Excellence, collaboration between research institutions will not be considered a significant conflict of interest. Only when direct personal collaborations have been identified would there be a conflict of interest.

Please note, Prostate Cancer UK may consider relaxing certain conflicts of interest if the fair assessment of an application is jeopardised by a significantly reduced number of assessors involved in the discussion.

Confidentiality

Before accessing the documentation associated with an application (with the exception of the proposal abstract), all potential peer reviewers must agree to the following code of conduct.

Prostate Cancer UK grant reviewers will have their comments (unless permission is explicitly given) and identity kept strictly confidential from applicants by both charity staff and members of the Research Advisory Committee.

Reviewers must also keep the applications confidential and are required to:

- keep the application secure, not disseminate it, not copy the whole or any part, nor use any ideas in them for any other purposes, and dispose of electronic and paper documents securely after reviewing;
- not discuss the application with anyone else without prior permission from the charity, nor contact the applicant about issues pertaining to the application;
- and declare any conflict of interest and if they exist discuss with charity staff whether the conflict of interest precludes them from reviewing the application.