

## DBRIC Conflict of Interest Policy

**Definition:** In relation to decisions made by the board of the Dutch-Belgian Research Institute of Chiropractic (DBRIC), one of whose duties is to allocate funding on receipt of applications from researchers or research institutions, a conflict of interest is defined as a situation in which financial or other personal considerations have the potential to compromise or bias professional judgment and objectivity. An apparent conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the professional's judgment is likely to be compromised. A potential conflict of interest involves a situation that may develop into an actual conflict of interest. It is important to note that a conflict of interest exists whether or not decisions are affected by a personal interest; a conflict of interest implies only the potential for bias, not a likelihood.

**Different types of conflict of interest:** A conflict of interest can be financial, academic, personal, political/religious/philosophical or institutional.

1. A financial conflict may be present when direct grants, fees (including review and writing assistance, lecturing and expert testimony), honoraria, travel support for the project, equipment or anything of value (royalties, patents, gifts or stocks) are linked between the grant application, the reviewer and also includes one of the above for family members of the reviewer.
2. An academic conflict may be said to have occurred when the publicised or otherwise well known beliefs of the reviewer towards the subject matter of the application conflict with the applicant or the contents of the grant application.
3. A personal conflict may include relationships with family, friends, competitors and peers as they relate to the proposed project.
4. A political/religious/philosophical conflict with the author(s) and/or the content of the project must be declared where it may reasonably be seen that such conflict is of such a nature as to compromise or bias professional judgement and objectivity .
5. An institutional affiliation may be direct or indirect. A direct conflict occurs where the reviewer has a employment or contractual link to the institution applying for the grant. An indirect relationship occurs when a research project seeks to investigate, examine or test any product of an organisation that is itself funding the institution where such research will be conducted. (Adapted from ICMJE and Johnson (2010), JMPT (33), 2, pg 81-86)

**Declaration:** A conflict of interest, once identified, must be declared by a member of the board or Academic Advisory Committee (AAC) as soon as it becomes apparent that such a conflict might exist. Where a member of the board or AAC declares no conflict of interest, the wording will read *"I have read and understand the DBRIC's policy in relation to conflict of interest and declare that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, no such conflict exists."*

**Suspension/substitution:** The Chairman of the board may, after consulting the members of the board and/or AAC (either in the presence or absence of the individual to whom the conflict of interest relates), decide to suspend or remove the member from that particular evaluation process when it is considered that the conflict of interest is likely to influence the decision making process. Where it becomes necessary for the board to do so, it may co-opt a suitably qualified individual to sit in the absence of the member who has been so suspended or removed .

In the event that the Chairman of the board shall declare a conflict of interest, he shall remove himself from the decision-making process. In the event that he refuses to do so, his suspension or removal may be decided by a majority of the board members.

**Rights of the board:** When it is shown that a conflict of interest is purposely withheld by any member of the board and/or AAC or anyone acting on its behalf, either during or after the application has been considered, the board reserves the right to suspend, withhold or cancel any grants and/or take action to recover such payments that have already been made if it is felt that the conflict be of such a severity that any outcomes of the research may be regarded adversely by the wider research community.

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