



Peer Review Committee: _____

CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR MEMBERS OF PEER/MERIT REVIEW COMMITTEES¹

A. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a conflict between a person's duties and responsibilities with regard to the review process, and that person's private, professional, business or public interests. Some factors to consider when determining if a conflict of interest exists are:

- (i) Potential for professional or personal benefit;
- (ii) Level of leadership or authority;
- (iii) Professional or personal proximity to the competition or application being reviewed, or to an applicant;
- (iv) Direct or indirect financial interest in a competition or application being reviewed.

Any otherwise eligible reviewer may attend a review committee unless he/she:

- (i) has disclosed a potential conflict of interest in regard to the competition to be reviewed, and has been determined to be in conflict of interest in regard to the competition, by CIHR's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or his/her delegate;
- (ii) has funding-decision authority for the competition; or
- (iii) is a Principal Applicant on an application to be reviewed by that committee.

No committee member with a conflict of interest may participate in any part of the review of an application. A committee member is considered to have a conflict of interest with an application if he/she:

- is from the same immediate department, institution, organization or company as the applicant, and who interacts with the applicant in the course of his/her duties at the department, institution, organization or company;
- has collaborated, been a co-applicant or published with the applicant, within the last five years (exception will be made for CIHR funded networks designed to increase partnerships among disciplines, institutions and thematic research);
- has been a student or supervisor of the applicant within the last ten years;
- is a close personal friend or relative of the applicant;
- has had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant;
- is in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the application (e.g., holds stock in the company of an industry partner or a competitor); or

¹ For more information see CIHR's Policy on Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality in the context of Merit, Relevance and Peer Review (CCIP) at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/28654.html>

- for some other reason feels that he/she cannot provide an objective review of the application.

(**Note:** For Awards committees, these criteria also apply to the committee member's relationship with the proposed supervisor, if applicable.)

All committee members (Chair, Scientific Officer, Reviewers, etc.) are subject to the same conflict of interest guidelines. CIHR Staff and the Chair are responsible for resolving areas of uncertainty during the committee meeting.

B. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is information about a person that shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone else without that person's prior expressed consent. The information provided by applicants in their applications is protected by the *Privacy Act* and is made available to external assessors for reviewing purposes only. Thus, information contained in applications, reviewer reports, names of reviewers and committee discussions are all strictly confidential. The use of this information for any other purpose than what is outlined here is a breach of the Privacy Act and could result in a CIHR investigation and/or report to the federal Privacy Commissioner's Office.

Committee members must not discuss with applicants, or anyone outside of the committee, any information relating to the review of a specific application, or offer opinions on the chances of success or failure. All requests for information on an application or a reviewer report should be referred to the Deputy Director at CIHR responsible for the committee in question.

By law, applicants have access to their own application files. Therefore all written materials used in evaluating an application are made available to the applicants when they are notified of CIHR's decision. However, CIHR will not reveal the identity of reviewers to applicants.

All materials related to the review process must be stored in a secure manner to prevent unauthorized access. Materials must be transmitted using secure carriers and technologies as per CIHR's guidelines on the handling of protected information. Any loss or theft of these materials must be reported to CIHR. When materials are no longer required, all material related to peer/merit review must be destroyed using a secure method, or returned to CIHR for destruction.

Declaration:

I, the undersigned, do hereby agree to adhere to the **CIHR Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality** policy as described in section A and B above. It also certifies that I have received and agree to abide by the CIHR Guidelines for members of peer/merit review committees.

(Name)

(Signature)

(Date)