

# Macmillan Research Grants Code of Conduct



This code of conduct relates to all Research Advisory Panel (RAP) members, individuals acting as external peer reviewers (EPRs) for Macmillan, Macmillan staff members acting as internal reviewers (MIRs), research grant applicants, and Macmillan Research team staff members.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to ensure that the research grants review process at Macmillan is fair and transparent; that applications are objectively assessed on their scientific quality, relevance, and potential to bring benefit to people living with cancer; and that confidentiality is maintained through the review process.

If an individual breaches this code of conduct then they may be asked to step down from their involvement in the research grants review process, or in the case of applicants, may have their application withdrawn from consideration.

## Confidentiality

- a) Details of applications are strictly confidential and should not be discussed by MIRs, EPRs, RAP members or Macmillan Research team staff members with persons outside the review process, either during or, in the case of unsuccessful applications, subsequent to the review process.
- b) MIRs, EPRs and RAP members should not communicate directly with the applicant about their application at any point in the review process, and applicants should not approach EPRs, RAP members or MIRs about their application.
- c) Any feedback from MIRs, EPRs and RAP members on a particular application will be provided directly to applicants by the Macmillan Research team in an anonymised form from which individual MIRs, EPRs and RAP members are not identifiable.
- d) Applicants should not seek direct feedback on their application from MIRs, EPRs and RAP members, and MIRs, EPRs and RAP members should not provide such feedback.

## Conflicts of interest for RAP members

- a) Where a RAP member is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest in writing to the Macmillan Research team and all fellow RAP members on submission of the application and must withdraw from any consideration of that application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports and must retire from the meeting when the application is assessed. Details of discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives.
- b) Where the chair of the RAP is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, he or she must declare an interest in writing to the Macmillan Research team and all fellow RAP

members and should not be involved in that round of meetings. A vice chair will chair the meeting to prevent any undue influence.

c) RAP members who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion, or they have applied for funding to the same grant round); have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past three years; work in the same institution; or have any other vested interest in the outcome of an application, should declare an interest and may be asked to withdraw from the meeting for that application, or may be allowed to stay, but not vote on the application.

d) Members of the RAP are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions in writing to the Macmillan Research team before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the meeting to the chair of the panel as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent. If a RAP member is concerned about a potential conflict of interest involving another RAP member, they should also declare this in the same way. A decision will be taken by the Macmillan Research team or by the chair of the panel as to whether the potential conflict of interest means the RAP member in question should withdraw from any consideration of the relevant application.

### **Conflicts of interest for EPRs**

a) Where an EPR could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion, or they are being considered for funding within the same grant round); have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past three years; work in the same institution; or have any other vested interest in the outcome of an application, they should declare an interest and may be asked to withdraw from the peer review process for that application.

b) EPRs are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions in writing to the Macmillan Research team. A decision will be taken by the team as to whether the EPR should proceed with peer review of the application in question and the EPR will be advised accordingly.

### **General**

RAP members, EPRs, MIRs and Macmillan Research team staff members should also adhere to the spirit of this document and declare any other interests which they feel may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of Macmillan as soon as they are aware of them. This includes interests held by an individual's spouse or children.