

Our Breast Cancer Research



Policy statements

Conflicts of interest

1. Introduction

a) As part of its commitment to impartiality and to the integrity of the peer review process, Against Breast Cancer has established a Conflicts of Interest Policy. This policy relates to the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB), the External Review Panel, the Board of Trustees and all committees of the Charity.

b) The purpose of this policy is to minimise the potential for conflicts of interest arising and to protect Against Breast Cancer and those who work for it from any perception, real or otherwise, that the external interests and affiliations of its committee members might interfere with their ability to work towards the furtherance of the Charity's objectives.

c) This policy is based on the standard conflicts of interest policy of the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC).

2. Declaration of interests

a) Any persons covered by this policy, as defined in paragraph 1a) above, must declare any disclosable external interest on their appointment to Against Breast Cancer, and annually thereafter. A register of interests will be kept up to date by the Research Manager of Against Breast Cancer.

b) Interests which should be disclosed by such individuals include;

Equity interests (if worth £10,000 or more, or more than 1% of the total issued capital) in enterprises with involvement in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, biotech or related areas, or in any other enterprise that may have a real or perceived interest in the work of the charity.

Consultancies and other external appointments (paid and unpaid)

c) The individual should adhere to the spirit of this document and in so doing should declare any other interests which the individual feels may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of Against Breast Cancer. This includes interests held by the individuals' spouse, partner or

children.

3. Discussion of proposals

- a) Details of applications, meeting papers and related correspondence and the names of external referees are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with persons outside the review process.
- b) Discussions of a proposal between members of the SAB or any other funding committee which occur outside a meeting should be declared to the committee Chairperson.
- c) If an individual is approached by an applicant for technical advice on an application then he or she may provide advice but must report this to the SAB Chairperson and the Research Manager at Against Breast Cancer. They may subsequently be asked by the Chairperson to absent themselves from a discussion of the application concerned.
- d) If the advice sought by an applicant is on administrative grounds or to seek information on the status of their proposal, the individual should refer the applicant to the Research Manager of Against Breast Cancer.

4. Management of conflicts of interest

- a) To prevent a direct conflict of interest, all Board/committee members are prohibited from submitting funding proposal applications to ABC during the term of their membership. If membership has been terminated early or the end of contractual term reached, a period of 6 months must be served before applying for future project funding from ABC.
- b) Board/committee members who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are funded or applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion) or have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past 3 years, or work in the same institution, 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.
- c) In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the Research Manager who will discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Trustees, who will make a decision with regard to the provisions of paragraphs 4 a) and 4 b) above.
- d) If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of the Board/committee, then he or she should raise the matter with the Research Manager who will discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Trustees, who will make a decision with regard to the provisions of paragraphs 4 b) above.
- e) Members of the Board/committee are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions to the Research Manager before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the meeting as soon as the existence of a conflict of interest becomes apparent.

5. Resolution of conflicts of interest

- a) Against Breast Cancer recognises that the majority of conflicts arising will relate to a particular issue and as such will not present any long term restrictions on an individual's ability to work for the Charity or to sit on its committees.

b) In a small number of cases, major conflicts of interest may arise which compromise an individual's ability to continue with their position in the Charity. Where such a situation relates to a member of the SAB or other funding panel committee, the matter will be discussed by the Research Manager together with the Chairperson of the SAB or alternative SAB member if the case concerns the Chairperson. In cases where agreement cannot be reached through this means, the case will be referred to the SAB as a whole, whose decision should be taken as final.

6. Updating the policy

a) Against Breast Cancer will endeavour to review this policy, if necessary, every two years, in consultation with the Board of Trustees.

Open access for research publications

a) Against Breast Cancer grants are funded through public donations, and as such, Against Breast Cancer expects that findings from such research will be published in an appropriate form (usually as papers in peer-reviewed journals), and in a free, online, Open Access manner to maximise public benefit.

b) All research papers that have been accepted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal and are funded in whole or in part by Against Breast Cancer, shall be made available from UK PubMed Central as soon as possible, and in any event within six months of their publication.

c) Grant awards can be used to cover the cost of Open Access publication for work funded by Against Breast Cancer. Fellowship Grant recipients may apply to Against Breast Cancer for publication fees to be covered, which will be considered on a case by case basis.

Data sharing

Data generated using publicly-donated funds should be made available to the wider research community in order to maximise value to the public and expedite discovery to benefit patients.

We encourage researchers seeking funding to consider data sharing and to detail plans in their funding application. The data sharing plan will be used for data gathering and monitoring purposes and will not be reviewed as part of the funding decision. Applicants who do not currently share their data will be encouraged to indicate what issues and barriers exist that hinder them from making their data available to the wider research community.

Information on data sharing, including what to include in a free text data sharing plan, can be found here on Cancer Research UK's website.

The use of animals in research

a) Against Breast Cancer fully supports the replacement, refinement and reduction (3Rs) of the use of animals in research. All experimental programmes funded by Against Breast Cancer must only use animals when there are no alternatives. Experiments using animals must use the simplest possible, or least sentient, species of animal, ensure that distress and suffering are avoided wherever possible, and employ an appropriate design using the minimum number of animals consistent with ensuring that the scientific objectives will be met

All grant holders using animals must implement the principles in the cross-funder guidance 'Responsibility in the Use of Animals in Bioscience Research'.

Grant holders using non-human primates must comply with the NC3Rs guidelines 'Primate Accommodation, Care and Use'.

Grant holders should make use of the ARRIVE guidelines when designing their experiments and ensure that they report animal-based studies in accordance with these guidelines as far as possible, taking into account the specific editorial policies of the journal concerned.

b) Against Breast Cancer understands that some people may not agree with this policy and we respect their views. Any of our donors who do not wish to fund research which may involve the use of animals have the option of requesting that their contributions are not used in this way. Once made, Against Breast Cancer is legally bound to respect any such request and any such donations will be restricted to non-animal research.

c) This policy is in line with the Association for Medical Research Charities policy statement, as can be found here.

Supporting research in universities

Against Breast Cancer endorses the Association of Medical Research Charities position statement supporting research in universities, more here.

Previous



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