



The Royal College of Radiologists

# RCR Conflict of interest Policy (Boards and Committees)

<b>Audience</b>	Contributors – Board and Committee members
<b>Publication Date</b>	October 2024
<b>Last Reviewed</b>	July 2024
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Governance
<b>Version</b>	1.0



# Conflict of interest policy

## For non-trustee Contributors – Boards and Committees

### 1. Purpose and Scope

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to ensure transparency and the open and proper management of any conflict of interest to protect both the RCR and individuals from any appearance of impropriety. It aligns with and complements the provisions of the RCR's Contributors' Code of Conduct and should be read in conjunction with that document.
- 1.2 This policy for managing conflicts of interest (or perceived conflicts of interest) applies to any individual who is undertaking work on behalf of the College as a Contributor on its Boards and Committees.
- 1.3 The RCR handles conflicts of interest in the following way:
  - 1.3.1 Identify the conflict of interest
  - 1.3.2 Prevent the conflict of interest from affecting the decision
  - 1.3.3 Record the conflict of interest

### 2. Conflicts of interest

- 2.1 Conflicts of interest are a condition and not a behaviour. There is nothing wrong in there being a conflict of interest, but it is important that these are identified and declared so that they can be managed appropriately.
- 2.2 Conflicts of interest may arise where an individual's personal or family interests conflict or appear to conflict with those of the role that the individual is undertaking for the RCR.
- 2.3 Conflicts can also arise between an individual's duty to the College and some other public obligation, trusteeship of another organisation or membership of/ employment by another organisation. Therefore, the individual may have divided loyalties but does not stand to gain financially or in any other way.
- 2.4 A potential conflict is anything which could be perceived as impairing impartiality or objectivity and hence casts doubt over a decision that has been taken.

### 3. Declaration of interests

- 3.1 All Contributors must consider what, if any, conflicts of interest or loyalty they may have with the duties and role they are undertaking for RCR. They must also consider any potential conflicts of interest or loyalty they might have or appear to have.
- 3.2 Contributors are expected to declare any conflict of interest or loyalty. Such a declaration is not a statement of 'wrongdoing' but ensures openness and transparency. If in doubt, an individual is advised to err on the side of caution and declare a potential conflict of interest.
- 3.3 A declaration of interest form is available, and it is expected that all Contributors complete this outlining both real and perceived conflicts of interest. Members of RCR Boards and Committees must complete the declaration of interests form, including with a nil return.



- 3.4 The member of RCR staff supporting the Board or Committee is responsible for maintaining a register of interests for their Board or Committee. The register of interests should be available at all meetings of the Board or Committee, or for inspection by trustees and/or the RCR Governance team. Where appropriate, the register may be published to ensure full openness and transparency in line with best practice.
- 3.5 The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. Data will be processed only to ensure that Contributors act in the best interests of the RCR. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.
- 3.6 All agendas of RCR Board and Committee meetings invite declarations of interest with any items on the agenda. All Contributors must consider the question and declare any conflicts at the start of the meeting.
- 3.7 There are RCR Boards and Committees where there is a high or an inevitable risk of conflicts (such as where the College has to rely on the expertise of those who may also be involved in commercial developments in the same area of activity as the work of the board or committee). In such cases, advance declarations of interest will be sought so as to ensure they are given proper consideration before the meeting and the members concerned advised of the steps to be taken to manage the conflict.

## **4. Management of conflicts of interest**

- 4.1 It is important that any conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest are managed. In a Board or Committee context this will usually involve limiting the involvement of the conflicted individual in the decision making and/or decision taking process. Decision making is the discussion which takes place to inform, debate and consider a matter before a decision is taken.
- 4.2 It is the responsibility of the Chair of the Board or Committee to manage the conflict, supported by the secretary to the Board. Options for the management of the conflict in terms of decision making and decision taking are:
- a. Full exclusion
  - b. Partial exclusion
  - c. Full involvement
- 4.3 While full exclusion from both the decision making and taking would be rare, it should not be discounted if the management of the conflict demands it. Partial exclusion, where a contributor remains for the decision making but not the decision taking, is likely to be more common. Full involvement would only be advised where there is a very low risk of actual or perceived inappropriate bias or influence of the decision. None of these options should be taken as the default position, and all options must be considered on a case-by-case basis. There are some examples in annex A to illustrate how management of conflicts of interest might be handled.
- 4.4 The Head of Governance or a member of the Governance team are available to advise on how best to manage the conflict.
- 4.5 If the conflict is held by the Chair of the Board or Committee then the Governance team must always be consulted on how to manage the decision making and decision taking process.



4.6 Similarly, if the majority of Board or Committee members are conflicted or a quorum cannot be reached with non-conflicted members, then advice must be obtained from the Governance team; in such circumstances decisions may be elevated to a more senior Committee.

## 5. Recording conflicts of interest

5.1 All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- 5.1.1 the nature and extent of the conflict;
- 5.1.2 an outline of the discussion; and
- 5.1.3 the actions taken to manage the conflict.

5.2 The Chair of the Board or Committee is responsible for ensuring that the minutes of the meeting are a full and accurate record of all conflicts and the actions taken to manage them.

## 6 Linked Policies

6.1 [Contributors Code of Conduct](#)

## 7 Compliance

All RCR Contributors are required to comply with this policy. In line with the Contributor Code of Conduct, any breaches of this policy will usually be managed under the RCR Contributors Problem Solving policy and process.



## Managing conflicts of interest examples<sup>1</sup>

Dr X is a Consultant Clinical Radiologist. They have a substantive Consultant post in an NHS Trust and undertake some work for a teleradiology company. They also do some paid advisory work for a commercial AI start-up company, Company Z. They hold shares worth 20% of the value of Company Y, another AI company. They also hold a position as a trustee of a charity which provides healthcare services in the Global South. Dr X sits on the RCR's AI Committee.

When Dr X joins the AI Committee they should enter the above information on the register of interests. The register should be updated if anything changes, for example if Dr X sells their shares, or undertakes similar advisory work for a different company.

### Full exclusion:

- At a committee meeting, there is an item for discussion which involves a decision as to whether RCR should endorse a product made by Company Y.

Dr X does not work for the company and does not have experience with the product. However, they would stand to benefit financially from any decision which benefits Company Y. It is agreed that Dr X should therefore declare their interest and not take part in any part of the decision making nor decision taking process and absent themselves from the room. The minutes should record the declaration, the decision to absent, Dr X leaving the room and when they return. Should Dr X not make their own declaration clear ahead of the discussion, it is for the Chair to raise the matter.

### Partial exclusion:

- The Committee is discussing which AI Companies should be invited to attend an RCR event, which may or may not include Company Y and Company Z. The event will give the Company the opportunity to mix with members and Fellows and promote its product. Dr X knows a lot about the different companies and while declaring their interest, they are able to add to the conversation with information and background that others do not have. Dr X should declare an interest as both an employee of one organisation and a shareholder in another. However, it is agreed that the insight they have in that area is helpful for informing the discussion – it is therefore concluded that Dr X should remain for the decision making but should then leave and take no part in the decision taking. The minutes should record the declaration, the decision of the committee to a partial exclusion and note when Dr X leaves and rejoins the meeting.

### Full involvement:

- The Committee is discussing the use of some AI technology that is being used in the Trust for which Dr X works. It is not a product that is manufactured by either Company Z or Company Y and does not compete with their products. Dr X should declare their interest as an employee of the Trust, and their involvement with both Company Y and Z – stating that there is no direct competition between them and the product. Following discussion, it is agreed that as there is no direct conflict that Dr X can remain for the discussion and any decision making. The minutes should record

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that these are just examples and that each case will need to be judged on its individual circumstances.



that Dr X raised the matter, it was discussed, and an agreement reached that they remain and are fully involved.

