

## Life Sciences Discovery Fund Conflict of Interest Policy on External Reviews

The Life Sciences Discovery Fund Authority (LSDF) employs expert external reviewers to assist in evaluating grant applications, post-award progress of grantees and its own programs. Integral to the success of these reviews is the requirement that they be conducted without bias. Reviewers must not have personal, professional or financial interests that are likely to conflict with their ability to perform an unbiased review.

This conflict of interest policy is established to ensure that LSDF's external review contractors and reviewers perform their services in an impartial and unbiased manner. For the purposes of this policy, a "conflict of interest" is defined as any personal, professional or financial interest that may be reasonably perceived to bias the reviewer's judgment. Contractors and reviewers shall disclose any potential conflicts of interest they may have when performing reviews on behalf of LSDF. All conflicts of interest associated with a review must be disclosed at the time that such conflicts are first recognized. When a conflict of interest has been declared, a reviewer must recuse him or herself from further review of the conflicted subject matter unless otherwise authorized by LSDF.

To guide those coordinating or performing reviews for LSDF about whether or not they have a conflict of interest, the following non-exhaustive examples of conflicts are presented.

1. Affiliations with a grant applicant organization, an organization collaborating in a grant application or an organization otherwise under review place a reviewer in a conflict of interest situation. A reviewer is deemed to have a conflict if he or she:

- is currently employed at the organization;
- is currently providing service to the organization as a consultant or advisor;
- was previously employed by the organization within the last 12 months;
- is being considered for employment by the organization;
- has a formal or informal reemployment arrangement with the organization;
- is currently a member on a visiting committee or other advisory group at the organization;
- holds any office, governing board membership or relevant committee chairpersonship in the organization;
- is currently enrolled as a student at the organization; or

- has received an honorarium or award from the organization within the last 12 months.

2. Relationships with an investigator, project director or other person associated with an LSDF grant application, funded project or program under review place a reviewer in a conflict of interest situation. A reviewer is deemed to have a conflict if he or she has one or more of such relationships:

- family relationships such as spouse, child, sibling or parent;
- business or professional partnership relationships;
- close personal friendships;
- relationships that have included long-standing personal or professional differences;
- past or present professional relationships such as thesis advisor or thesis student; or
- collaborative relationships on a project, book, article, report or paper within the last 48 months.

3. Financial arrangements, having a value of more than \$10,000, where such value may reasonably be affected by the work underlying a proposal, funded project or program under review place a reviewer in a conflict of interest situation. Such arrangements may include stocks, bonds, investments, partnerships, royalties or intellectual property interests.

For the purposes of this policy, interests of the following persons, to the extent the reviewer is aware of such interests, are to be treated as if they were those of the reviewer: spouse, partner, dependent child, or relative living in a reviewer's immediate household.

Contractors and reviewers are required to report to LSDF any conflict of interest of which they are aware, including, but not limited to, those described above. Except under unusual circumstances, any contractor or reviewer who has declared a conflict of interest with respect to a review process may not participate in that review. In exceptional cases, LSDF may decide that the need for special expertise of the contractor or reviewer outweighs any possible bias posed by a potential conflict of interest.

All contractors and reviewers must sign a pre-review statement indicating any conflicts of interest that they have, and must also sign a post-review statement that they did not participate in the discussion or review of any grant application, funded project or program concerning which they have a conflict of interest.