



**Brain Tumour Research Scientific and Medical Advisory Board (SMAB)
Conflicts of interest and Confidentiality Policy**

October 2020

1. Conflicts of interest

- a. The high standards of integrity expected by the members of the charity and the wider public require SMAB members to avoid situations in which their duties and other interests conflict or where there could be a suspicion of conflict. When asked to review a proposal or sit on an interview panel or sub-committee, SMAB members need to consider whether there are any potential conflicts of interest and if so inform Brain Tumour Research as soon as possible. Those involved in assessment must not only avoid conflict of interest between reviewers and applicants, but also avoid circumstances that might give the impression there is a conflict of interest.
- b. It is impossible to prescribe a comprehensive set of rules on interests. Individuals are best placed to know their duties with other bodies and where these might conflict. The rule-of-thumb question one should ask is: 'Will I benefit either directly or indirectly if this grant is awarded or is not awarded?' If in doubt, individuals should discuss their concerns with the Chair or Research directorate staff.
- c. Before each meeting, or when asked to review an application or sit on a subcommittee, Research directorate staff will ask SMAB members to declare conflicts of interest. If the Chair has a conflict of interest he or she will withdraw and a deputy will be appointed to Chair for the item.
- d. Where appropriate, the minutes of a meeting will record decisions about conflicts of interests, any withdrawals for particular items and the reason for these withdrawals. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that this procedure is followed.
- e. An individual who is concerned about another's potential or actual conflicts of interest should raise the issues with the Chair.
- f. Conflicts of interest may arise from:
 - close links with, or interest in, a particular institution from which a grant or other funding proposal is being considered (e.g. employment or academic collaborations)
 - a commercial or pecuniary interest (e.g. where a member or an organisation with which an individual is involved may benefit financially, directly or indirectly, from a decision made)
 - a non-pecuniary interest where a member has other interests that might be thought to influence them, either wittingly or unwittingly personal or family interest with regard to both pecuniary (e.g. from connections with bodies which have a direct financial interest, or from being a business partner, or being employed by a person with such an interest)
 - nonpecuniary (e.g. any benefit or favour 'in kind' including arising from membership of clubs or other organisations) interests
- g. An absolute conflict of interest, where the individual should decline to comment, is when the SMAB member is:
 - a close friend or related to the applicant(s)
 - directly involved in the work the applicant proposes to carry out

- located at the same department as the applicant(s), co-applicant(s) or project partner(s)
 - working closely with the applicant(s) (for example as a co-author or PhD supervisor or has done so within the last five years
- h. Where a conflict of interest exists the SMAB member will not take part in the review process, under certain circumstances will not receive any of the paperwork and will leave the room during any discussion relating to the application.

2. Confidentiality

- a. The SMAB's deliberations and decision-making are confidential to allow free and frank expression of opinions, to protect the confidence of referees and individuals and to avoid premature disclosure of intentions. SMAB members must agree to treat as confidential all correspondence and documents sent by Brain Tumour Research. This may result in members receiving pre-publication or confidential information or proprietary information owned by the applicants. Information contained in confidential documents and applications will be made available on the terms and conditions below.
- b. Confidential information should be used solely for the purpose of SMAB business, including assessing and taking decisions for research support on behalf of Brain Tumour Research.
- c. SMAB members will not, without written consent from both Brain Tumour Research and the researcher, disclose the fact that an applicant has applied to the charity for support.
- d. SMAB members will not, without written consent from both Brain Tumour Research and the researcher, either disclose confidential information to any third party or use confidential information for any purpose
- e. It is understood that the foregoing restrictions on use and disclosure shall not apply to information which:
- was in the public domain or which subsequently becomes part of the public domain by publication or otherwise, except by your wrongful act
 - was in a SMAB member's possession and was not acquired directly or indirectly from Brain Tumour Research or the researcher
 - was received by a SMAB member from a third party who did not acquire the same directly or indirectly from Brain Tumour Research or the applicant and who did not require you to hold the same in confidence.
- f. Papers and minutes must not be disseminated or discussed outside of the review process and should be kept secure and appropriately disposed of when no longer required.
- g. Brain Tumour Research will not use comments provided by the SMAB for any purpose other than is necessary for the peer review/funding process and will not disclose them to any person except as is required for the peer review/funding decision process or the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Information will be stored as appropriate under the Data Protection Act 1998 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 (or any other law or regulation to which Brain Tumour Research is or may become subject).
- h. Brain Tumour Research will only release anonymous SMAB comments to applicants and grant holders under review. Brain Tumour Research will not release SMAB members' names in connection with any specific comments that are released under the Data Protection Act 1998, GDPR 2018 or the Freedom of Information Act 2000 without first obtaining permission to do so.

- i. A list of SMAB members is publicly available on the charity's website. Further details of SMAB members will only be provided following permission from the member.

3. Communication of decisions

Only the Chair or Chief Executive, or those members of staff authorised to act on his or her behalf, may communicate decisions taken either by the SMAB or the Board of Trustees. In reporting SMAB business special care will be taken to keep confidential any part played in discussion by individual members, to maintain the convention that any decision is the collective responsibility of the whole panel and to safeguard the anonymity of any referees. Members should resist any request for information or for explanation of how a particular decision was reached.

I HAVE READ THE BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH SMAB TERMS AND CONDITIONS.
I AGREE TO BECOMING A MEMBER OF THE BRAIN TUMOUR RESEARCH SMAB
AND ABIDING BY THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THE ABOVE:

NAME (CAPITALS):

JOB TITLE & INSTITUTION:

SIGNED:

DATED: