



# Conflict of interest, confidentiality, non-disclosure and responsibility rules

## Conflicts of interest (Col)

To ensure complete fairness and impartiality of the review process, AIRC has established a set of rules concerning the Col. Conflicts of interest arise when a reviewer (external reviewer or member of an AIRC Review Committee, e.g. CTS) has or appears to have an interest in an application that is likely to bias his/her evaluation of it.

The following circumstances represent conflicts of interest:

1. the reviewer is (or has been in the past five years) an employee or a member of a Board (e.g. Scientific Advisory Board) of the applicant's Institution;
2. the reviewer is a close relative of the applicant (parent, sibling, son/daughter, spouse, domestic partner);
3. the reviewer is a current collaborator, or has collaborated, with the applicant in the past five years. Collaborators include scientific mentors and former students;
4. the reviewer has published with the applicant in the past five years. This condition may not apply in case of publications stemming from studies of large consortia and/or listing exceptionally large number of authors. To determine if co-authorship in one such publication represents a Col, reviewers should enquire with the staff of the AIRC Peer Review Office;
5. the reviewer has a longstanding scientific or personal difference with the applicant.

This list is not exclusive: there may be other circumstances in which a reviewer's decision could be influenced. In these cases the reviewer should inform the staff of the AIRC Peer Review office of the conflict. Reviewers in conflict with an applicant (and, in case of fellowship applications, with the candidate's head of the lab of origin and the head of the hosting lab) for any of the reasons listed above are excluded from the review of that application. In addition, during study section meetings, reviewers cannot participate in the discussion of the applications with which they have a Col, they are required to absent themselves and they must not be informed of the outcome of the application by other committee members, but will be informed by AIRC Staff in due course.

The staff of the AIRC peer review office will try to avoid any Col when assigning applications to reviewers; however, it is the reviewer's personal responsibility to disclose any Col with applications that he/she has been assigned either by e-mail or through the AIRC online platform used for the peer review. The rules on conflict of interest may also extend to personnel involved in the research, listed in an application, who play a major role in the proposed research activity of an application. Reviewers should contact the staff of the AIRC Peer Review

Office if this is the case.

## **Confidentiality, non-disclosure and responsibility rules**

When accepting to evaluate an application, reviewers automatically agree that they will maintain the confidentiality of applications and associated materials they have received. In line with this, no parts of an application and its associated materials can be uploaded into any online software where the confidentiality of data is not ensured, such as web-based storage providers (i.e. Google Drive, DropBox etc.) and artificial intelligence generative tools that use Large Language Models (i.e. ChatGPT etc.). Reviewers also agree to take full responsibility for their assessments, including accuracy, tone used, reasoning and originality of all their evaluations.

Following review meetings, reviewers will not disclose any information related to the evaluation and discussion of the proposals with anyone who has not been officially designated to participate in the review process.