



The Meath Foundation

Better Research - Better Care

Policy Statement

It is the policy of The Meath Foundation to conduct our work in an honest, open, and ethical manner.

The Meath Foundation Conflict of Interest Policy is designed to ensure that all potential conflicts of interest are identified and addressed in an appropriate and timely manner in order to:

- Protect the integrity of The Meath Foundation's decision-making processes;
- Protect the integrity and reputation of The Meath Foundation Directors, external members of Committees and staff;
- Ensure stakeholder trust and confidence in The Meath Foundation.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is any situation in which your personal interests or loyalties could, or could be seen to, prevent you from making a decision in the best interests of The Meath Foundation. This personal interest may be direct or indirect and can include the interests of a person connected to a Director, an external member of a Committee or a staff member.

Examples of conflicts of interest include:

- A personal connection¹ is a Director or the joint or sole owner of a supplier or service provider that the Meath Foundation is considering using.
- A personal connection or a person employed in a healthcare or academic setting with which a Director of the Meath Foundation/external member of a Committee has a professional or personal connection and who is applying to the Meath Foundation for funding.

Also, a conflict of loyalty could arise where the decision under consideration has implications for a particular institution, profession, or medical speciality with which a Director/external member of a Committee is associated.

Who Must Comply?

The policy applies to all Directors, external members of Committees and staff of the Meath Foundation.

¹ A 'personal connection' can be a parent, brother, sister, spouse, grandparent or grandchild of the individual, or a child of the spouse of the individual; any person the individual is in a partnership with; any person the individual is employed by under a contract of service; a body corporate if the individual has control of it, or if the individual and any of the aforementioned connected persons together have control over it.

Approach

Conflicts of interest commonly arise in organisations and do not present a problem if they are managed openly and effectively. It is the policy of the Meath Foundation that ethical, legal, financial, or other conflicts of interest be managed and that any such conflicts (where they arise) do not conflict with the Directors or external members of Committees obligations to the Meath Foundation.

This policy cannot anticipate all conflicts of interest, and its application may be uncertain at times. Directors and external members of Committees have a responsibility to exercise sound judgement and respect the spirit as well as the letter of this policy and to make sure that any appearance of impropriety is managed.

The approach adopted in this policy is one of disclosure rather than automatic prohibition of transactions that may give rise to a conflict of interest. Once disclosed, potential conflicts of interest will be considered and appropriate actions to address them will be decided on a case by case basis.

If, in the considered opinion of a Director or external member of a Board Committee, there is anyone attending a Board or Committee meeting who is not acknowledging their own conflict of interest then, another person in attendance at the meeting may raise the concern by addressing the Chair either during the meeting or immediately following the meeting.

In deciding what approach to take, the Directors and external members of Committees will consider whether the conflict will realistically impair the disclosing person's capacity to impartially participate in decision-making; whether the conflict needs to be managed or simply documented; and what approaches are available to avoid any conflict with the Meath Foundation's objects.

The approval of any action requires the agreement of the majority of the Board or Committee (excluding any conflicted Director) who are present and voting (if applicable) at the meeting. All details regarding the conflict of interest, including the action arising, will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Disclosure

Upon appointment to the Board or a Committee or commencement of employment each person is required to disclose fully any interests such as relationships or posts held that could potentially result in a conflict of interest by completing the Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form. Thereafter all Directors/external members of Committees and staff will be required to re-declare annually.

Interests will be recorded on the Meath Foundation's register of interests, which will be maintained by the Company Secretary. The register will be accessible by the Board and will be subject to review by the Governance & Nominating Committee annually.

The information will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as per the General Data Protection Regulation. Data will be processed only to record and manage conflicts of interest and not used for any other purpose.

It is the responsibility of every Director, external member of Committees and staff to report new conflicts of interest as they arise rather than waiting to be asked to update their declaration of interest.

At the start of each meeting of the Board or Committee, participants will be asked to disclose any conflict of interest, and if appropriate, to absent themselves entirely from the discussion on the relevant agenda item. Their absence will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Other Steps to Address Conflict of Interest

In most cases it will be sufficient for a conflicted person to absent themselves from any involvement in the matter giving rise to the conflict of interest e.g. consideration of a specific funding application so that the Meath Foundation can proceed with the matter in an impartial and objective manner. However, in some circumstances, further steps may be required to address a significant or ongoing conflict of interest. These may involve recruiting a third party to assist, removing the individual affected from relevant duties e.g. Board or Committee membership, requiring an individual to relinquish a private interest or, in exceptional cases, resignation.

Conflicts of Interest in Research Funding Decisions (Specific Provisions)

In addition to the general provisions above, the following apply to conflicts of interest relating to research grant funding:

Any Director or REQII member who applies for, is named on, or is closely associated with a research grant application must formally declare this conflict at the earliest opportunity.

Any Director or REQII member who submits an application to a funding round shall be excluded from all discussions, evaluations and decisions relating to that funding round, including consideration of other applications, and shall not be present for those agenda items.

The conflicted individual must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the relevant discussion, and this withdrawal will be recorded in the minutes.

Independent Assessment

- All research grant applications will be assessed by an independent panel of assessors who are not members of the Foundation's governance or committee structures.
- Assessors will score applications against agreed criteria.
- The results of the Assessment Panel will be used by REQII to make a recommendation to the Board of the Foundation, which will make the final decision. All decisions of the Board on the awarding of Research Grants are final.

These measures ensure that expertise is retained while safeguarding the objectivity and credibility of funding decisions.

Compliance with this policy

If the Board has a reason to believe that a person subject to this policy has failed to comply with it, it will investigate the circumstances. If it is found that this person has failed to disclose a conflict of interest, the Board may take action against the person up to and including seeking the person's resignation from the Meath Foundation Board or Committee.

***This Conflicts of Interest and Loyalty Policy approved by G & N Board Committee 19th
January 2026***

For review Q1 2029

