

Tenovus Cancer Care Research Grants Code of Conduct

Tenovus Cancer Care prides itself on the robustness and transparency of its grant selection process. We are currently the only Welsh charity member of the National Cancer Research Institute (NCRI) and the Association of Medical Research Charities (AMRC) and adhere strongly to their principals of open call, peer reviewed research.

As part of our commitment to fund only the best and most relevant research possible it is essential that there is public and professional trust in the integrity of our grant selection and award process.

The purpose of this code of conduct is to ensure that the research grants review process at Tenovus Cancer Care is rigorous and comprehensive so that applications are objectively assessed on their scientific quality, relevance, and potential to fulfil the research strategy, aims and objectives of Tenovus Cancer Care in the most fair and transparent manner.

This code of conduct relates to all research committee members who review and determine grant allocation, individuals acting as external peer reviewers for Tenovus Cancer Care, Tenovus staff members acting as internal reviewers, research grant applicants, and Tenovus Cancer Care Research team staff members.

If an individual breaches this code of conduct then they may be asked to step down from their involvement in the research grants review process, or in the case of applicants, may have their application withdrawn from consideration. This would be at the discretion of the Head of Research or chair of committee as appropriate.

Confidentiality

- a) Details of applications are strictly confidential and identifiable data should not be discussed with persons outside the review process, either during or, in the case of unsuccessful applications, after the review process.
- b) Committee members should not communicate directly with the applicant about their application at any point in the review process. Applicants should only approach Tenovus Cancer Care Research team staff members with queries about their application. Committee members will only be approached if this is deemed appropriate, at the discretion of the Head of Research.
- c) Applicants should not seek direct feedback on their application from committee members who likewise should not provide such feedback. Any feedback from research committee members on a particular application will be provided directly to applicants by the Tenovus Cancer Care Research team in an anonymised form from which individual research committee members are not identifiable.

Conflicts of interest for research committee members

- a) The chair may apply for grants if in line with eligibility criteria but, if they do so or are listed as a co-applicant, they must declare an interest and absent themselves from the whole meeting and a nominated vice-chair should step in to prevent any undue influence.

b) The chair of any committee may be a trustee of the charity, however, they cannot vote on the funding of applications at both the committee meeting and the trustee's meeting; they shouldn't have the opportunity to vote twice as this unbalances the way funding decisions are made.

c) Where a committee member is an applicant, co-applicant or is in any other way involved on a grant application, it must be declared as an interest in the application to the Tenovus Cancer Care Research team (and subsequently to all fellow members) on submission of the application. They must withdraw from being involved in any consideration of that application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of external referees or receive its referees' reports. They would also not be in receipt of the external peer review scores. They must also retire from the meeting when the application is assessed. Details of discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives.

d) Committee members who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion, or they have applied for funding to the same grant round); or have any other vested interest in the outcome of an application, should declare an interest and may be asked to withdraw from the meeting for that application, or may be allowed to stay, but not vote on the application.

e) Members of the research committee are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions in writing to the Tenovus Cancer Care Research team before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the meeting to the chair of the panel as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent. If a committee member is concerned about a potential conflict of interest involving another member, they should also declare this in the same way. A decision will be taken by the Tenovus Cancer Care Research team or by the chair of the panel (as deemed most appropriate) as to whether the potential conflict of interest means the committee member in question should withdraw from any consideration of the relevant application.

Conflicts of interest for External Peer Reviewers

a) Where an external peer reviewer could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion, or they are being considered for funding within the same grant round); have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past three years; work in the same institution; or have any other vested interest in the outcome of an application, they should declare an interest at the point of being asked to review and may be asked to withdraw from the peer review process for that application.

b) External Peer Reviewers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions in writing to the Tenovus Cancer Care Research team. A decision will be taken by the Head of Research as to whether the reviewer should proceed with peer review of the application in question and the reviewer will be advised accordingly.

General

All committee members, including the chair, has a fixed term of office and operates under the committees' terms of reference and code of conduct policy. All those involved in the review process should also adhere to the spirit of this document and declare any other interests which they feel may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of Tenovus Cancer Care as soon as they are aware of them. This includes interests held by an individual's spouse or children.