

Governance Public Contributors - Potential conflicts of interest

Who and what?

ARC governance Public Contributor Roles usually means:

- Strategy Board Public Partners
- PPI Champions
- PPI Theme Champions

Potential conflicts of interest

Being involved in a wide range of activities as a public contributor (whether ARC/University based or outside of the University) is a positive thing as it brings broad experience and knowledge. However, it can also lead to potential conflicts of interest.

The underlying principle is that personal and professional interests must never influence, or be perceived to influence, any ARC decisions and outcomes. Our Governance Public Contributors are expected to discuss/declare any potential conflicts of interest. The PPI Champion Group's Terms of Reference explicitly state this but it applies to all governance public contributors.

A conflict of interest might include:

- Being directly involved in the work that is being discussed (for example being a public contributor or public co-applicant on a funding application/project being discussed).
- Having a personal relationship with someone directly involved in what is being discussed (for example a close family member/friend is involved with a project or being interviewed).
- Being involved in another organisation that is in the same area of work (e.g. being involved with another ARC or BRC).
- The potential to benefit financially from decisions made (for example if involved in an element of a proposal being discussed that means you will be paid if they are successful).

As a public contributor it is highly likely that one or more of these situations might arise. It doesn't mean you cannot be involved it just means that we need to be aware of it and consider the potential for a conflict of interest, as perceived by others. It might mean there are certain tasks/activities you will not be able to get involved with.

What you need to do

As a general rule please let us know if you think you might have a conflict of interest. It can be helpful to talk about the different PPI work you are/have been involved with (when you joined the ARC this is likely to have happened) as any potential conflicts might be noted or arise as part of the conversation. ***If you are ever in doubt please just ask one of the PPI team.***

For some activities or tasks we will specifically ask about potential conflicts of interest. For example:

ARC renewal – as this is a competitive process we will specifically ask if you are involved with other ARCs or organisations that might submit an application. If there is any potential for a conflict of interest it is likely you will not be able to contribute to the process.

Making decisions about ARC funding – we will remind those involved that they need to let us know if they are involved with any of the projects or know any of the team well, including being a theme PPI Champion. Most likely you will be allowed to be involved but will not get to review any applications you might have a conflict of interest for.

Recruitment – if you are involved in recruitment it is important that you declare if you know any applicants. The most likely action is that individual situations will be discussed and an appropriate decision made.