

## **RNID external peer reviewers: Code of conduct for conflicts of interest and confidentiality**

**Policy last updated: February 2026**

**All external peer reviewers of applications for funding submitted to RNID must actively adhere to and support this code of conduct for conflicts of interest and confidentiality.**

### **Conflicts of interest**

- The RNID Research team will only approach external peer reviewers if they have not identified any conflict of interest for those reviewers based on the criteria below.
- All invited external peer reviewers must disclose any potential conflict of interest they have with an application before they gain access to the application they have been invited to review. If they disclose a significant conflict of interest, they will not be used as a reviewer for that application.
- Please note that RNID may consider relaxing certain conflicts of interest (numbers 3 or 6 and only if the nature of the conflict allows it) if the fair assessment of an application is jeopardised by a significantly reduced number of available suitable peer reviewers.

### **Definition of a Conflict of Interest**

- RNID considers a conflict of interest to arise under the following circumstances:
  1. If a peer reviewer is named on any grant application as an applicant or co-applicant within the same grant round.
  2. If a peer reviewer is named on any grant application as a collaborator within the same grant round.
  3. If a peer reviewer has a recent collaboration with any applicant named on the relevant application (excluding collaborators). A recent collaboration is defined as an active funded grant, joint publication or other active working collaboration during the previous 3 years. Co-authorship on publications resulting from a large consortium (more than 20 authors) will not be considered as a conflict of interest as collaboration between the two parties is considered to be minimal unless specified otherwise by the peer reviewer.

4. If a peer reviewer has a personal relationship with any of the named parties on a grant application, such as spouse, family member or close friendship.
5. If a peer reviewer was the PhD supervisor or PhD student of any applicant named on an application.
6. If a peer reviewer is at the same research institute as the lead applicant(s) or co-applicants of the relevant grant application.
7. If a peer reviewer could personally gain (financially or otherwise) in relation to an application under consideration.
8. If a peer reviewer is at the same research institute as a collaborator on the relevant grant application, it is not considered to be a significant conflict of interest. However, we will take into consideration individual cases if raised with us by the reviewer.

## Confidentiality

- Peer reviewers must keep all documentation pertaining to an application confidential and not disclose it to any third parties.
- Peer reviewers are required to keep application and review documentation secure, not disseminate it, not copy the whole or any part, and dispose of electronic and paper documents securely after reviewing.
- Peer reviewers must not use generative AI tools when reviewing an application. This includes:
  - Not inputting any part of an application provided by RNID into a generative AI tool.
  - Not using generative AI tools in formulating or editing their review.
  - Our policy on the use of generative AI in funding applications applies to all external peer reviewers.
- Peer reviewers must not discuss the application with anyone else without prior permission from RNID, nor contact the applicant about issues pertaining to the application.
- RNID should be notified of any breach of confidentiality as soon as possible.
- RNID grant reviewers will have their identity kept strictly confidential from applicants by both charity staff and members of the relevant Grant Review Panel. Reviewers' comments will be shared anonymously with applicants as feedback on their application.