



Declaring conflicts of interest during the recruitment process

What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest arises primarily when a **member of a departmental search committee or a member of the School's Selection Committee** (i.e. a panel member):

- Has, or has had, a close personal or working relationship with an applicant;
- Is related to an applicant;
- Has prior knowledge of an applicant outside of the work environment which could potentially affect the decision they make.

Examples of conflicts of interest could include, but are not limited to, when a member of a departmental search committee or a member of the Selection Committee:

- Is involved in the shortlisting and/or interviewing of a candidate who is a spouse, partner, close friend or other family member;
- Is a supervisor or a co-supervisor of a PhD candidate who has applied for a job;
- Is a co-author on a publication with a candidate who has applied for a job;
- Has a close working relationship with a candidate who has applied for a job, such as previous line management responsibility or previous relationships as a client and/or consultant.

When should a conflict of interest be declared?

You should disclose any conflict of interest as soon as you are aware of it. Before you begin to longlist or shortlist, we advise that you check the list of applicants to ensure that there are no conflict(s) of interest.

Please note that it is your responsibility to notify HR of any conflict of interest at any stage during the recruitment process.

In the event that the conflict of interest arises after the shortlisting process has already taken place, please inform HR as soon as it occurs.

How to declare a conflict of interest

Please declare your conflict of interest to your designated [HR Adviser](#) who will pass this on to the Vice Chair of the Appointments Committee (VCAC) or Pro-Director (Faculty Development) (PDFD) for academic, research and teaching posts, or the Chair of the panel for professional services posts.

HR will provide the VCAC/PDFD/Chair of the panel with advice on the implications of the declared conflict of interest and make a recommendation on the next steps. The VCAC/PDFD/Chair of the panel will consider this information and make a decision regarding your continued involvement in the process.

Interview notes should record whether or not any conflicts of interest were declared. The Chair of the Committee should decide if any declarations should lead to the member excusing themselves from all or part of the meeting. If the Chair has a conflict, the Committee should agree for a member to act as Chair for the item.

What if I am not a member of a search committee or of the School's selection panel?

Given wide participation in departmental recruitment processes for NAC, NRSC and ECT roles, conflicts of interest may also exist for colleagues who are neither formally serving on departmental search committees or on the School's selection panel. Such conflicts of interest should be declared to your Head of Department or Centre/Institute Director, so that they can be taken into account during departmental recruitment processes. As a general rule, colleagues should not be in a position to argue for or vote for candidates with whom they have a close personal or professional connection, as defined above. Advice on such cases can be sought from the VCAC.