



Declaration of Interests

Royal College of Physicians (RCP) policy

The following policy on declaration of personal interests and good standing is approved by RCP Council. All RCP fellows and others participating in RCP activities and decisions are asked to read and accept this policy and to complete a declaration via an online system.



Introduction

As a matter of good governance, the RCP requires that fellows and others who participate in RCP activities and decisions should make declaration of any interests that might conflict with this RCP work (rather than any other activities carried out for other organisations). However, a proportionate approach is necessary. It would be easy to create a bureaucracy that required detailed record keeping, but this would be difficult to maintain and could also be intrusive, particularly when many people give their time freely to assist in RCP activities. However, whilst conflicts of interest are rare, it is nevertheless possible that they could happen and could impact adversely on the reputation of the RCP. Therefore it is appropriate to have a formal procedure, which is defined in this document.

Who this affects

- The RCP wishes to follow the advice of the Charity Commission and ask trustees, members of Council, members of boards, committees and working parties, examiners and members of any groups working under the auspices of the RCP, including those involved in producing guidelines and recommendations, contributing to conferences and postgraduate meetings, to declare personal interests.
- For the purpose of this document such people are called **RCP Contributors**.

Purpose of the policy

- The key intention of this policy is to make sure that conflicts of interest are identified, so that discussion of any issue can take place in the knowledge of such interests and thus take account of them.
- The test of what constitutes a relevant interest will be whether a reasonable third party would be likely to consider that the objectivity of the person's views or conduct might be affected or influenced by that interest.

Good Standing

- Linked to this, it is appropriate for medically qualified RCP Contributors to confirm that they are of good standing in terms of registration with regulatory bodies.
- This information will be collected at the same time as details of personal interests, and following the same principles.

Operational protocol

- All members of RCP boards, committees and working parties will be asked to make a declaration of interests, via an online system. Declarations will be stored by the RCP.
- This will be carried out as a structured process to establish the system, and then will be required of new appointees as they become involved in RCP activities.
- Such records will be collated and maintained by the Membership Support & Global Engagement Department.
- The purpose of maintaining such records is to enable the RCP to be aware of relevant interests and to provide a source of reference should that be needed.

Disclosure of interests

By individuals

- In completing the declaration of interests described above, an individual should be mindful of any interest that could potentially conflict with or prejudice his or her independence and objectivity in performing their RCP role.
- Completion of this declaration will be a condition of such involvement in RCP activities.

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- An interest is any arrangement which constitutes a current **significant** benefit to the individual or immediate family concerned, such as any financial benefit to the person, hospital, practice or department in which they are employed and also membership of any organisation whose interests might conflict from time to time with the RCP. Generally, but not exclusively, the situations might include:
 - Sponsorship or payment of expenses by commercial organisations.
 - Donations, sponsorship or similar from pharmaceutical firms and equipment manufacturers.
 - Consultancies and fees paid.
 - Patents (existing or pending) held by the individual or department.
 - Holding of shares in commercial organisations (eg pharmaceutical/equipment manufacturers), including relevant shareholdings by family members that could have a bearing on objectivity.
 - Membership of any national body, charity or pressure group.
 - Editorial responsibility including payment for publications (written or electronic)
 - Membership of any political party or private organisation that could have a bearing on the work of the RCP.
 - It will be the responsibility of each individual to maintain the accuracy and timeliness of their declaration, and to notify any changes. If a new interest arises after the declaration has been completed, he or she should as soon as possible notify the RCP in writing, giving details. The RCP may ask for further information as may reasonably be required if this seems appropriate.
 - As well as maintaining written declarations of interest, the RCP will foster a culture whereby contributors are mindful of any interest that might be regarded as conflicting, and encouraged to declare it.
 - At the start of each and every formal board, committee, or working party meeting as a matter of routine the chair will ask members to declare any interests relevant to the business on the agenda. If a member realises that there may be a conflict only when an item starts to be discussed, they should declare it at that point.
 - Once an interest has been declared, it will be for the chair of the meeting to decide whether the individual should leave whilst the item is discussed; or whether discussion should continue with the member present but with all aware of the potential for conflict; or whether some other course of action is more appropriate.

By the RCP

- The RCP is not a public body as defined under the Freedom of Information Act, although it does try to adhere to the spirit of that Act. However, the RCP will normally regard declarations as private to its business and will not release them outside of the RCP or to other Fellows or Members except with the specific consent of the individual concerned, except that;
- When a person is involved significantly in a piece of work that is to be published, either in print or online, they will be asked to provide a summary statement of any relevant interests.
- Such statements will be published, along with and linked to the work in question, so as to declare interests and specify any conflict.

Note

The following questions relating to personal interests and good standing are included for reference only. RCP Contributors will be sent the questions via an online link, on appointment.



Declaration of personal interests and good standing

Do you or any of your immediate family receive sponsorship or paid consultancy work within commercial organisations related to the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Do you or any member of your immediate family have any commercial interest such as personal shares with any company related to the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Does your department or unit receive financial support from commercial organisations related to the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Are you a consultant or member of any national body, charity or pressure group whose work is related to that of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Do you receive significant editorial fees for commissioned articles for publications (in any format) or are you paid for editorial work for any publication related to the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Do you or your department hold a patent (existing or pending) related to the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)

Do you hold membership of any political party or private organisation that could have a bearing on the work of the College?

No Yes

(If yes please provide details on a separate sheet)



Declaration of Good Standing (for medically qualified RCP Contributors only)

- I confirm that my name is **not** currently removed, suspended, or withdrawn from the Medical Register in any country.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to inform the RCP, if during my tenure of office, my name is removed, other than by voluntary erasure (such as because of retirement) from the Medical Register in any country.
- I note that the RCP reserves the right to withdraw membership of any committee or honorary appointment.

Name (including title):

Signature:

Date:

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**Royal College
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