



Conflict of Interest Policy

Policy Reference HR-COI	
Last amended	30 January 2019 (GFAC Review)
Board Endorsement	5 July 2019
Proposed Review Date	30 June 2021
Related Documents	ARMS Constitution ARMS ByLaws ARMS Procurement Guidelines for the Purchase of Goods and Services, ARMS Social Media Policy, Privacy Policy ARMS Strategic Plan: Towards 2025

1. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy, the following definitions apply:

ARMS Board means Office Bearers and Committee Members of the ARMS Board.

Awards and Scholarships mean any awards or scholarships offered by the Society.

Interested Persons means employees of ARMS, including paid consultants, volunteers (including ARMS Board), Convenors of Standing Committees, Chapters and Special Interest Groups, Members of the Accreditation Council, other ad-hoc committees established by the Society and members).

Paid Consultant means someone paid by the Society at a market rate to undertake a detailed body of work for a specified period.

Society means ARMS.

Sponsors mean those external organisations that have entered into a sponsorship arrangement with ARMS.

Volunteer means a person who enters into any service of their own free will, or who offers to perform a service or understanding free of payment apart from payment reimbursement for approved expenses.

ARMS Executive Office means those employed by the society to provide secretariat and other professional services for the daily operations of the Society.

2. PURPOSE OF POLICY

The ARMS Strategic Plan: Towards 2025 states that the Society values “Equity and diversity in the profession of research management; a strong vibrant profession; high standards of research governance including the uncompromising protection of the integrity and the ethics of research; and the profession of

research management as integral to the research enterprise". ARMS recognises the need to operate within these values and ensure that:

- It is apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial and professional manner;
- It demonstrates the highest ethical standards; and
- It delivers services to its members fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously and is sensitive to their diversity.

3. SCOPE

The scope of this policy includes:

- Communicate the Society's position on conflict of interest to all Interested Persons; and
- Providing examples of situations which may constitute a conflict of interest or might be perceived to exist.

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES

In all interactions with ARMS, Interested Persons must always observe high standards of ethical behavior and avoid any activity or interest that might reflect adversely upon the ARMS brand. Interested Persons have an obligation to avoid unacceptable ethical, legal, financial or other conflict of interest and to ensure that their activities and interests do not conflict with their obligations to, or the welfare of, ARMS. All interested Persons must not make improper use of inside information, their duties on all committees of the Society, status, power or authority, in order to gain, or seek to gain, a benefit or advantage.

5. AREAS IN WHICH CONFLICT OF INTEREST MAY ARISE

The following are some examples of, but not limited to, situations where a conflict of interest may arise:

- Interested Persons who may have a material personal interest in a matter being considered at an ARMS committee meeting. Examples may include Board meeting, Chapter Committee meeting, Accreditation Council meeting, Conference Organising/Programme Committee meetings;
- Payment for services carried out by Interested Persons, excluding reimbursements for approved out of pocket expenses;
- Decisions regarding suppliers, customers and other persons in respect of the selection and/or ongoing dealings related to doing or seeking to do business with ARMS;
- Holding positions on boards, shareholdings or ownership of other companies, organisations or businesses or membership with an organisation that comes into serious competition with ARMS;
- Close personal relationships with other Interested Persons when negotiating a transaction or arrangement;
- Acceptance of benefits (gifts, entertainment, travel, accommodation expenses etc.) for personal gain;
- Use of ARMS facilities or financial resources for personal benefit or the benefit of a third party. Examples may include unauthorised use of training materials or the content of such materials where the Society owns the intellectual property.

6. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CONFLICT OF INTEREST

ARMS Board Meeting Decision Making

Section 10 of the ARMS Constitution and ARMS By-Laws 7 deals with the procedures relating to the management of conflict of interest raised during an official meeting of the ARMS Board. It is important to note that members of the ARMS Board have a fiduciary duty to exercise expertise and discretion and to act in the best interest of all ARMS members.

Any member of the ARMS Board who has a material personal interest in a matter being considered at the committee meeting must, as soon as the member becomes aware of his or her interest in the matter, disclose the nature and extent of that interest to the Committee at the commencement of the meeting. If

in doubt, it is best to acknowledge possible conflict of interest. Where such a conflict of interest is disclosed, the Chair is responsible for determining what action shall be taken and whether there is a perceived conflict of interest and will, when a conflict of interest has been identified:

- Request the Committee member to leave while the item of business is being discussed; or
- Request the Committee member to abstain from voting and or contribute in any way to the discussion.

Ultimately, it is the Chair's responsibility to determine whether there is an actual or perceived conflict. This must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting to ensure transparency and to ensure that any conflicts raised will withstand scrutiny.

The requirements of By-Law 7 also apply to members of all other meetings of ARMS committees (including standing committees, Special Interest Groups and Networks, Accreditation Council and other ad-hoc meetings as they evolve).

Financial Benefits such as payment to Volunteer

ARMS is a Not for Profit Society and does not pay its Volunteers for the services they provide, except for any approved out-of-pocket expenses which they may incur as a result of their contributions (refer to ARMS Bylaw 2). However, the exception will be paid consultants who are contracted to undertake an approved body of work and whose expense recovery shall be clearly articulated in an agreement with ARMS.

Awarding and Management of Awards and Scholarships

Paid employees of the ARMS Executive Office are ineligible to apply for Awards and Scholarships. However, paid consultants who are ARMS members and have been commissioned to carry out short term projects for the Society will be eligible to apply but will not be able to reference any of the work undertaken for the Society within their application.

Close Personal Relationships

The existence of a close personal relationship can potentially create a dis/advantageous situation. In such instance, the relationship must be disclosed by the Interested Person(s) as well as any potential conflict of interests.

Public Comment

In some circumstances, public comment by an Interested Person could raise questions of conflict of interest in regard to perceived personal view rather than a Society value. In such instances, ARMS will refer to the Social Media Policy for further guidance.

Documents

Where Interested Persons have access to official ARMS documents and information obtained in the course of either their employment or their dealings with ARMS, they need to be aware of and maintain confidentiality and privacy of that information in order to protect the individuals involved or intellectual property rights of the Society. An example may include, but is not limited to, where a person has been commissioned to write the content for an ARMS training document and then uses this information for their own personal use, without the consent of the Society.

Use of ARMS Facilities and Other Resources for Personal Gain.

Interested Persons are expected to use the facilities and other resources provided by ARMS, carefully, honestly and to be transparent in their dealings. Such resources shall not be used for personal benefit. Examples where a conflict may occur is where Interested Person acting on behalf of the Society has made an unauthorized travel arrangement which may be perceived for

personal gain. Members of the Society must always put forward a written case and obtain pre-approval for any travel arrangements using the pre-approval form available on the [ARMS website](#).

7. DUTY TO DISCLOSE

All member of the ARMS Board, Interest Parties and ARMS Executive Office have a duty to disclose any actual or possible conflict of interest to the respective Chair of any official ARMS Committee that they serve on.

8. BREACH OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

If there is reason to believe an Interested Person has failed to disclose actual or possible conflict of interest, the ARMS President (or delegate) shall inform the member of the basis for such belief and afford her/him an opportunity to explain the alleged failure to disclose.

If after hearing the Interested Person’s response and after making further investigation as warranted by the circumstances, the matter will be reviewed by a sub-group of the ARMS Board who will determine whether the member has failed to disclose an actual or possible conflict of interest, it shall take appropriate disciplinary and corrective action which could include, but is not limited to, termination of appointment (if paid employee or contractor) or cancellation of membership, to be determined on a case by case basis by the sub-group of the ARMS Board.

Version Control

Version	Date of Approval by ARMS Board	Date for review	Circulation	Document owner
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