



Peer/Merit Review Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT FOR OBSERVERS OF PEER/MERIT REVIEW COMMITTEES<sup>1</sup>**

CIHR allows observers to attend peer/merit review committee meetings under certain conditions. Observers are bound by the Policy on Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality in the context of Merit, Relevance and Peer Review (CCIP) as outlined below. Observers also agree to be as unobtrusive as is possible to help minimize disruptions during the meeting.

### **A) Conflict of Interest**

A conflict of interest is a conflict between a person's role as an observer with regard to the review process they are observing, and that person's private or professional interests. Some factors to consider when determining if a conflict of interest exists are:

- i. Potential for professional or personal benefit.
- ii. Level of leadership or authority.
- iii. Professional or personal proximity to the competition or application being reviewed, or to an applicant.
- iv. Direct or indirect financial interest in a competition or application being reviewed.

Any otherwise eligible observer may be permitted to observe a review committee meeting unless:

- that person (or a third party) has disclosed a conflict of interest in regard to the competition, and has subsequently been determined to be in conflict of interest in regard to the competition, by CIHR's Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or his/her delegate;
- that person has funding-decision authority for the competition; or
- that person is a participant (Principal Applicant, Co-Applicant or Decision Maker) on an application to be reviewed by the committee.

An individual who has been permitted to observe a committee meeting may not observe any part of the review of an application with which he/she has a conflict of interest and must leave the room during the review of these applications. An individual is considered to have a conflict of interest with an application if he/she:

- is from the same immediate department, institution, organization or company as the applicant, and interacts with the applicant in the course of his/her duties at the department, institution, organization or company;
- has collaborated, been a co-applicant or published with the applicant, within the last five years (exception will be made for CIHR funded networks designed to increase partnerships among disciplines, institutions and thematic research);
- has been a student or supervisor of the applicant within the last ten years;
- is a close personal friend or relative of the applicant;

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<sup>1</sup> For more information see CIHR's Policy on Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality in the context of Merit, Relevance and Peer Review (CCIP) at <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/28654.html>

- has had long-standing scientific or personal differences with the applicant;
- is in a position to gain or lose financially from the outcome of the application (e.g., holds stock in the company of an industry partner or a competitor); or
- for some other reason feels that they are in conflict with the application.

**(Note:** For Awards committees, these criteria also apply to the committee member's relationship with the proposed supervisor, if applicable.)

## **B) Confidentiality**

Confidentiality is information about a person that shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone else without that person's prior expressed consent. The information provided by applicants in their applications is protected by the *Privacy Act* and is made available to external assessors for reviewing purposes only. Thus, information contained in applications, reviewer reports, names of reviewers and committee discussions are all strictly confidential. The use of this information for any purposes other than what is outlined here is a breach of the Privacy Act and could result in a CIHR investigation and/or report to the federal Privacy Commissioner's Office.

Observers:

- must not discuss with applicants, reviewers, individuals with funding-decision authority for the competition, or anyone else other than Program Delivery staff, any information relating to the review of a specific application, or offer opinions on the chances of success or failure.
- must not remove any written notes or documentation from the meeting room related to reviewer assignments, ratings or reviewers' comments on applications.

### **Declaration:**

I, the undersigned, do hereby agree to adhere to the **CIHR Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality** policy as described in section A and B above. It also certifies that I have received and agree to abide by the CIHR Guidelines for Observers.

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(Name)

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(Signature)

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(Date)