

TYPES OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Personal Conflicts

Editors should avoid making decisions on manuscripts submitted from their own institution, or by research collaborators, or co-authors, or competitors. To avoid the possibility of bias, editors should recuse themselves if they have published with, have collaborated with, or have been in a mentoring relationship with any author or contributor of the manuscript within the past three years.

Financial Conflicts

The most apparent type of conflict of financial interest occurs when an editor or affiliated organization may benefit financially from a decision to publish or to reject a manuscript. Financial conflicts may include salary, grants from a company with an interest in the results, honoraria, stock or equity interests in a company whose product is discussed in the article, and intellectual property rights (patents, royalties, and copyrights).

Non-financial Conflicts

Other nonfinancial conflicts of interest should also be avoided or disclosed. Editorial decisions should be based on an objective and impartial consideration of the facts, exclusive of personal or professional bias. All decisions by editors should be based solely on the paper's scientific merit, originality, and quality of writing as well as on the relevance to the journal's scope and mission, without regard to race, ethnic origin, sex, religion, or citizenship of the authors. Editors must disclose personal biases that may affect their editorial decisions.

Note

Even if prospective reviewers feel confident that the existence of one or more of these potential conflicts of interest would not intrude upon their objectivity, they should protect the credibility of the review process by avoiding even the appearance of a conflict of interest and decline to review the manuscript.

A reviewer should not take scientific, financial, personal, or other advantage of material available through the privileged communication of peer review, and every effort should be made to avoid even the appearance of taking advantage of information obtained through the review process.

Specific Conflict of Interest Policies

Submission By an Editor

A paper submitted by an editor will be handled by one of the other editors who does not have a conflict with the review and who is not at the same institution as the submitting

editor. The other editor will select referees and make all decisions on the paper. In such circumstances, full masking of the process must be ensured so that the anonymity of the peer reviewers is maintained. Therefore, the editor submitting the paper will not have access to the review records of their own manuscript.

Submission From the Same Institution

A paper submitted by an author from the same institution as one of the editors will be handled by one of the other editors. The other editor will select referees and make all decisions on the paper. **Personal Relationships**

A paper submitted by a family member of one of the editors, or by an author whose relationship with one of the editors might create the perception of bias (e.g. in terms of close friendship or conflict/rivalry), will be handled by another editor. The other editor will select referees and make all decisions on the paper. If in doubt, the editors will consult with the editor-in-chief for the journal.

Previous Review

If an editor is assigned a manuscript for review that they had previously rendered a decision on for another journal, then the editor should state they need recuse themselves due to a previous review connection with that article; no further explanation or detail is needed.