Conflict of Interest Policy: Code of Practice

For Funding Panels

1. General

1.1 This policy relates to all committees and funding panels of Orthopaedic Research UK (ORUK), including the Scientific Advisory Committee, External Expert Reviewers, the Research Committee and the Investment Review Panels, their chairs and other members, including the charity's trustees. These individuals must sign and follow the Conflict of Interest and Code of Practice.

1.2 The purpose of the conflict of interest Policy is to:

a) minimise the potential for conflicts of interest arising;

b) protect the charity and those who work for it from any perception, real or otherwise, that the external interests and affiliations of its committee members and external reviewers might interfere with their ability to work towards the advancement of the charity's objectives.

2. Declaration of interest

2.1 Any persons covered by this policy, as defined in 1.1 should declare any disclosable external interests which may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of the charity on their appointment to the charity, and annually thereafter. A register of interests will be kept up to date by the charity.

2.2 Interests which should be disclosed by such individuals include:

a) Equity interests (if worth £50,000 or more, or more than 1% of the total issued capital) in enterprises with involvement in MSK entities.

b) Consultancies and other external appointments (paid and unpaid), together with details of any remuneration or other benefits arising from these.

2.2 Panel members (including trustees who serve on panels) should also adhere to the spirit of this document and declare any other interests which they feel may be a source of conflict, or which might be perceived to conflict, with the interests of ORUK. This includes interests held by the panel members' spouse or children (Related Parties).

3. Discussion of proposals

3.1 Details of applications, meeting papers and related correspondence and the names of external referees are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with persons outside of the review process.

3.2 Discussions of a proposal between members of a funding panels which occur outside of a committee meeting, should be declared to the Chair of the committee.

3.3 If a committee member (including serving trustees) is approached by an applicant for technical advice on an application, then they may provide advice, but must disclose this to the committee Chair and secretariat. They may subsequently be asked by the Chair to absent themselves from a discussion of the application concerned.

3.4 If the advice sought by an applicant is on administrative grounds or to seek information on the status of their proposal, the committee member should refer the applicant to the research administrator of the charity.

4. Managing conflicts of interest

4.1 When committee members are associated with an application or policy decision in any way that presents a conflict of interest, they should absent themselves from the room when the application/policy is being discussed.

4.2 Panel members who could be seen as a direct competitor of the applicant (e.g. they are funded or applying for funding on a similar project to the proposal under discussion) or have collaborated or published with the proposal applicant within the past three years, or work in the same institution, should declare an interest. They may be asked to withdraw from the meeting for that application, or may be allowed to stay, but not vote on the application.

4.3 Where a panel member is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, they must declare an interest and withdraw from any consideration of that application. That member will not receive documents pertaining to the application, learn the identity of its referees or receive its referees' reports. They must retire from the meeting when the application is assessed. Details of discussion of that application will be deleted from any papers the member receives.

4.4 Where the chair of the panel is an applicant or co-applicant on a grant application, they must declare an interest and should not be involved in that round of meetings. A vice chair will chair the meeting to prevent any undue influence.

5. Resolution of conflicts of interest

5.1 ORUK recognises that most conflicts or potential conflicts will relate to a particular issue and as such will not present any long-term restrictions on an individual's ability to work for the charity or to sit on its committees.

5.2 In rare instances, major conflicts of interest may arise which could compromise an individual's ability to continue with their position within the charity. If such a situation relates to a member of a funding committee or panel, the matter will be discussed by the chair of the committee, together with a committee staff member or secretariat. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the case will be referred to the committee, whose decision should be taken as final.

5.3 Members of funding committees are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest relating to individual funding decisions to the committee secretariat before the meeting wherein they will be discussed, or during the meeting as soon as the existence of a conflict becomes apparent.

5.4 In cases where an individual is uncertain as to whether a conflict of interest exists or not, they should report this to the committee secretariat. The secretariat shall discuss the matter with the individual as necessary and report to the Chair, who will decide on a course of action.

5.5 If an individual is concerned about a possible conflict of interest involving another member of a funding panel, then he or she should raise the matter with the Chair of the panel.

5.6 If the Chair has reason to believe that a member has breached this code of conduct, then they may be asked to step down from the committee.

6. Updating the policy

6.1 The charity will endeavour to review this policy, if necessary, every two years, in consultation with the board of Trustees.

Signature: **Date:**