

11. Register of Interests

Conflicts of Interest Policy

Introduction

1. The GOSc strives to ensure transparency and probity in the fulfilment of its statutory functions. In so doing, it aims to avoid any appearance of impropriety or conflict of interest that would undermine confidence in the regulatory process.
2. In order to achieve that aim, members and all those who act on behalf of the GOSc are expected **to act impartially and objectively in carrying out the GOSc's business**. This includes a requirement to avoid situations of conflict of interest including those where there might reasonably be said to involve a conflict between the individual's personal interests and his/her GOSc duties.
3. Failure to manage conflict of interests effectively runs the serious risk that the GOSc could be perceived to be acting improperly, rendering its actions and decisions vulnerable to challenge.
4. This policy applies to GOSc Council members and all those acting on behalf of the GOSc including members of committees who are not members of Council, co-opted members of committees and working groups, Legal and Medical Assessors, Visitors and any other office holders.
5. The Executive are also required to follow the principles set out in this policy and notify the Council and Executive Support Officer of any potential or actual conflicts of interest.
6. All those covered by this policy must declare in writing to the Chief Executive any professional, personal or business interests which they consider may pose, or might be seen to pose, a conflict with their GOSc responsibilities. The interests will then be transferred to a Register of Interests which will be made available on the public website.
7. Those covered by this policy must declare on the Register of Interests those outside interests that are relevant to the GOSc's business and activities. This includes any interest that might influence their judgment or which could be perceived as influencing their judgment: the test is whether a fair-minded and informed member of the public would consider that such an interest might influence their judgment.

Guidance

8. In considering what might constitute a potential conflict, those covered by this policy should bear in mind the seven principles of public office: selflessness; integrity; objectivity; accountability; openness; honesty; and leadership.¹
9. The GOsC requires that certain interests must be declared on the Register of Interests and these are listed in Annex A. Where a Member of Council or other office holder has declared their membership of any of the organisations or bodies listed in Annex A, the Chair of Council will decide whether it is appropriate for that Member of Council or office holder to participate in a relevant discussion or decision.
10. While it is not possible to produce an exhaustive list of situations which may give rise to a conflict of interests, Members should bear in mind three categories of interest to guide them in assessing whether a conflict may exist.
11. The three categories of interest, together with their effect on participation in the issue for discussion/decision are:

12. Indirect interests

Interests that do not directly relate to specific issues for discussion: there is no reason not to participate in the discussion or decision.

- **Prejudicial interests**

Interests with direct relevance to specific items of business such that a fair-minded observer would conclude that the interest may prejudice the Member's judgment in any discussion/decision: it may be necessary for the individual to withdraw from the discussion/decision. It will be a matter for the Chair of Council or relevant committee to decide, following a consideration of the likely impact of the prejudicial interest, whether it is appropriate for the individual to participate in the discussion or decision.

- **Irreconcilable interests**

Interests with direct relevance to specific items of business such that a fair-minded observer would conclude that the interest would certainly prejudice the Member's judgment in any discussion and give rise to a perception of bias in any decision: in such circumstances it will not be permissible to participate in any relevant discussion or decision.

13. Annex B sets out practical examples of the three categories of interest referred to above.

¹ The Seven Principles see: [Committee on Standards in Public Life](#)

Procedure

14. The Chief Executive will be responsible for keeping the Register of Interests which will be published on the GOsC website.
15. If any member is unsure as to whether they need to declare a particular interest, they should discuss it with the Chair of Council, the relevant committee chair or the Chief Executive.
16. On appointment, all members are asked to complete the attached form (Annex C) giving details of their interests. All individuals concerned will be invited to review and update their declared interests on an annual basis and aside from this, are required to amend their entries to reflect any changes as soon as possible.
17. If there are any queries over proposed entries on the Register of Interests, please contact the Chief Executive, in the first instance, or the Council and Executive Support Officer:

Chief Executive
+44 (0) 20 7357 6655 x244
ce@osteopathy.org.uk

Council and Executive Support Officer
+44 (0) 20 357 6655 x246
council@osteopathy.org.uk

18. Please return the completed declaration form to the Council and Executive Support Officer:

Council and Executive Support Officer
General Osteopathic Council
Osteopathy House
176 Tower Bridge Road
London SE1 3LU

Annex A to Section 11

Interests which must be declared

The following interests must be declared:

- a. posts held in the ordinary course of employment or professional practice, including unpaid
- b. membership of professional bodies or specialist societies
- c. any office (e.g. President, Chairman, Chief Executive, Treasurer or Secretary) of any professional body, specialist society or similar body, whether in the private or voluntary sector
- d. consultancies, directorships or advisory positions, if they relate to a healthcare company or organisation, public body or political party.
- e. membership of a political party or pressure group with an interest in the GOsC's work
- f. a significant, current, anticipatory or recent association with any Osteopathic Educational Institution (OEI):

Significant association (including employment) with an OEI (see definition of OEI below)

- a trustee or director of an OEI
- a principal of an OEI
- a vice-principal of an OEI
- a person who is materially associated with the senior management and/or direction of an OEI or with power to influence decisions

Current, anticipatory or recent association

- the individual's association with the OEI is active at the time.
- the individual expects to have a future association with an OEI.
- the individual's association lapsed less than four years ago.

Osteopathic Educational Institution (OEI)

- an undergraduate osteopathic provider that already has Recognised Qualification (RQ) status.
- an undergraduate osteopathic provider that is preparing to sign a Declaration of Intent to apply for RQ status.

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- an undergraduate osteopathic provider that has signed a Declaration of Intent to apply for RQ status.
 - a provider of post-graduate and Continuing Professional Development courses in osteopathy.
- g. any close personal ties with the GOsC's advisers, executive or prospective advisers, executive.
- h. any other interest which may be relevant and not covered by the above e.g. association through family such as might lead a fair-minded member of the public to consider that such an interest might influence their judgment.

Annex B to Section 11

Practical examples of indirect, prejudicial and irreconcilable interests

1. **Member of Council is also a member of another healthcare regulator's Council or one of its committees**

Likely to be a **prejudicial interest** if the GOsC and the other regulator has opposing or different opinions on particular topics, for example in relation to revalidation or policies relating to the remuneration of Council members . The membership should be declared and the Chair of Council or committee should invite the other members to decide whether the member concerned may continue to participate in any relevant discussion or decision.

2. **A Council member is a member of an osteopathic special interest group**

Likely to be a **prejudicial interest** if the special interest group undertakes activities which run counter to the statutory objectives of the GOsC. Membership should be declared and the Chair of Council or the committee should invite other members to decide whether the member concerned may continue to participate in any relevant discussion or decision.

3. **A Council member wishes to act as an expert witness in GOsC fitness to practise proceedings**

Likely to be an **irreconcilable interest**, as the member's independence would be viewed as impaired.

4. **A Council member is asked to sit on an interview panel for a tendering process**

- May be a **prejudicial interest** if the member knows one of the parties bidding for the work: the member should declare the interest and the Chair of Council or the committee should allow the other members to decide if the member should participate in the process.
- Likely to be an **irreconcilable interest** if the member has an interest, financial or otherwise, in any of the parties bidding for the work. The member should declare the interest and withdraw from the interview panel.

5. **A fitness to practise committee member is a member of an NHS board or trust**

- In most cases, likely to be an **indirect interest** only; the membership should be declared but is unlikely to give rise to any conflict.

- More unusually, may give rise to a **prejudicial interest** if a party to the proceedings is employed by the same NHS board or trust; the remaining committee members should decide whether the member concerned should continue to participate in the decision.

6. **Member of Council has a financial or commercial interest in another organisation**

For example, the member has shares in a business which may benefit as a result of a decision made by Council.

- May give rise to a **prejudicial interest** if the financial or commercial interest might, in the view of a fair-minded observer, influence the decision of the member in Council business: the remaining Council members should decide whether the member concerned should continue to participate in the decision.
- Will be an **irreconcilable interest** if a fair-minded observer would conclude that it would certainly prejudice the member's judgment in any discussion and give rise to a perception of bias in any decision: in such circumstances it will not be permissible for the member to participate in any relevant discussion or decision.