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UNIVERSITE D'ABOMEY-CALAVI
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Conflict of Interest Declaration Procedure (Recruitment)

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TIDRC/UAC RESEARCH GRANTS MANAGEMENT OFFICE

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1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to define the process for identifying, documenting, and managing actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest (COI) during the recruitment and selection of all staff, consultants, and long-term trainees at the Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center/University of Abomey-Calavi(TIDRC/UAC). This ensures that all hiring decisions are made objectively, ethically, and in the best interest of the Center's mission.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to all members of hiring committees, interview panels, human resources personnel, and any other individuals involved in the recruitment process for any position within TIDRC/UAC. It also applies to all candidates considered for employment.

3.0 Definitions

Conflict of Interest (COI): a situation in which an individual's personal, financial, or professional interests (or those of a close associate) could influence, or appear to influence, their objectivity and impartiality in performing their duties or making decisions on behalf of TIDRC/UAC.

Recruitment COI: a situation where a person involved in hiring has a relationship with a candidate that could compromise fair and objective selection. This includes, but is not limited to, family relationships, close friendships, romantic partnerships, business associations, or significant financial ties.

Hiring Committee: the group of individuals responsible for reviewing applications, interviewing candidates, and recommending a candidate for hire.

Recusal: the act of an individual removing themselves from a specific decision-making process due to a conflict of interest.

4.0 Responsibilities

All Staff Involved in Recruitment: responsible for proactively disclosing any potential COI with any candidate as soon as it is identified.

Hiring Committee Chair / Hiring Manager: responsible for ensuring all committee members understand the COI policy, for collecting signed disclosure forms, and for managing any disclosed conflicts appropriately.

Human Resources (HR) Administration Officer: responsible for maintaining the master COI log, advising on the management of conflicts, and filing all disclosure forms.

TIDRC/UAC Deputy/Director: responsible for reviewing and approving the management plan for significant or complex conflicts of interest.

5.0 Procedure

5.1 Pre-Screening and Disclosure at Committee Formation

1. Prior to the start of any recruitment process, the Hiring Manager, in consultation with HR Administration Officer, will form a Hiring Committee.
2. The Hiring Manager will provide each potential committee member with a copy of this SOP and the "Recruitment Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form" (Appendix).
3. Each nominated committee member must review the list of candidates (once the application pool is known) and complete the disclosure form, declaring any relationship or interest that could be perceived as a conflict.
4. The signed forms must be returned to the Hiring Manager before the first committee meeting.

5.2 Disclosure during the recruitment process

1. If a committee member identifies a potential conflict after the initial disclosure (e.g., they realize they know a candidate shortlisted later), they must immediately:
 - verbally inform the Hiring Committee Chair and the HR Administration Officer.
 - complete a new "Recruitment Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form" noting the timing of the disclosure.

5.3 Managing and Documenting Conflicts

1. The Hiring Committee will review all disclosed conflicts.
2. They will determine the appropriate course of action based on the nature and severity of the conflict:
 - **Minor/Remote Conflict:** the committee member may be allowed to remain on the committee, but their involvement in scoring or discussing the specific candidate may be limited. this will be documented.
 - **Significant Conflict:** the committee member must be recused from all discussions, deliberations, and voting regarding the specific candidate with whom they have a conflict.
 - **Pervasive Conflict:** if a committee member has conflicts with multiple candidates, they may be removed from the entire hiring process.
3. All decisions regarding the management of a conflict, including the rationale for recusal or continued participation, must be documented on the disclosure form and in the meeting minutes.

5.4 During Interviews and deliberations

1. At the beginning of every hiring committee meeting, the Chair will ask if any new conflicts have arisen since the last meeting.
2. If a committee member has been recused from a specific candidate, they must leave the room (or digitally disconnect) during that candidate's interview and during any subsequent deliberation and scoring for that candidate. Their absence must be noted in the meeting minutes.

5.5 Candidate Disclosure

1. The standard TIDRC/UAC employment application form and/or offer letter will include a clause requiring the candidate to disclose any potential conflicts of

interest they may have (e.g., ownership in a competing entity, family member already working at TIDRC/UAC).

2. Hiring Manager is responsible for reviewing these candidate disclosures and, if necessary, to determine if the conflict is manageable or if it disqualified the candidate.

5.6 Record Keeping

1. The HR Administration Officer will file all signed "Recruitment Conflict of Interest Disclosure Forms" in a central, confidential COI file for that specific recruitment.
2. Records will be retained for a minimum of 5 years after the recruitment process is completed, in line with TIDRC/UAC's document retention policy.

6.0 References

- TIDRC Code of Conduct
- National Guidelines for Research Integrity

7.0 Appendices

- Appendix : TIDRC Recruitment Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form



Appendix: TIDRC/UAC RECRUITMENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCLOSURE FORM

Instructions: This form must be completed by all individuals who are part of a Hiring Committee, Interview Panel, or who have significant input into a recruitment decision. The purpose is to identify any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest with any candidate. If you are unsure if a relationship constitutes a conflict, please disclose it and discuss it with the HR Administration Officer.

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | |
| Committee Member Name: | [Committee Member Name] |
| Job Title: | [Job Title] |
| Recruitment for Position: | [Job Title being recruited for] |
| Date Form Completed: | [DD/MMM/YYYY] |

Section A: Declaration of Interests

Please review the candidate list (if available) and answer the following questions honestly.

- 1. Familial Relationships:** Do you have any spouse, partner, child, parent, sibling, or in-law who is an applicant for this position?
 - Yes (If yes, please provide details below)
 - No
- 2. Close Personal Relationships:** Do you have a close personal friendship, romantic relationship, or ongoing personal conflict with any applicant that could be seen to affect your objectivity?
 - Yes (If yes, please provide details below)
 - No
- 3. Financial/Business Interests:** Do you have any current or pending financial or business relationship (e.g., partnership, outside employment, consulting agreement, significant stock ownership) with any applicant?
 - Yes (If yes, please provide details below)
 - No

4. **Professional Relationship:** Have you closely collaborated with any applicant on a project in the last 5 years? Are you or have you been their supervisor, mentor, or thesis advisor?
- o Yes (If yes, please provide details below)
 - o No
5. **Other Interests:** Are you aware of any other circumstances or interests that could be perceived as influencing your impartiality in this recruitment process?
- o Yes (If yes, please provide details below)
 - o No

Section B: Details of Declared Interest

If you answered "Yes" to any of the above, please provide the name of the candidate(s) and the nature of the interest/relationship.

| Candidate Name | Nature of Conflict/Relationship |
|------------------|---|
| [Candidate Name] | [e.g., Cousin; Former student; Business partner in a small startup] |
| [Candidate Name] | [e.g., Close personal friend for 10+ years] |

Section C: Management of Conflict (To be completed by Hiring Manager)

| Action Taken | Tick if applicable |
|--|--------------------------|
| No action required. Conflict is remote or irrelevant to the process. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Committee member may participate in discussions but will be recused from scoring Candidate(s) named above. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Committee member will be recused from all discussions, interviews, and scoring for Candidate(s) named above. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Committee member is removed from the entire Hiring Committee due to pervasive conflicts. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Name of Hiring Manager: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Section D: Signatures

Committee Member Declaration

I hereby declare that the information provided on this form is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I agree to notify the Hiring Manager immediately if any new potential conflicts arise during the recruitment process.

Committee Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

Approval & adoption

This Conflict of Interest Declaration Procedure (Recruitment), code: TIDRC/RH/CIDP-01 is hereby formally approved and adopted as the official SOP of the Tropical Infectious Diseases Research Center/University of Abomey-Calavi, effective February 19, 2026




Salako Luc DJOGBENOU

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