

## Met Éireann Research Call Programme

### Reviewers Code of Conduct

MET ÉIREANN offers a number of funding schemes as part of our MET ÉIREANN Research Call Programme. Once deemed eligible, applications are reviewed by a panel of reviewers with expertise in the relevant area and that can assess the potential impact and delivery of the project in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding call. Reviewers are identified based on expertise, experience and availability and considering diversity and balance. The purpose of having the reviewers is to gather expert evaluation from appropriate experts so that MET ÉIREANN can make informed decisions on proposals for funding. Reviewers make recommendations on proposals for funding and MET ÉIREANN makes the informed decision.

Reviewers engaged by MET ÉIREANN are required to abide by this code of conduct:

#### **Reviewers' responsibilities**

- Reviewers are expected to conduct their assessment in a fair, independent and equitable manner according to MET ÉIREANN procedures and directions and to the best of their ability;
- Reviewers are requested to carry out the work in a personal capacity and do not represent any organisation;
- Reviewers must not delegate or sub-contract the performance of any activities to any third party;
- Reviewers should be aware of the Equal Status Act 2014<sup>1</sup> and the HEA National Review of Gender Equality in Irish Higher Education Institutions<sup>2</sup>, and avoid all, including unconscious, bias particularly bias in relation to gender, race, colour, age, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, political or religious affiliation or marital status;
- In cases where evidence of parental leave (maternity, paternity or adoptive) has been provided, the reported time should be excluded from any career assessment, as provided for in the terms and conditions of the funding call;
- Reviewer's comments may be provided to applicants in feedback. Reviewer's comments are required to comply with this Code of Conduct and are expected to be respectful and include constructive comments.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ihrec.ie/>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/hea\\_review\\_of\\_gender\\_equality\\_in\\_irish\\_higher\\_education.pdf](http://www.heai.ie/sites/default/files/hea_review_of_gender_equality_in_irish_higher_education.pdf)



## Conflict of Interest

- Reviewers must be able to offer impartiality in their review. It is the responsibility of reviewer to notify the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office ([researchfunding@met.ie](mailto:researchfunding@met.ie)) of any or any potential conflicts of interest if and when they arise;
- Reviewers agree to declare to the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office should they be aware of any factor which gives rise to a conflict of interest, or any matter which impairs or threatens to impair their impartiality with respect to any individual proposal for funding, to the funding call itself, or in another way that may affect the outcome;
- If the reviewer is unsure as to whether or not a conflict of interest arises, the reviewer shall contact the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office and a clarification will be given by the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office. If a conflict of interest arises during the course of a review, a reviewer must alert the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office to this and MET ÉIREANN will address the issue as considered appropriate;
- A conflict of interest can occur when a reviewer has a personal or professional interest in a review he/she is conducting, or a direct personal or professional relationship with the applicant that may bias their review;
- Reviewers must also be cognisant of matters, which objectively viewed, could be seen as giving rise to a conflict of interest. It is the responsibility of reviewers to notify the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office in these circumstances in the same manner as above;
- It is important that any potential conflict of interest is identified as soon as possible to allow for new reviewers to be engaged where necessary.

Examples of conflicts are where reviewers (this is a non-exhaustive list of examples):

1. are named as a team member or project partner in the proposal;
2. have provided a letter of support for the proposal;
3. have a formal affiliation to any of the project/proposal partners;
4. or their organisation would directly benefit from the work being undertaken under the project;
5. have assisted the applicant with their proposal;
6. have an existing business or professional partnership with any of the applicants or staff named in the proposal;
7. are related to any of the applicants or staff named in the proposal;
8. are a personal friend of any of the applicants or staff named in the proposal;
9. are a collaborator with any of the applicants or staff named in the proposal;



10. have been the applicant's supervisor within the last 5 years;
11. have had any involvement in the development of the proposal at any stage of its preparation, including providing comments or advice to the applicants;
12. have publicly and/or professionally disagreed (either oral or written presentations) with the views of the applicant such that the reviewer could not be expected to be impartial in reviewing the proposal.

### **Confidentiality**

- Reviewers must agree to confidentiality prior to conducting a review;
- Reviewers are expected to provide their professional, independent evaluation of the material. This is a personal assessment and not the opinion of any third party or host institute. Reviews must not be delegated to a third party. Reviews must also not be shared or disclosed, in whole or in part, with third parties for their views or for any other reason;
- At no point should the applicant be contacted by the reviewer. In the case where reviewers are contacted by an applicant, the MET ÉIREANN Research Funding Office should be informed immediately;
- Reviewers are expected to keep all documentation in a secure environment and confidential. Information regarding the proposal, review, scores or discussions must not be disclosed to any other party;
- With regard to any personal data provided by MET ÉIREANN, reviewers must agree at all times to comply with the data security obligations in respect of the Data Protection Act 2018;
- Reviewers are required to respect the intellectual property of applicants and their applications, and may not appropriate and use as their own, or disclose to any third party, ideas, concepts or data contained in any proposals;
- Reviewers are responsible for keeping confidential and keeping safe any and all documentation in relation to an application and its applicant(s);
- Reviewers are expected to adhere to professional and scientific practices and codes of conduct. Information provided in the applications may not be used by the reviewer in any other context than to conduct the evaluation.

By undertaking any evaluation for the MET ÉIREANN Research Programme, reviewers agree to provide a fair, unbiased, confidential, professional evaluation and are declaring that they have no conflict of interest, and are obliged to be at all times in conformity with the terms of this Code of Conduct.

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