

Guidelines interest transparency

Adopted by the SCNAT Executive Board on 25.06.2020¹

Declaration of the engagement

Researchers are often connected to many societal actors today. This is central for the development of their expertise and promotes the pertinence of the research for society. These engagements can, however, also lead to conflicts of interest. The transparency of engagements of authors involved in print products in the policy domain and of members of bodies of the SCNAT therefore needs to be ensured. These declarations of interest are released upon request in any case, which needs to be pointed out explicitly in the print product.

All persons in the group of authors indicate their vested interests in self-declaration related to the elaboration of a product that is affected by the quality assurance system «Policy».² These declarations are available to the Delegate of the SCNAT Executive Board in the application for the release. The list of author's engagements is not updated and deleted five years after publication of the product.

Members of SCNAT bodies need to declare the above-mentioned interests upon their election. The list is to be updated at each re-election. The declaration is deleted after leaving the body.

The Executive Board reserves the right to bring in additional experts for collaboration or to consider the exclusion from the cooperation on a product that is affected by the quality assurance system «Policy», if authors refuse a disclosure or if there is a conflict of interest. The Executive Board can also exclude candidates who refuse a disclosure from the election to SCNAT bodies.

The declaration of interest is intended to sensitise the members of SCNAT bodies and the authors of publications to the topic in order for them to report any conflicts of interest that may have come to light of their own accord. Elected members are to abstain if there is a conflict of interest on their part in a particular case.


The academy thereby follows the international development towards more transparency in scientific policy advice. The Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities thus recommends the declaration of financial interests, institutional affiliations and memberships of the advising scientists in their «Leitlinien zur Politikberatung». The Swiss Academy of Medical Sciences SAMS captures the vested interests of its Executive Board and some committees and reveals them upon a reasoned request.³

¹ The guidelines interest transparency came into force on 01.01.14. The current version was adopted by the SCNAT Executive Board on 25.06.20.

² Quality assurance system «Policy» of the SCNAT, see www.scnat.ch

³ Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities. Leitlinien Politikberatung. 2008. (<http://www.bbaw.de/publikationen/manifeste-und-leitlinien>).

Swiss Academy of Sciences (SCNAT)

House of Academies • Laupenstrasse 7 • P.O. Box • 3001 Bern • Switzerland
+41 31 306 93 00 • info@scnat.ch • scnat.ch  [@scnatCH](https://twitter.com/scnatCH)

Capture the interests

The below information applies to all declared authors of products affected by the quality assurance system «Policy» and for members of SCNAT bodies.

- Current institutional affiliations and memberships
 - Employments
 - Activities in governing and supervisory bodies of private or public entities, incl. foundations and NGOs
 - Membership in scientific advisory board or expert committee on a similar topic
 - Membership in a political party, if the mandate is in an executive or a legislative authority
- Financial situation
 - Royalties for advisory, expert and similar activities for private firms during the last 3 years of at least 10'000 CHF or more per annum
 - Funding of scientific investigations (all contributions to the researcher in the context of his or her research activity by a non-public sponsor during the last 3 years need to be declared, if they exceed 50'000 CHF)
 - Intellectual property rights that could result in financial benefit and that are in the subject area

Further interests can be declared on a voluntary basis, if the person in question specifically wishes to point them out.

Handling conflicts of interest

The following explanations should help to identify a conflict of interest and to regulate the handling of conflicts of interest in SCNAT.

Conflicts of interest

« *Conflicts of interest can be of a financial, psychological or social nature.* »⁴ It is not possible to establish definitive criteria for identifying conflicts of interest here, as such conflicts are situational and each case must therefore be assessed individually by the person responsible.

- Indications of a material conflict of interest may include, for example, the amount of money received, and/or a specification of the subject on which payments were received. This information can then be related to the subject of the publication or the body in which the person is to participate.
- In the case of a psychological or social interest, it is hardly possible to identify the conflict with the information in the declaration form of interest. For example, if the bond exists in the shape of a close private friendship. In this case, the academy is dependent on the person recognising and reporting the conflict on his or her own initiative.

⁴ SAMS. Collaboration between the medical profession and industry. 2013.
(<https://www.samw.ch/en/Publications/Medical-ethical-Guidelines.html>)

Process

This procedure is binding for all managers who submit election applications and all persons responsible for a product who submit a release application for their respective product.

1. The manager of the SCNAT body or the person responsible for the development of the product (editor) use the existing declaration form to obtain declarations of interest from the persons to be elected or the authors of the publication and check the declarations for conflicts of interest. If a potential conflict of interest is identified or if there is any uncertainty, they first contact the person responsible for the quality assurance system of the SCNAT.
2. The person responsible for the quality assurance carries out an assessment with them as to whether a conflict exists and how to deal with it.
3. The person responsible for the quality assurance may consult the secretary general for the final decision or, if necessary, to determine the further procedure. In addition, the head of division shall be informed.