

APS Conflict of Interest Policy Graduate Student Ambassador (GSA) Program

The Graduate Student Ambassador Program are awards that require judging that is subjective. Therefore, it is particularly important that there be neither actual bias nor the appearance of bias in the selection process. If a member of the Trainee Advisory Committee has close ties with an applicant **and** subsequently participates in the awards rating process, this can create the appearance of bias (whether there is actually bias involved). Therefore, the following policy outlines the procedures guiding the participation of members of the Trainee Advisory Committee involvement in the review of the applications.

Conflict of interest policy

A. Committee members who abstract sponsors for an applicant in the current applicant pool will recuse themselves from the review process in its entirety. They should not be involved in either reviewing applications for other applicants or in the conference call when the applications are being discussed and a final awardee is being selected. Although it may be possible for the committee member to do an objective review of other applications, there is the appearance of a conflict of interest because they have made a personal and professional recommendation by being an abstract sponsor for a different applicant. In the conference call, applicants are not discussed during one isolated portion of the call; therefore, it is not possible to be excused only from the portion of the call related to the other applicants. **It is incumbent on the committee member to inform the committee chair as soon as they have decided to allow their student or postdoc to apply for either award. This will allow the chair to decide whether additional reviewers will be needed for the review panel.**

B. Committee members who are in the applicant's department will recuse themselves from all or part of the review process. Committee members who are in the applicant's department also have a perceived, if not direct, conflict of interest and should, at minimum, recuse themselves from reviewing that specific application. However, the committee member can be involved in reviewing other applications and participate in the award selection conference call. In addition, s/he should refrain from being involved in the discussion of that specific applicant. However, if the committee member works closely with or collaborates extensively with the applicant, s/he should recuse himself from the entire review process to eliminate any perception of bias or conflict of interest. **It is incumbent on the committee member to inform the committee chair as soon as s/he is aware of the application of a member of his/her department, including information on the level of collaboration between the committee member and the applicant. This will allow the chair to decide whether the committee member should participate in the review process.**

For questions regarding this policy, please contact [Scarletta Whitsett](#), Awards and Events Manager.