



Astronomical Society of Australia Guidelines on Conflict of Interest

This statement provides general guidelines to ASA members on Conflicts of Interest. It is intended to be read in conjunction with the [Astronomical Society of Australia Statement of Ethics](#).

A **conflict of interest** is a situation in which someone in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests. Such competing interests could make it difficult for an individual to fulfil his or her duties impartially, and potentially could improperly influence the performance of their official duties and responsibilities.

An **apparent** (or perceived) conflict of interest exists where it appears that individual private interests could improperly influence the performance of their duties and responsibilities whether or not this is, in fact, the case. Individuals must be conscious that perceptions of conflict of interest may be as important as an actual conflict.

A **potential** conflict of interest arises where an individual has a private interest which is such that an actual conflict of interest would arise if the member were to become involved in relevant (that is conflicting) official duties and responsibilities in the future.

A conflict of interest may also exist where a person's spouse or immediate family member has any of the interests or involvements listed above.

Individuals must consider the potential for conflict in all possible interests including:

- professional positions
- membership of committees of other organisations
- consultancies
- boards of directors
- advisory groups
- family and personal relationships, or
- financial interests, including receiving recompense in the form of cash, services or equipment from outside bodies to support research activities.

If a conflict of interest arises in any of these situations, then it needs to be immediately declared and managed in a way that is appropriate for that situation. Most bodies and committees generally have formal procedures in place to deal with conflict of interests.