



Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

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Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure

1. Title: TSI Conflict of Interest, Disclosure and Governance Policy

2. Commencement

This Policy guidelines shall come into effect from the date of approval by the Telemedicine Society of India Executive Committee (TSI EC) and General Body.

3. Preamble

The Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all its activities. This Conflict of Interest (CoI) Disclosure and Governance Policy is designed to ensure that decisions and actions of TSI members are made in the best interest of the Society and are not influenced by personal, financial, or professional interests.

4. Purpose

The TSI depends on the active involvement of its members to advance the science and practice of telemedicine. The purpose of this policy is to:

- 4.1 Promote ethical conduct and transparency in all TSI activities;
- 4.2 Identify, disclose, and manage conflicts of interest effectively;
- 4.3 Protect the society from reputational harm and legal liability;
- 4.4 Ensure that all individuals acting for TSI avoid conflicts between their personal, professional, or business interests and the interests of the Society;
- 4.5 Ensure fair decision making in governance, partnerships, programs and business transactions are undertaken with integrity and are not influenced by personal gain.

5. Scope

This policy applies to all TSI Leaders, including but not limited to:

- 5.1 Executive Committee (EC) members
- 5.2 Other Office bearers
- 5.3 State chapter representatives
- 5.4 Advisory board members
- 5.5 Editors and editorial board members of TSI publications
- 5.6 Committee members, reviewers, and consultants
- 5.7 Employees, volunteers, and interns associated with TSI.

6. Definitions

- 6.1. "Member": Any individual or entity enrolled under the society's membership categories
- 6.2. Misconduct: Any act violating this Conflict-of-Interest Policy

- 6.3. Conflict of Interest: A situation where personal or financial interests influence professional decisions
- 6.4. EDC: Ethics and Disciplinary Committee constituted by TSI

7. Statement on Inclusive Language

All references to roles and designations in this policy document are gender-neutral and shall apply to individuals of any gender.

8. Policy Statement

All individuals covered by this policy are expected to avoid situations in which personal, financial, or other interests conflict with those of the Association. Any potential or perceived conflict must be disclosed immediately.

9. Types of Conflict:

- 9.1. Real: A direct contradiction between personal interests and the Society's interests.
- 9.2. Potential: A situation that may develop into a conflict in the future.
- 9.3. Perceived (Apparent): A situation where a reasonable person might deduce a lack of impartiality, even if it does not actually exist.
- 9.4. Financial Conflict: Receiving honoraria, grants, sponsorships, or gifts that may influence decisions.
- 9.5. Professional Conflict: Involvement in decision-making where the member's organization is a beneficiary
- 9.6. Academic/Research Conflict: Bias in reviewing research papers, grants, or awards involving collaborators or affiliated institutions
- 9.7. Personal Conflict: Decisions involving family members, close associates, or personal relationships
- 9.8. Institutional Conflict: Conflicts arising from affiliations with institutions that have formal or informal relationships with TSI

10. Disclosure Requirements

- 10.1. Mandatory Disclosure
 - 10.1.1. All covered individuals must:
 - 10.1.2. Submit a Conflict-of-Interest Declaration Form annually
 - 10.1.3. Disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict as soon as it arises
- 10.2. Event-Specific Disclosure
 - 10.2.1. Prior to participation in meetings, conferences, committees, or evaluations
 - 10.2.2. While engaging in partnerships, MoUs, sponsorships, or funding decisions

11. Conflict of Interest Declaration

- 11.1. The declaration should include:
- 11.2. Nature of the conflict

- 11.3. Entities or individuals involved
- 11.4. Duration and extent of the interest
- 11.5. Any financial or non-financial benefits

12. Management of Conflict of Interest

- 12.1. General Principles
 - 12.1.1. Transparency and timely disclosure
 - 12.1.2. Fair and unbiased decision-making
 - 12.1.3. Protection of institutional integrity

12.2. Possible Management Actions

Depending on the severity of the conflict:

- 12.2.1. Recusal from discussions and decision-making: Any member with a conflict must abstain from voting, influencing, or participating in related discussions or decisions.
- 12.2.2. Restriction from accessing sensitive information: In situations where a conflict of interest exists, the concerned individual may be restricted from accessing confidential or sensitive information related to the matter. This ensures that such information is not used, intentionally or unintentionally, for personal, professional, or institutional advantage, and maintains the integrity and confidentiality of TSI processes.
- 12.2.3. Reassignment of roles or responsibilities : Where there is a chance that a conflict may influence an individual's ability to perform duties objectively, their roles or responsibilities may be reassigned to another qualified individual. This helps ensure that decisions and processes remain fair, unbiased, and in the best interest of the Society
- 12.2.4. Independent review or oversight: In cases of significant or complex conflicts, an independent review or oversight mechanism may be instituted. This may involve assigning the matter to an impartial committee, external expert, or uninvolved authority to ensure transparency, objectivity, and credibility in decision-making.
- 12.2.5. Divestment or termination of conflicting interest (if necessary): In certain cases, individuals may be required to divest (withdraw from) or formally terminate the conflicting interest—such as financial holdings, advisory roles, or affiliations—if the conflict cannot be adequately managed through other measures. This step is taken to eliminate the conflict entirely and protect the interests of TSI.
- 12.2.6. Non-Compliance and Consequences :Failure to disclose or appropriately manage a conflict of interest may be treated as misconduct. Depending on the severity, appropriate actions may include warning, removal from decision-making roles, suspension from committees, or termination of membership. This ensures

accountability and reinforces adherence to ethical standards within TSI.

13. Procedures

- 13.1. Disclosure of Interests: Members must submit a written declaration of any personal, business, or financial interest that may conflict with the Association's objectives at the beginning of each year or upon assuming office.
- 13.2. Recusal from Decision-Making: Any member with a conflict must abstain from voting, influencing, or participating in related discussions or decisions.
- 13.3. Record Maintenance: All disclosures are recorded in a Conflict-of-Interest Register maintained by the Secretary.
- 13.4. Review and Action: The Executive Committee reviews all disclosures and determines whether a conflict exists and what corrective measures are necessary.
- 13.5. Non-Compliance: Failure to disclose a conflict or continued participation despite a conflict may result in disciplinary action, including termination of membership or removal from office.

14. Roles and Responsibilities

- 14.1. President: Ensures transparent handling of all conflict cases.
- 14.2. Secretary: Maintains the Conflict-of-Interest Register and records disclosures.
- 14.3. Members: Disclose all relevant interests and comply with recusal requirements.
- 14.4. Executive Committee: Reviews and resolves reported conflicts.

15. Review and Amendment

This policy shall be reviewed annually or as required by the Executive Committee to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness.
