**Conflict of interest**

Conflict of interest is a situation which undermines confidence for a particular administrator’s or expert’s impartiality when handling/assessing a matter. The right of applicants to an impartial evaluation of their qualifications implies careful scrutiny of possible conflict of interest.

In general, five types of situation may constitute grounds for disqualification:

1. a person has a direct or indirect interest in the matter,
2. a person is a proxy for another person who is directly affected by the matter,
3. a person has previously been involved in handling the matter at a different level,
4. a person has represented, in legal proceedings or similar circumstances, another person who is affected by the matter,
5. there is some other “special” circumstance likely to undermine confidence in a person’s impartiality in the matter.

In matters pertaining to appointments and promotions, the first and last types of conflict of interest are most common.

Examples of conflict of interest:

- close collaboration
- shared authorship
- cases of friendship or hostility
- dependency
- colleagues

All those taking part in the assessment of an applicant’s qualifications or who are involved in the handling of individual cases have an obligation to report any circumstances that could undermine confidence in the impartiality of the decision-making process. The Academic Appointments Board is responsible for decisions concerning conflict of interest. Any person found to have a conflict of interest will be disqualified from taking part in the appointment process.