



PSA Declaration of Interests Policy

Introduction

The Professional Speaking Association UK & I (PSA) is committed to promoting transparency, integrity, and accountability across all levels of its governance and operations.

To safeguard the interests of the organisation and maintain public trust, it is essential that Directors, Board Members, Regional Presidents, Officers, and volunteers declare any potential conflicts of interest. This policy provides a clear framework for the declaration of interests to ensure decisions made on behalf of The PSA are free from bias or undue influence.

All relevant parties are required to declare their interests annually, as well as update their declarations promptly if new situations arise that could affect their impartiality.

The duty to declare such interests lies with the individual, and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

Purpose

The Declaration of Interests Policy is designed to:

- Ensure that any personal, financial, or professional interests that could potentially conflict with an individual's duties to The PSA are disclosed.
- Maintain transparency in decision-making, protecting the integrity of The PSA and its reputation.
- Guide Directors, Board Members, Regional Presidents, Officers, and volunteers on how to manage conflicts of interest effectively.
- Enable The PSA to manage any perceived or actual conflicts appropriately, fostering trust within the organisation and with its members.

Scope

This policy applies to:

- PSA Directors
- PSA Board Members
- Regional Presidents
- Other Officers of The PSA
- Volunteers engaged in PSA activities

What is a Conflict of Interest?

A conflict of interest arises when an individual's personal, financial, or other interests potentially interfere with their duty to act in the best interests of The PSA. This may occur when:



- The individual stands to gain personally or professionally from a decision made by The PSA.
- The individual has a financial interest in a business, organisation, or contract related to The PSA.
- The individual's loyalty to another organisation or person may impair their ability to act impartially for The PSA.

Types of Interests to Declare

Relevant interests that must be declared include (but are not limited to):

- **Financial Interests:** Directorships, shareholdings, partnerships, consultancies, or other business interests that could be seen as influencing decisions within The PSA.
- **Non-Financial Interests:** Voluntary roles, trusteeships, advisory positions, or roles in other organisations that might affect an individual's ability to act independently.
- **Family or Personal Relationships:** If a family member or close associate stands to benefit from a PSA decision or relationship (e.g., contracts, grants, or employment).
- **Gifts and Hospitality:** Any significant gifts or hospitality from external parties that could be seen as influencing decision-making.
- **Political or Membership Affiliations:** Involvement in political groups, professional bodies, or other associations that might conflict with the interests or values of The PSA.

Guidance for Completing the Declaration of Interests

1. **Annual Declaration:** All relevant individuals are required to complete the Declaration of Interests Form annually. The form should cover any current roles, financial interests, or personal connections that could present a conflict.
2. **Updating Declarations:** If a new conflict of interest arises during the course of the year, individuals must update their declaration promptly. This includes changes in employment, financial interests, or other situations that could affect their impartiality.
3. **Disclosing Conflicts at Meetings:** Before any board, regional, or committee meeting, individuals should review the agenda and declare any conflicts related to the items to be discussed. This declaration should be made at the start of the meeting, and the individual may be asked to withdraw from the discussion or decision-making process related to that item.
4. **Managing Conflicts:** Where a conflict of interest is declared, the Chair or responsible officer will determine the appropriate action to manage the conflict. This may involve exclusion from discussion or voting on the matter, or in some cases, withdrawal from certain duties or responsibilities.



Information to Declare

Below is an example of the information required when completing the Declaration of Interests Form:

1. Personal Details

Name:

Position:

Date of Declaration:

2. Employment and Financial Interests

1. Any paid employment or consultancy roles.
2. Directorships or shareholdings in any organisation that could potentially work with or contract for The PSA.
3. Any other financial interests, including property ownership or business ventures that may conflict with PSA duties.

3. Non-Financial Interests

1. Trusteeships, advisory roles, or voluntary positions in other organisations.
2. Membership of any other professional bodies or associations, including political or pressure groups.

4. Relationships with PSA Stakeholders

1. Any personal or familial relationships with current PSA members, advisers, donors, or employees that could be perceived as influencing decisions.

5. Gifts and Hospitality

1. Any significant gifts or hospitality received within the past 12 months that could be viewed as potentially influencing decisions.

6. Other Conflicts

1. Any other potential conflicts not covered above but that could affect your ability to act impartially within your PSA role.

Responsibilities of Individuals

- It is the duty of all relevant individuals to ensure they are aware of this policy and fully comply with its requirements. The responsibility to declare conflicts rests with the individual, not The PSA.
- Individuals must ensure that their declarations are accurate, up-to-date, and submitted in a timely manner.



- Failure to disclose relevant conflicts of interest may result in sanctions, including removal from office or other disciplinary measures.

Monitoring and Review

The PSA Board will review all declarations annually and assess any updates provided during the year. The Chair, or a designated Ethics Officer, will be responsible for maintaining the Register of Interests and ensuring compliance with this policy. Any serious breaches of the policy will be investigated, and appropriate actions will be taken.

What Happens if a Conflict of Interest Arises?

If a conflict of interest arises, whether identified by the individual or another member of The PSA, the following steps will be taken to ensure the conflict is managed appropriately and transparently:

1. Immediate Disclosure

The individual must disclose the conflict as soon as they become aware of it. This can happen in a variety of situations, such as when:

- Preparing or attending a board, committee, or regional meeting.
- Engaging in decisions that may impact their personal or professional interests.
- Receiving new information that creates a conflict with their role at The PSA.

The disclosure should be made to the Chair of the meeting or, where applicable, the Ethics Officer or Company Secretary. If the conflict occurs outside of a formal meeting, the individual should notify the Chair or designated officer as soon as possible.

2. Declaration and Documentation

Once the conflict is disclosed, it will be documented in the meeting minutes or included in the relevant records, such as The PSA's Register of Interests. This ensures there is a clear, transparent record of the conflict, as well as the steps taken to manage it.

If the conflict is significant, the individual's declaration may also be shared with other relevant members of the board or committee to ensure everyone is aware of the potential issue.

3. Review and Determination

The Chair, along with other board members or the Ethics Officer, will review the nature and scope of the conflict. Based on the level of risk to The PSA, they will determine how the conflict should be managed. The main considerations include:

- The impact the conflict could have on The PSA's reputation, decision-making, or operational integrity.
- The individual's ability to remain objective despite the conflict.
- The severity and type of conflict (e.g., financial, familial, or professional).

4. Actions to Manage the Conflict

Depending on the nature of the conflict, the following actions may be taken to manage it:



- **Exclusion from Decision-Making:** If the conflict affects a specific matter being discussed or decided upon, the individual may be asked to leave the room or withdraw from that part of the discussion. The individual will also abstain from voting on that matter to ensure their interests do not influence the outcome.
- **Delegation of Duties:** In cases where the conflict is ongoing or may affect a wider range of duties, certain responsibilities may be reassigned to other board members to ensure objectivity.
- **Resignation from Role:** In extreme cases, where a conflict significantly impacts the individual's ability to fulfil their role impartially, or where no suitable resolution is possible, the board may request that the individual resign from their role or position.

5. Recording the Outcome

All decisions and actions taken to manage the conflict will be recorded in the board or committee minutes, ensuring transparency. This includes details of:

- The conflict that was declared.
- How the conflict was managed (e.g., exclusion from discussion, reassignment of duties).
- Any decisions made in relation to the individual's ongoing role within The PSA.

6. Monitoring the Conflict

If the conflict is ongoing (e.g., a financial interest in a partner organisation), the board or Ethics Officer will monitor the situation periodically to ensure it remains effectively managed. The individual will also be required to keep their declaration up-to-date and notify The PSA of any changes.

7. Confidentiality

Where appropriate, conflicts will be managed confidentially to protect both the individual and the integrity of The PSA. The disclosure of conflicts will be restricted to relevant parties within The PSA, and decisions will be made with fairness and discretion.

Consequences of Failing to Declare a Conflict

If an individual fails to declare a conflict of interest, this may lead to disciplinary actions, including:

- A formal warning from the board.
- Removal from the board, committee, or relevant position within The PSA.
- Legal consequences if the failure to declare a conflict results in financial or reputational damage to The PSA.

In serious cases, failure to disclose a conflict of interest could also result in the revocation of membership or directorship in line with The PSA's constitution and governance framework.



Conclusion

The PSA takes conflicts of interest seriously to uphold the integrity, transparency, and trust of its governance processes.

It is the responsibility of each Director, Board Member, Regional President, Officer, and volunteer to proactively declare any potential conflicts and ensure they are managed in a way that protects the interests of The PSA and its members.