



## Guidelines for impartiality in competence assessment

The Faculty of Medicine, UoB

The regulations outlined in the Public Administration Act are designed to ensure an objective and impartial case processing.

Members of committees\* involved in recruitment and promotion matters at the Faculty of Medicine (MED) are subject to the impartiality provisions outlined in § 6 of the [Public Administration Act](#). If a committee member is deemed disqualified, it indicates the presence of circumstances that may compromise their impartiality. Each member is responsible for assessing their own eligibility. Should there be any doubt, the member may refer the question of impartiality to their supervisor for a decision, as per [§ 8 of the Public Administration](#)

**Below are guidelines to assist in accessing your own impartiality.**

### 1. When am I directly disqualified?

An employee at MED or a member of a committee is considered directly disqualified from facilitating the basis for a decision or making a decision in a case under the following circumstances:

- 1.1 If you are a party to the case.
- 1.2 If you are related by blood or marriage to a party in an ascending or descending line, or in the collateral line as close as siblings.
- 1.3 If you are or have been married or partnered with, engaged to, cohabiting with, or are a foster parent, foster mother, or foster child of a party.
- 1.4 If you are a guardian or attorney for a party in the case or have been a guardian or attorney for a party after the case began

### 2. "Special circumstances" that make you disqualified at MED:

Even if you are not directly disqualified, as a member of a committee, you can still be disqualified due to "special circumstances" that could undermine trust in your impartiality. See more about this in points 3 and 4.

When assessing, factors such as whether the decision in the case might entail a particular benefit, loss, or disadvantage for yourself or someone you have a close personal connection to, should be considered. It should also be considered whether disqualification objections have been raised by a party.

At MED, you are *always* considered disqualified due to "special circumstances" in the following situations:

- 2.1 When you have been or currently are a supervisor to a party in exams, doctoral degrees, or postdoctoral work within the last five (5) years.
- 2.2 When you have or have had significant close professional collaboration and co-authorship within the last five (5) years.



### 3. Additional situations and circumstances that may be considered “special conditions”:

Co-authorship and other academic collaborations are generally evaluated in the similarly.

Your contribution to a publication or collaboration, and the role you have played, must be assessed in each individual case. Generally, the fewer co-authors involved, the higher the likelihood of a conflict of interest. Contributions published within the same publication or collaboration framework more than five (5) years ago typically do not result in a conflict of interest. This is unless there is a widespread perception that the previous collaboration has established a lasting, close academic and/or personal relationship (see points 2.2 and 4).

3.1. Ordinary close collaboration in service and contact due to work within the same field will generally not lead to conflict of interest.

3.2. Editorial responsibilities generally do not result in disqualification.

### 4. Control questions and summary:

Are there any circumstances that could compromise, or be presumed to compromise, professional judgment when viewed from an external viewpoint? This includes considerations related to the requirements for proper case handling, impartiality, or objectivity? Such special conditions may include

- Close personal friendships or animosities?
- Personal financial relationships?
- Organizational close relationships?

The assessment should be based on factual evidence and actual circumstances, rather than unfounded assumptions and speculations. It should be evaluated in such a way to ensure that a) it is highly probable that b) an individual's impartiality will be questioned, and that c) this is likely to undermine trust in the specific decision.

When conducting an assessment, it is beneficial to consider the perspective of an external observer by asking, "how does this appear from the outside?"

- It is crucial to assess each situation individually. If there are multiple "unique circumstances" that apply simultaneously, it can more easily lead to disqualification.
- Individuals are responsible for assessing their own eligibility and, in good time, reporting any circumstances that may or do render them ineligible.
- If there is any doubt regarding your eligibility, that in itself is a reason to carefully consider the eligibility question.

**If you have any inquiries regarding impartiality and/or the impartiality assessment, please contact the HR section at the faculty promptly to discuss the matter.**

\*Committees

The question of impartiality applies to members of all committees involved in appointment and promotion matters at MED: Expert Committee, Advisory Committee, Recommendation Committee, and Interview Committee.