

# PHSA Research Conflict of Interest Process

## Researcher & Research Staff FAQ

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## General Information

### Conflict of Interest Overview

A conflict of interest is when there is a difference between your personal interests and professional obligations. To determine if you have a conflict of interest, ask yourself if an independent observer would question whether financial or personal gain influenced your duties or professional judgment. Financial interests and external relationships can present a real conflict with a researcher's role and responsibilities at PHSA, the potential for a conflict to develop, or the perception that a conflict might exist from the view of an outside, independent observer.

### PHSA's Research Conflict of Interest System

#### *Scope*

Anyone who is involved with the design, conduct or reporting of research at or under the auspices of any of PHSA's hospitals, health centers, agencies, or their affiliated research institutes must submit a declaration form. This includes individuals with academic appointments, members of the medical, dental, midwifery, nursing and professional staff, research associates, research assistants, research nurses, and technologists. Students only need to submit a form when they have a conflict, not on an annual basis. For more information, see our [Scope of PHSA Research Conflict of Interest Policy guide](#).

#### *Estimated Effort*

The online declaration system was designed to be user friendly and simple to use. If you have no conflicts to declare, the declaration form can be completed in a few minutes. Similarly, if you have a valid university declaration, it can be uploaded to the system in lieu of completing the entire form.

#### *System Access*

To log into and access PHSA's COI declaration system, follow the steps below:

1. Connect to the PHSA, BCCHR, BCCRC or GSC network. Use Citrix Secure Access if connecting via VPN off-site.
2. Go to <http://coi.phsa.ca/researcher/>
3. Enter your domain and username (e.g., phsabc\jane.doe), followed by your password.

Please contact PHSA Research and Academic Services staff ([researchadministration@phsa.ca](mailto:researchadministration@phsa.ca)) with questions or to request assistance with this process.

#### *Submission Frequency*

You are required to submit a declaration form every year. If there are changes to your role, responsibilities, or research, or if a conflict arises prior to 365 days of your last submission, you must update your declaration within 30 days. The declaration system will send automated email reminders for you to renew your declaration as your anniversary date approaches.

### *Renewal Process*

To amend or renew your declaration, log in to the PHSA COI declaration website (<http://coi.phsa.ca/researcher/>) with your network credentials. Once signed in, you will see an option to amend your declaration. The system saves the information you submitted in your previous declaration. Please update the form to reflect your current PHSA roles and responsibilities, and any external interests and relationships you have.

### *Account Reactivation*

If you login and can access your previous declarations but cannot see an “Amend my last Col Declaration” button, your account may have been temporarily deactivated due to prolonged inactivity. Please contact PHSA Research and Academic Services at [researchadministration@phsa.ca](mailto:researchadministration@phsa.ca) to reactivate your account.

### *Account Deactivation*

If you are leaving your PHSA role, please inform PHSA Research and Academic Services at [researchadministration@phsa.ca](mailto:researchadministration@phsa.ca) so they can deactivate your account.

### *Duplicate Accounts*

If you have received a declaration renewal reminder but are sure you have updated your PHSA COI within the last year, you may have a duplicate account. This sometimes happens when users login with different domains (eg. phsabc\ and crc\), or login with just their username as well as their full email (eg. phsabc\jane.doe and phsabc\jane.doe@phsa.ca). To reduce duplicate efforts, take note of the username you are using to log into the PHSA COI declaration site. Please email PHSA Research and Academic Services ([researchadministration@phsa.ca](mailto:researchadministration@phsa.ca)) to deactivate duplicate accounts.

### *Related Persons*

A related person is an individual connected to you by marriage, common-law partnership, adoption, and is a member of your immediate family, such as spouse, sibling, parent, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, grandparent, or grandchild. A related person can also be someone residing in your household, a person that you have a close personal relationship with, or an individual or industry that you have a direct or indirect financial or other interest.

### *Management Plans*

A management plan outlines how the identified conflicts of interest will be controlled, managed, and mitigated. It provides specific courses of action to reduce the conflict to protect your integrity, your research, and PHSA's reputation.

### *Thresholds for Financial Interests*

There is no threshold for financial interests. You should disclose all financial interests that pose a conflict with your research or roles at PHSA.

### *Submitting with no conflict*

If you are involved with PHSA research, you still need to submit a declaration form every year even if you do not have a conflict.

### *Academic Declarations*

If you submit a declaration form to your university, you will still need to submit one to PHSA. The PHSA Research Conflict of Interest form provides researchers the opportunity to disclose any conflicts related to their PHSA responsibilities that are not captured in their university declaration. You do have the option of saving your university declaration and uploading it to the PHSA declaration system to minimize duplication. If you don't have any other conflicts specific to your PHSA role that aren't disclosed in the university form, you will be able to submit it and complete the process.

### *Confidentiality*

The information you submit in your declaration form will remain confidential. The information is gathered under Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) (s. 26(c)) and is only used to fulfill the requirements of the [Research Conflict of Interest Policy](#). The information you disclose will only be viewed by your reviewer and, if sent up for additional review, other appointed reviewers. It may also be viewed by the Research Conflict of Interest (RCOI) committee members if your declaration is randomly selected for the annual audit. As confidential information, any unauthorized disclosure is strictly prohibited.

## **Conflict of Interest Declaration Review Process**

### **Declaration Submissions**

Once you submit, your declaration will be sent to your department reviewer for approval if it indicates any conflict.

### **Declaration Review**

Your declaration reviewer will be someone who is familiar with your area of research, and is often a supervisor, department head, or executive director. A concerted effort has been made by both PHSA Research and Academic Services and your program to have your form reviewed by someone who understands what interests are necessary, and what interests might cause harm.

### **Disagreeing with a Reviewer's decision**

If your reviewer has decided to prohibit your declaration, you should first review the comments and determine if you can amend the form to satisfy these requirements. If this isn't possible, you have the option of appealing the decision to the RCOI committee.

### **RCOI Committee**

The RCOI committee acts as final reviewer for declarations, decides any appeals, and performs audits annually.

## Declaration Audits

If your form has been selected, at random, for the annual audit, you will receive an email notifying you. No action is required until you receive an email from PHSA Research and Academic Services requesting more information. Instructions will be provided at that time. If you receive an email stating that your declaration is approved, no further action is required.

## Questions or Comments?

Please contact PHSA Research and Academic Services with any questions or comments ([researchadministration@phsa.ca](mailto:researchadministration@phsa.ca)).