

CONFLICT OF INTEREST POLICY

1.0 STATEMENT

- 1.1 The SSC is committed to a high standard of propriety in the governance, decision-making, and action to promote the advancement, discovery, learning, and application of the statistical sciences. The goal is to maintain and enhance public confidence in the SSC.
- 1.2 This policy statement informs SSC members, employees, officers, and others engaged with the SSC of the manner in which conflicts of interest are to be managed.

2.0 STANDARD OF CONDUCT

- 2.1 Anyone acting on behalf of the SSC shall conduct themselves in a manner that will preserve and enhance the integrity, objectivity, and impartiality of SSC affairs.
- 2.2 Anyone engaged with the SSC as an officer, a director, a mentor, a volunteer, or as staff shall act in the best interests of the SSC and shall strive to be in compliance with this policy and shall be accountable to the SSC for their actions.

3.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 3.1 A **conflict of interest (COI)** is a situation in which a person or organization is involved in multiple interests, financial or otherwise, and serving one interest could involve working against another. Typically, this relates to situations in which the personal interest of an individual or organization might adversely affect a duty owed to make decisions for the benefit of a third party.
- 3.2 A widely used definition is: A conflict of interest is a set of circumstances that creates a risk that professional judgement or actions regarding a primary interest will be unduly influenced by a secondary interest. *Primary interest* refers to the principal goals of the profession or activity, such as the protection of clients, the health of patients, the integrity of research, and the duties of a public officer. *Secondary interest* includes personal benefit and is not limited to only financial gain but also such motives as the desire for professional advancement, or the wish to do favours for family and friends. These secondary interests are not treated as wrong in and of themselves, but become objectionable when they are believed to have greater weight than the primary interests.
- 3.3 A conflict of interest exists if the circumstances are reasonably believed (on the basis of past experience and objective evidence) to create a risk that a decision *may* be unduly influenced by other, secondary interests, and not on whether a particular individual *is actually* influenced by a secondary interest.
- 3.4 The presence of a conflict of interest is independent of the occurrence of impropriety. Therefore, a conflict of interest can be discovered and voluntarily defused before any corruption occurs.

- 3.4 The basic principle is that neither benefits received nor the interests of anyone engaged with the SSC should influence or be perceived to influence the objectivity and impartiality of their judgements in the conduct of their SSC duties and responsibilities.

4.0 ACADEMIC CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Academics are professionals whose employment obligations encompass not only scheduled duties but also scholarly activities, administrative duties, and service to the academic community. Conflict of interest situations may arise when academics engage in outside activities that affect their responsibilities to their society, organization, or university. It is understood that individuals engaged with the SSC may be employed by other societies, organizations, or universities and that, when at the same time they are working on behalf of the SSC, they are contributing to the betterment of the statistical sciences community.

5.0 GUIDELINES

- 5.1 Anyone acting on behalf of the SSC shall act in the best interests of the SSC and shall avoid situations:
- a) where their own interests affect their actions on behalf of the SSC;
 - b) that provide personal benefit other than incidental gifts, customary hospitality, or other minor benefits of nominal value, from persons or organizations having dealings with the SSC;
 - c) that permit use of their position or relationship to give another party special treatment that would advance their respective interests or that of any member of their family or associates;
 - d) that place the SSC or themselves under any obligation to any person or organization that might profit from special consideration by the SSC;
 - e) involving decisions from which they or their immediate family or associates derive a benefit either directly or indirectly; and
 - f) that may disclose confidential or privileged information about the affairs of the SSC or provide confidential information to advance personal or others' interests.

6.0 BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

- 6.1 Should a real or potential conflict of interest arise or be seen to exist, the individual concerned shall bring the conflict to the attention of the committee Chair and the Chair, with or without the advice of the committee, as necessary in consultation with the Executive Director, will decide on whether or not a conflict exists and if any action is required. As required, the matter can be addressed by the SSC President and, as necessary, by the SSC Board of Directors. A conflict of interest concern regarding the Executive Director shall be addressed by the SSC President and, as necessary, by the SSC Board of Directors.
- 6.2 Should an individual excuse and absent themselves from a discussion and/or a Board or committee decision, it will be recorded in the meeting minutes.

The individual need not indicate the reason for the action.

7.0 COMPLIANCE

- 7.1** Anyone acting on behalf of the SSC can comply with this policy by:
- a) Avoiding activities or situations that would place themselves in a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest relative to their SSC duties and responsibilities; and
 - b) Declaring a conflict of interest to the SSC and, as required, taking appropriate acceptable action to mitigate or minimize the conflict.

8.0 UNADDRESSED CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 8.1** Any individual who believes a conflict of interest situation exists within the SSC and that that the situation is not being addressed or is being inadequately addressed may raise the matter, formally or informally, with the SSC Executive Director who will investigate and review the situation and report back to the individual who raised the concern. As required, the matter can be addressed by the SSC President, and as necessary, by the SSC Board of Directors.

9.0 POLICY CHANGES

- 9.1** Changes to this policy may be made from time to time and communicated on the SSC website.
- 9.2** Administrative and operational changes to this policy can be made by the SSC Executive Director.
- 9.3** A change in policy must be approved by the SSC Board of Directors.

10.0 ENQUIRIES

- 10.1** The SSC official responsible for implementing this policy and monitoring compliance is the SSC Executive Director.
- 10.2** Enquiries regarding the application, information, suggestions, complaints, concerns, etc. regarding this policy should be directed to the SSC Executive Director as follows:
- a) by mail to: Executive Director, Statistical Society of Canada, 219-1725 St. Laurent Blvd., Ottawa, ON K1G 3V4
 - b) by email to: ed@ssc.ca
 - c) by phone to: 613-627-3530
- 10.3** Enquiries will usually be responded to within five (5) business days.

11.0 AUTHORITY

- 11.1** This corporate policy was approved by the SSC Board of Directors on June 3, 2018.