

NSA Mathematical Sciences Grants Program Research and Conference Grant Proposals: Conflicts of Interest Policy

The following guidelines are used by the American Mathematical Society (AMS) and the Director of the NSA Mathematical Sciences Grants Program to determine when the relationship between a panelist or a potential reviewer and a Principal Investigator (PI) disqualifies that panelist or reviewer from participating in the evaluation of the PI's proposal. Except where noted, these policies have guided the work of the panel since the AMS assumed management of the review process in the early 1990s. These policies are modeled closely on those of long standing use within the peer-reviewed research grant programs of other federal agencies, including the Division of Mathematical Sciences at the National Science Foundation.

It is recognized that these policies exclude from use as evaluators individuals who might otherwise be well qualified to evaluate the mathematical work of a PI. However, the (automatic) exclusions listed are those where the objectivity of the panelist or reviewer could be called into question solely due to the nature of his/her prior or existing relationship with the PI. **It is assumed that to be competitive within the NSA research grants program, a PI's research program must be sufficiently established to provide for an adequate pool of qualified reviewers outside of those automatically disqualified by the policies which follow.**

Automatic Conflicts of Interest: Here the term *evaluator* means either a panelist or a reviewer. An evaluator may not participate in the review of a proposal by a PI in the following situations.

1. The evaluator, or a member of the evaluator's family, has a research proposal under review by the panel.
2. The evaluator served as thesis advisor or postdoctoral mentor to the PI.
3. The PI was thesis advisor or postdoctoral mentor to the evaluator.
4. The evaluator works at the same institution as the PI.
5. The evaluator has received payment (including honoraria) from the PI's institution within the past 12 months (excludes travel reimbursement).
6. The evaluator has collaborated with the PI within the past 48 months (e.g. on a book, project, article).
7. The evaluator and the PI have co-edited a journal, compendium, or conference proceedings within the last 24 months.
8. The evaluator and the PI have co-organized a meeting within the last 12 months.

The above list covers some of the most frequently occurring relationships that may raise sufficient concern by a third party observer that they should be automatically avoided. However, in addition to these specific instances, a panelist or reviewer should disqualify him/herself if any relationship with the PI exists that might be perceived as a conflict of interest by either the PI or a disinterested third party observer. Panelists are encouraged to discuss any such situation with the senior AMS staff person managing the work of the panel, and with the NSA Grants Program Director. The NSA Grants Program Director has final say in determining whether a situation constitutes a conflict of interest.