



1. PURPOSE

The Australian Political Studies Association Limited (APSA) strives to maintain a high standard of professionalism and ethical conduct.

This policy provides a framework for identifying, disclosing and managing any actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest to ensure they are addressed in an open and transparent way.

Conflicts of interest are common, and they do not need to present a problem to the organisation, provided they are openly and effectively managed.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to:

- directors, office holders, committee members and convenors
- employees (fulltime, parttime, casual), agency staff and contractors
- members and volunteers.

3. DEFINITIONS

A **conflict of interest** occurs where an individual in a position of trust has competing professional or personal interests which may impact their ability to undertake their duties and responsibilities impartially and without improper influence.

An **actual conflict** of interest occurs where an individual's professional or personal interest directly impacts their ability to undertake their duties and responsibilities impartially and without improper influence.

A **potential conflict** of interest occurs where an individual's professional or personal interest is such that an actual conflict would arise if the individual were to become involved in relevant (that is conflicting) duties and responsibilities in the future.

A **perceived conflict** of interest occurs where an individual's professional or personal interest could appear to impact their ability to undertake their duties and responsibilities impartially and without improper influence. Regardless of whether this is the case, individuals should be aware that perceptions of conflict are as important as an actual conflict.

The **Interest Register** is a formal record which documents all actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest disclosed by individuals involved with APSA. The Register ensures transparency and demonstrates compliance with APSA's obligations to effectively manage conflicts of interest.

The **Independent Observer Test** considers whether a fair-minded third person might see the potential for the individual to be influenced by their conflict of interest, regardless of whether the individual believes they can set aside the other interest and not have it influence the impartiality of them undertaking their duties and responsibilities.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

Individuals should consider the potential for conflict in all possible interests including:

- financial interests (e.g. shareholdings, real estate investments, trusts)
- professional positions
- places of employment (past, current, future)
- membership of committees or other organisations
- consultancies
- directorships and office holder positions
- advisory groups, and
- family and personal relationships.

5. DECLARATIONS

Declarations of conflicts of interest should be made in writing and provided to the Company Secretary via email to secretary@auspsa.org.au

APSA will use the Independent Observer Test as the basis for determining whether an individual has a conflict of interest.

All declared conflicts are recorded in the Interest Register which is tabled at Board and other relevant meetings.

Simply declaring a conflict without taking steps to address it is insufficient. It may be necessary to remove the individual from any involvement in the matter causing the conflict.

Directors

Clause 18.2 of the APSA Constitution details how conflicts of interest for directors are to be managed.

Upon appointment directors are required to declare any actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest, and then to confirm they have reviewed their declarations at the first Board meeting following each annual general meeting.

Directors are also required to notify the Company Secretary within a reasonable time when there is any change to their current declaration, and when any new conflict of interest arises.

Other Individuals

This includes office holders, committee members, convenors, employees, agency staff, contractors, members and volunteers.

Individuals involved with APSA are required to declare any actual, potential and perceived conflicts of interest at the time where the conflict of interest becomes relevant:

- on appointment to a position within APSA, i.e. as a committee member, convenor, office holder
- on engagement with APSA, i.e. as an employee, contractor or agency staff position
- at the commencement of the consideration/discussion of the conflicted matter/issue/topic, and
- when a new conflict of interest arises.

Individuals are encouraged to speak with the Chair/President or Company Secretary to discuss any questions or concerns they may have in relation to their own conflicts of interest of those of other individuals involved with APSA.

6. RELATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

- APSA Constitution
- Member Code of Conduct

7. REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the Board at least every two years, or sooner if required by changes in law, regulation or organisational circumstances.

Version	Amendments	Approved By	Date	Next Review
2024.1	Initial policy	APSA Board	04Feb25	Feb27
2026.2	Revised policy – addition of a disclosure and management process for all individuals (members, convenors, committee members, employees) to expand coverage wider than directors	APSA Board	07Apr26	Apr28