

ACADEMIC CENTRE FOR HEALTHY AGEING

ACADEMIC AFFILIATION and CONFLICT OF INTEREST GUIDELINES

APPROVALS	ACHA Board	Date	
	ACHA Assurance Committee	Date	
EFFECTIVE FROM	June 2025		
OWNER	Amanjit Jhund, ACHA SRO and Whipps Cross Hospital CEO		
REVIEW DATE	June 2026		

1. Scope

These Guidelines apply to all academic and general staff of ACHA, as well as the Board Members and doctoral students of the Centre. Furthermore, it applies to all staff and students whose research outputs from pre-clinical and clinical research derive from their employment/education by the University and/or Trust, from research grants awarded to the University and/or Trust or otherwise from the use of University and/or Trust resources and facilities. The policy applies to all authors of publications, and not simply to principal authors or reprint authors.

The Guidelines apply equally to all publications and other written documents that are directly related to ACHA (research, teaching, continuing education, knowledge transfer, social responsibility and administration). This also includes publications in the field of research transfer, social media contributions as well as print and audio-visual media. Furthermore, this standardised affiliation designation applies to lectures, to the organisation of and participation in conferences and other events, as well as to research proposals. This Guideline is mandatory, not only for first and corresponding authors, but also for senior, co- and last authors.

Only staff or students of the ACHA or Queen Mary University of London, or those who have a formal affiliation to the University, Trust or Centre (or those who were University staff or students, or had a formal affiliation when the research in question was conducted), should state in any journal submission that they are affiliated to the ACHA.

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Barts Health NHS Trust and Queen Mary University [Joint Research Management Policies](#).

2. Core Principles

- Research outputs should appropriately acknowledge all ACHA
- Any undeclared or incorrectly managed conflicts may result in undue influence or bias. This could ultimately put the credibility of the Centre and Board Members at risk.
- It is recognised that there needs to be a sufficient number of Board members who have the appropriate knowledge and skills to make an informed decision. If an appropriate level of expertise cannot be maintained then a balance must be struck between the risk of bias due to conflict of interest versus wrong decisions from lack of expertise.
- The Affiliation and COI policy should be applied consistently across all ACHA projects and infrastructure.

ACHA Staff and Board Members are expected to adhere to the Queen Mary Policy on Research Integrity and in line with the [Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#):

“Honesty in all aspects of research, including in the presentation of research goals, intentions and findings; in reporting on research methods and procedures; in gathering data; in using and acknowledging the work of other researchers; and in conveying valid interpretations and making justifiable claims based on research findings.

Rigour, in line with prevailing disciplinary norms and standards, and in performing research and using appropriate methods; in adhering to an agreed protocol where appropriate; in drawing interpretations and conclusions from the research; and in communicating the results.

Transparency and open communication in declaring potential competing interests; in the reporting of research data collection methods; in the analysis and interpretation of data; in making research findings widely available, which includes publishing or otherwise sharing negative or null results to recognise their value as part of the research process; and in presenting the work to other researchers and the public.

Care and respect for all research participants, and the subjects, users and beneficiaries of research. Those engaged with research must also show care and respect for the integrity of the research record.

Accountability of funders, employers and researchers to collectively create a research environment in which individuals and organisations are empowered and enabled to own the research process. Those engaged with research must also ensure that individuals and organisations are held to account when behaviour falls short of the standards set by this concordat.”

3. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which a person reviewing a research application or making a funding decision is, or could appear to be, influenced by factors unrelated to the quality of the application. It is essential that the personal and institutional interests of those involved in reviewing applications do not influence the decision making process. All those involved share responsibility for ensuring this.

The Affiliation and COI policy should be applied consistently across all ACHA projects and infrastructure. A standing item allowing for a COI declaration will be in place at all ACHA Board Meetings to allow Members to declare any interest regarding business or matters arising.

All declarations of interest must be reviewed by the ACHA Board Chair, with consideration given to any actions required to mitigate the conflict in the individual circumstances. There may be occasions where the conflict of interest is profound and acute. In such cases it may be necessary to consider a range of possible actions which may include:

- deciding that no action is warranted;
- restricting the person's involvement in discussions and excluding them from decision making;

- removing the person from the whole decision making process;
- removing the person's responsibility for an entire area of work;
- removing the person from their role altogether if the conflict is so significant that they are unable to operate effectively in the role.

An audit trail of the actions taken must be maintained via the Board Minutes.

4. Affiliation

The consistent use of the ACHA name is essential if all relevant research outputs and grants are to be credited to ACHA which will ensure that it can maximise its reputation for research and clinical excellence.

For the purposes of research publications the name must be cited as:

The Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing

This title must be used as the institutional address on all forms of research outputs and grant applications, irrespective of where the affiliation appears. It should be recorded as near the beginning of the affiliation as possible to maximise citation impact. It will be the responsibility of each researcher to ensure that the affiliation details are correctly recorded.

Examples of acceptable affiliation:

- Joe Bloggs, Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing
- Jane Bloggs, Communications Manager, Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing
- Bo Wang, Consultant Geriatrician, Barts Health NHS Trust, Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing

Where any author has a substantive or honorary contract with, or is an undergraduate or postgraduate, registered at the Queen Mary University of London and/or Barts Health NHS Trust, or with one of ACHA's partner organisations, the employing organisation must appear first, and the **Academic Centre for Healthy Ageing** listed after

It is recognised that for some publications, for example, those produced by large consortia governed by contracts, our preferred citation format may involve some negotiation with Queen Mary, external bodies, both funders of research, particularly the National Institute for Health Research and other partners.

It is important for our success that the use of ACHA's name is consistently used, so that all citations to the work of our researchers are recognised, and more generally so that all of the contributions to the reputation of the Centre by our researchers combine effectively.

In all public events, presentations and debates involving staff discussing work undertaken as an affiliate, employee or Board Member of ACHA participants must make their role clear. While other affiliations, such as Barts Health NHS Trust and/or Queen Mary University of London may be included, ACHA must appear in a prominent position.

ACHA affiliation process

Researchers, educationalist and others may seek affiliation with the ACHA if they believe the association will be mutually beneficial. Alternatively, individual projects may seek to be affiliated with the ACHA. Those wishing to be affiliated must submit the appended form for consideration by the ACHA Assurance Committee, upheld by a monthly standing item.

Proposed affiliated projects should be in line with the principles of ACHA and focus on applied health research, they will typically be responding to the needs of our local population and health and care system, and in line with ACHA's three broad overarching themes:

1. frailty prevention and living well with long term conditions and multimorbidity
2. rehabilitation
3. Cognition

4. Advocacy

ACHA Advocates promote and support ACHA's core mission to develop research capacity across the community and north east London health and care system. Advocates provide support and advice to both aspiring researchers and those already on a clinical academic pathway and provide real-world expert advice to ACHA in relation to their specific profession and/or area of interest.

ACHA Advocates are organised by professional group or area of interest and connect to ACHA via focus groups, the Community Advisory Group and System Advisory Group, and specific projects.