TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT DARMSTADT

Conflicts of Interest in Appointment Procedures

Handout for Reviewer

The aim of the appointment procedures at TU Darmstadt is to recruit the most suitable persons worldwide. This requires the following:

- Only unbiased appointment committees can select the best researchers for the professorships.
- Our commitment to both the quality and fairness of appointment procedures requires that the committee and all individuals involved, including external reviewers, adhere to the following principles:
  - Full transparency with regard to possible conflicts of interests
  - Avoid possible conflicts of interests in all decision-making situations
- An undisclosed conflict of interest can undermine the appointment procedure and harm the reputation of the individuals involved as well as that of the university.
- The appointment committees are responsible for identifying and addressing potential conflicts of interest. They decide whether or not a conflict of interests exists.

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT DARMSTADT

Disclosure of a Potential Conflict of Interest

- **If you, as an reviewer, identify or assume a potential conflict of interest:**
  - Contact the commissions chair immediately in order to rule out the possibility of a conflict of interest before your review is prepared.
  - Describe the specific case of potential conflict of interest and as comprehensively as necessary the overall picture of all relationships with this person. Especially if you are unsure about the case. The relationship should be presented without any time limit in the past.
  - The appointment committee will make a decision on the basis of your descriptions.
  - You can, of course, notify the chair of the commission yourself that you feel biased and would therefore like to refuse the review, even if there is no clear exclusion criterion. In this case, the commission will appoint another reviewer.

Thank you very much for your responsible handling of this sensitive topic!

TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT DARMSTADT

Potential Conflict of Interest: Examples

1. Reviewer and applicant are first-degree relatives
   👉 Exclusion as an reviewer
2. Reviewer and applicant are in a relationship of official dependency
   👉 Exclusion as an reviewer
3. Reviewer and applicant have only one joint publication within the last three years
   👉 Describe the overall situation to the commission (without any time limit in the past): are there any previous joint publications or projects, joint stages in your CVs, (joint) supervision or examination of doctorate(s)? How many authors did the publication have, etc.?
4. Reviewer and applicant conducted research together as PIs in a collaborative project
   👉 Describe the overall situation to the commission (without any time limit in the past): Name and size of the collaborative project? Mode of cooperation between sub-projects? Do you have any economic or career advantage through appointment of Applicant? Are there additional relationships (e.g. from the past or other contexts, including private ones)?

Further examples of potential conflict of interests given in the DFG handout, pages 2 and 3.