Purpose
This Agreement, including guidelines, was created to provide a clear outline of expectations and processes for Scholarship Selection Panel(s) (hereafter panel) decision-making, and to ensure that all members of each panel are aware of their responsibilities and obligations in taking on the role. Please read this document carefully, and if you agree, initial each page, and date and sign the final page. You will only need to do this once, even if you are on multiple panels.

Background
As a member of a panel or panels you will be privy to: (1) personal information that the applicant has shared for the purposes of Scholarship Selection only, (2) to discussions around an applicant’s fit to certain selection criteria, and (3) to outcomes of the scholarship before the applicants are made aware of the outcomes.

Panel decisions
Most panels will choose awardees at Selection Panel Meetings, which may or may not include interviews of applicants; in some cases, panel decisions are via email.

A. PRIOR TO THE MEETING
Prior to each meeting, panel members will be provided access to all available application documents to help them make recommendations on applicant suitability at the selection panel meetings. These include, but are not limited to: current scholarship regulations (public); applications (confidential); and, a summary spreadsheet of all applications received (confidential). Only the regulations are public documents. All other documents MUST be kept confidential. Additionally, panel members must:

1. keep documents secure at all times;
2. not discuss any applications with anyone, including other panel members;
3. not share the documents with anyone; and
4. not contact any applicants directly. If this is unavoidable (e.g., because of familial ties etc.), then the panel member will need to declare a conflict of interest (see section B.1).

B. DURING THE MEETING

1. Declaration of any conflict(s) of interest and agreement on appropriate action(s)

Declaration
At the beginning of each meeting the Chair will ask if any panel member has a conflict of interest prior to discussions taking place. If in doubt, it is better to raise a possible conflict of interest and have the discussion with other panel members. As examples, a conflict of interest may be where a panel member is:
a) related to an applicant (by birth, marriage, adoption etc.); and/or
b) a friend/colleague of the applicant (this may also involve, for example, where your friend’s child is applying for a scholarship); and/or
c) a current or previous supervisor/mentor/manager of an applicant; and/or
d) has had recent direct contact with an applicant.

**Appropriate actions**
The panel members are expected to discuss and agree upon appropriate actions for any members who have declared a conflict of interest. Some examples of appropriate actions may include:

a) panel member refrains from discussions related to specific applicants;
b) panel member leaves the room when discussions/interviews of specific applicants are taking place;
c) no action (i.e., there is no risk that the panel member will derive personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their official capacity);

All conflicts of interest, and actions taken, must be recorded on the Record of Decision and/or minutes of the Selection Panel Meeting and/or email thread.

2. **Agreement of understanding of applicant eligibility and scholarship selection criteria**
The Chair will ask panel members if they understand the eligibility and selection criteria as outlined in the regulations, and if there are any questions. The Chair is expected to have a clear understanding of regulations in order to inform other panel members, and manage the selection meeting.

3. **Decisions on scholarship applications**
The Chair will guide the discussions around the applications and which applicants are to be awarded scholarships, or not. During the decision-making process, members are expected to:

a. adhere to the eligibility and selection criteria outlined in the regulations; and
b. have majority agreement in their decisions.

4. **Official records**
Some panel meetings will coincide with the recording of official minutes (e.g., panels that include all members of the Scholarships Executive or Scholarships Committee). Where meetings do not have official minutes, then each panel member must sign the Record of Decision prior to leaving the meeting. Where decisions are made via email, the Chair will email the decisions to the scholarship administrator copying in the other panel members.

5. **Further discussions**
At the completion of the meeting, any panel member may raise concerns, suggestions or points of interest in regards to the scholarship regulations and/or way future meetings are conducted.
C. AFTER THE MEETING

After the meeting is complete, all panel members are required to:

1. dispose of all documents appropriately (e.g., delete electronic documents/dispose of hard copies in a secure document destruction bin/shred etc.); and
2. not share the outcomes of the meeting with anyone until all the applicants have been informed of the outcome of their application; and
3. not discuss any applicant details with anyone; and
4. where a panel member is not a member of staff of the University of Waikato then they may NOT contact the applicants directly for any reason (unless a conflict of interest has been declared);
   a. If a panel member would like to contact an applicant then they may contact the School of Graduate Research – Scholarships, to seek guidance and/or permissions on this process. Some scholarship regulations allow for direct contact between funders (who may also be panel members) and applicants; this will be clearly detailed in the Scholarship Regulations and/or the applicants will be informed of this at the appropriate stage of the application process by School of Graduate Research – Scholarships staff.
5. where a panel member is a member of staff of the University of Waikato, they are bound by the Staff Code of Conduct in all interactions with applicants who are current students and may not contact any other applicants directly (unless a conflict of interest has been declared). If in doubt, then refer to clause C.4.a above.

I ______________________________ have read this Agreement, including guidelines and expectations for members of a scholarship selection panel, and agree to abide by these during all terms on any panels administered through the University of Waikato. I understand that this Agreement may be amended from time to time (after approval by the Scholarships Committee or higher committees), and I will be informed of any changes, and at that time I may choose to step down from the panel(s), unless I am an ex-officio member of the panel.

Date: ________________________________

Signature: ___________________________