

Additional Clarifications.

Conflict of Interest Practice.

A simple definition of “conflict of interest” is “a situation in which someone cannot make a fair decision because they will be affected by the result.” [Cambridge English Dictionary] It is also characterized as "A situation that has the potential to undermine the impartiality of a person because of the possibility of a clash between the person's self-interest and professional interest or public interest. [Business Dictionary]

In Virginia Mennonite Conference, a review for potential “conflict of interest” associated with the Investigation Team members shall be conducted prior to an investigation of a credentialed leader. The review shall occur in the following way:

1. The Executive Conference Minister shall assess the potential of a conflict of interest by the members of the Investigation Team in relationship to participants, i.e. the complainant, the credentialed leader, and/or the congregation or organization represented by the credentialed leader.
2. The assessment shall occur in conversation with Investigation Team members.
3. In the event a principle party of the case, i.e. the complainant, the credentialed leader, and/or the congregation or organization represented by the credentialed leader, seeks to challenge the Investigation Team members’ neutrality, the Executive Conference Minister will conduct a second assessment in consultation with the moderator and chair of the Faith and Life Commission. The outcome will be reported to the individual that challenged members’ neutrality on the basis of conflict of interest.
4. A conflict of interest challenge can only be made by an individual and/or organization that are directly impacted by the outcome of an investigation.
5. In the event, that the subject of the conflict of interest challenge is the Executive Conference Minister, the moderator and the Faith and Life Commission chair shall conduct the conflict of interest assessment.

Adopted: VMC Delegate Session
 February 2, 2019