UK Research and Innovation

[redacted]

10 September 2026

Dear [redacted],

Freedom of Information request: FOI2026/00723

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 5 August in which you requested the following:

Your request:

I am preparing an article concerning Professor Panos Koutrakos, his membership of the Arts and Humanities Research Council Peer Review College and the handling of potential conflicts arising from his marriage to Kelly Dart, daughter of Kenneth Dart.

Our reporting establishes that Professor Koutrakos is married to Kelly Dart. The evidence presently available indicates that their relationship or marriage may have begun during or around the COVID-19 period. We are therefore principally examining Professor Koutrakos's AHRC activities from 2020 onward.

We are not suggesting that the family relationship itself disqualified Professor Koutrakos from serving as a reviewer or panellist. We are also not suggesting that he is responsible for Kenneth Dart's business or investment activities.

The questions concern whether Professor Koutrakos's membership overlapped with the relationship, what declarations were required, and whether AHRC had sufficient information to identify any particular application or decision in which a relevant personal, household or family interest arose.

We are not seeking the names or contents of confidential funding applications.

Please answer the following questions.

1. *On what date did Professor Koutrakos first join the AHRC Peer Review College?*
2. *During which membership terms has he served, and does he remain a current member?*
3. *Has he served only as an external reviewer, or has he also participated in assessment, moderating or funding panels?*
4. *How many reviews and panel assignments has he completed in each year from 2020 onward? We are not seeking the identities of applicants. Annual aggregate figures would be sufficient.*
5. *What conflict-of-interest and declaration rules applied to Peer Review College members during each relevant year?*
6. *Were members required to disclose interests held by:*
    a. *a spouse;*
    b. *a close family member;*

c. *a person living in the same household;*
d. *a family trust;*
e. *or a company or investment structure from which the member or household benefited?*

7. *Were members required to maintain a general declaration or register of interests, or were conflicts assessed only when an individual application was assigned?*

8. *Did Professor Koutrakos notify AHRC that he was married to Kelly Dart or connected through marriage to Kenneth Dart?*

9. *Did he declare any financial, beneficial or household interest connected with the Dart family, a Dart family trust or a Dart-controlled entity?*

10. *If such information was provided, when was the first disclosure made?*

11. *Was Professor Koutrakos required to update AHRC when his personal or household circumstances changed during a membership term?*

12. *Has he ever declined or been removed from a review or panel assignment because of:*
    a. *his relationship with an applicant or project partner;*
    b. *a financial or household interest;*
    c. *a Dart-related connection;*
    d. *his external legal practice;*
    e. *or another personal conflict?*

13. *Has AHRC ever sought advice or additional information from Professor Koutrakos concerning a possible conflict?*

14. *Were his declared interests available to the staff responsible for allocating reviews and panel appointments?*

15. *Has Professor Koutrakos ever reviewed or participated in the assessment of an application involving:*
    a. *Kelly or Kenneth Dart;*
    b. *a Dart-controlled entity or foundation;*
    c. *an institution receiving material Dart support;*
    d. *or a named project partner in which his household possessed a financial or beneficial interest?*

16. *Where confidentiality prevents a case-specific response, please confirm whether any such situation was identified and appropriately managed.*

17. *Does AHRC's system depend on a reviewer personally recognising a connected person or organisation, or can declared interests be screened centrally against applications and project partners?*

18. *Can AHRC confirm that Professor Koutrakos completed all declarations required during his membership?*

19. *Can AHRC confirm that it has identified no occasion on which he reviewed or ranked an application despite an undisclosed relevant personal, household or family interest?*

20. *Has this enquiry prompted AHRC to review his membership dates, declarations, review assignments or panel participation?*

21. *Is there any factual or procedural context that should be included to ensure fair and accurate reporting?*

Our response

I can confirm that UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) does hold information relevant to your request. Please see the information below.

We have reviewed our records and consulted with AHRC and can confirm that Professor Panos Koutrakos served as an AHRC Peer Review Panel Member between 2010 and 2013 and is not currently a member of the AHRC Peer Review College.

As the time period of 2010 to 2013 falls outside of UKRI's retention schedule for information relating to individual peer reviewers, we no longer hold any information regarding this individual's activities and assessments during their service within the AHRC Peer Review College.

We can confirm that Professor Koutrakos was not serving as an AHRC peer reviewer from 2020 onward as specified in your request, therefore we do not hold any of the additional information you have requested.

Please note that information in relation to our internal policies is already available in the public domain and may be of further interest to you:

- UKRI declaration of interests: policy and guidance – UKRI[1]
- A guide for members of the AHRC Peer Review College[2]
- AHRC standards of service[3]
- AHRC conflict of interest[4]

Your rights

If you have any queries regarding our response please do let us know. If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review, explaining which elements of this decision you disagree with and why. Internal review requests should be submitted within 40 working days of the date of our response and should be addressed to:

Head of Information Governance
Email: foi@ukri.org

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: www.ico.org.uk.

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints procedure[5].

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]
Information Governance
Information Rights Team
UK Research and Innovation
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[1] https://www.ukri.org/publications/ukri-declarations-of-interest-policy-and-guidance/
[2] https://www.ukri.org/publications/ahrc-peer-review-college-membership-guide/
[3] https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/peer-review-college/standards-of-service/
[4] https://www.ukri.org/councils/ahrc/guidance-for-reviewers/peer-review-college/conflicts-of-interest/
[5] https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/contact-us/make-a-complaint/#skipnav-target