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## Council Policy

Policy Name	<b>Conflict of Interest for the Adjudicating Process for the OAA Awards Program</b>
Issue Date	<b>December 2016</b>
Revision Dates	<b>N/A</b>

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The OAA Awards program showcases the best in architectural practice in Ontario. Winners include both emerging new talent and some of the province's most established members of the architecture profession, both individuals and practices. The OAA promotes the winning submissions to highlight the value of architecture and the profession, and how both impact our world.

A critical element in the success of the program is the fairness and integrity of the selection process, including the avoidance and/or management of both real and perceived conflicts of interest on the part of staff and jurors.

The fact that jurors may be familiar with a nominated individual or submission does not in itself put them in a conflict of interest position. The OAA purposely selects jurors with as much expertise and familiarity with the profession as possible to reinforce the rigour of the adjudication process and the significance of winning an OAA award.

A conflict of interest is understood to be a circumstance in which an individual must choose between personal benefit (such as financial or professional gain) and fiduciary responsibility (including acting in the best interests of the public or an institutional entity).

Conflict of interest exists or may exist if jurors are asked to assess a submission or nomination:

- from an employer, co-owner, co-worker, client, or organization of which they are a board member;
- where they have a direct financial interest in the success or failure of a submission;
- where the submitter or nominee is their spouse/partner, or immediate family member;
- where their spouse/partner or immediate family member is a senior staff member, contractor, or board member with the applicant organization; and
- where they and the submitter/nominee have been involved in legal proceedings against each other.

The OAA is committed to ensuring the highest standard of integrity in its awards program, including taking all reasonable steps to avoid and/or manage conflicts of interest in the adjudication process. To this end, the OAA Conflict of Interest policy will be shared with all potential jurors, who will be asked by staff to declare in writing that they are aware of the policy and will abide by its conditions before being confirmed for the jury.

Specifically, the following guidelines will be in place:

- Neither jurors nor their practices (including partners, associates, and employees) will be eligible to make submissions to the OAA Awards they will be adjudicating, including the nominating or seconding of a Service Award nominee.

- Service Award submissions will also not be accepted if made by a member of the OAA Communications Committee.
- If it becomes evident, during the adjudication process, that such a conflict exists with one or more submissions, the juror must immediately declare a conflict of interest and cannot participate in the assessment of the particular submission(s) in which the conflict exists.
- If in the opinion of the Jury Facilitator the conflict of interest is serious enough to potentially compromise the integrity of the entire adjudication process, they will have the discretionary authority to direct the juror with the conflict of interest to step down from the jury.

The OAA Awards program is a key component of the OAA's broader public awareness strategy. It is important to the relationship between the Association and its members, and the integrity of the program is critical to its success.

