



Council Policy

Policy Name	Conflict of Interest for the Adjudicating Process for the OAA SHIFT Architecture Challenge Program
Issue Date	December 2018
Revision Dates	N/A

The SHIFT Architecture Challenge is a Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) program created to highlight the distinct contribution the architecture profession and architectural thinking bring to addressing key societal issues.

The program invites those with OAA status (including Architects, Licensed Technologists, Interns, Students, and Retired Members) and their collaborative teams to respond to an identified area of concern using their professional training, skills and insights. It runs biennially, beginning with the SHIFT 2019 Infrastructure/Architecture Challenge. The OAA will broadly communicate and promote selected submissions to highlight the value of architectural thinking.

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 member of the team behind a 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 and topic as possible to reinforce the rigour of the adjudication process and the significance of receiving recognition by the OAA.

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, a co-owner, a co-worker, a client or an organization where 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/or
- 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 the SHIFT Challenge 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.

The following guidelines will also be in place:

- Individuals will not be eligible to serve as jurors if they or their practices (including partners, associates, and

- employees) have made submissions to the SHIFT Challenge Program being adjudicated.
- If in the adjudication process it becomes evident 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 SHIFT Challenge 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.

