

Conflict of Interest Policy

Preamble

The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute is a charitable organization incorporated in Canada and has as its objective the enhancement of bilateral understanding between India and Canada, mainly through educational activities. In adopting this policy, Shastri intends to affirm the following purposes and principles:

- Shastri affirms the importance of recognizing the concept of **conflict of interest (COI)** and the need to have an explicit policy in place to deal with actual and potential COI situations.
- Shastri considers its interest - **the 'Shastri interest'** to lie in the furtherance of its objective in a manner likely to enhance public confidence in the integrity and professionalism of Shastri.
- Shastri intends this policy to govern the decisions and actions of its directors, officers, employees, advisors and volunteer workers - collectively called '**Shastri agents**' - when acting on behalf of Shastri or acting in a matter that may involve the Shastri interest.
- Shastri considers a **COI situation** to exist when a Shastri agent is actually or potentially involved in a decision or action in which the agent actually or potentially has an interest that diverges from the Shastri interest in such a way that an impartial observer might reasonably question whether the agent's contribution to the decision or action properly reflects the Shastri interest.
- Shastri recognizes that not all COI situations are avoidable, given the need to involve talent and expertise in its activities. Nonetheless, Shastri expects all Shastri agents to avoid being placed in COI situations and, in so far as these cannot be avoided, to disclose the interest(s) that diverge(s) from the Shastri interest and subsequently to act so as to ensure that the Shastri interest overrides any divergent interest(s).

Definitions *(in alphabetical order)*

This section defines terms not defined in the Preamble above.

Adjudicating Committee

An adjudicating committee is a committee authorized or recognized by the Board of Directors that is responsible for adjudicating awards under a programme.

Award

An award is a grant of funds made under a specific Shastri programme.

Close Association

A Shastri agent is deemed to have a close association with an institution if he/she is a current or recent employee, director or officer of the institution. He/she is deemed to have a close association with an individual if he/she is or recently was a teacher or supervisor, a departmental colleague, a professional collaborator, a relative or a sexual partner of the individual.

Office

An office is a position occupied by a Shastri agent in virtue of being

- a voting member or chair of a committee authorized or recognized by the Executive Council,
- chair of one of the advisory councils, or
- employed by Shastri.

N.B. Membership of the Executive Council or of the Advisory Councils is not an office.

Programme

A programme is a component of Shastri activities governed by specific guidelines and disbursing funds to individuals and institutions in accordance with these guidelines.

Withdrawal

To physically leave the room or disconnect from the teleconference.

Process

The purposes and principles affirmed in the Preamble to this policy may not be changed except by the Executive Council.

- The Executive Council will appoint a committee - the '**COI Committee**' - in each country to deal with or advise the Executive Council upon any issue raised by the adoption of this policy.
- The COI Committees - the 'COICs' will normally consist of one member of the Members' Council as Chair and two members of the Advisory Council in the country in question.
- The Executive Director will not be a member *ex officio* of either COIC but may be called upon by the chairs as a resource person.
- Members of the COIC will serve a two-year term and will not be eligible for any Shastri award or office.
- The COIC will normally conduct its business by teleconference or correspondence.
- Any disclosure by a Shastri agent required by this policy will be made to the Chair of the COIC who, after consultations with his/her colleagues, will inform the agent of the appropriate course of action.
- The COIC will treat any disclosures made to it as confidential, unless the failure of a Shastri agent to follow the course of action recommended by the COIC requires that the disclosure be made public.
- All decisions of the COIC will be final.

- A Shastri agent may seek the advice of the COIC through its Chair about a COI situation involving another Shastri agent. If the COIC believes the advice to be sought on reasonable grounds, it will recommend an appropriate course of action to the agent considered to be in a COI situation.
- The COIC may, in exceptional circumstances, grant exceptions to the provisions that follow to the Shastri agents concerned.

Provisions

The following provisions are intended to deal with some representative COI situations in which a Shastri agent may be expected to be involved. They are **not** intended to be exhaustive.

- All Shastri agents except the following are eligible for awards:
 - i) Shastri employees
 - ii) members of the Executive Council,
 - i) members of the COIC, and,
 - ii) members of a Members' Council
 - iv) with respect to awards adjudicated by an adjudicating committee, members of that particular committee.
- Any Shastri agent who holds or hopes or expects to hold an award will withdraw from any deliberation or decision concerning the award or the programme under which the award is made, including, specifically, the administration, modification or termination of the award or the programme.
- A Shastri agent who is a member of an adjudicating committee will physically withdraw from any deliberation or decision concerning an award to an individual/institution, or an individual from an institution with whom or which he/she has a close association. In case of an institutional grant, the same shall apply to a member of that institution.
- No Shastri agent will serve as a peer reviewer or expert assessor for that category of award in which he/she is himself/herself an applicant.
- A Shastri agent who holds an office will normally resign from such office upon being elected or appointed to another office.
- No Shastri agent will participate in any deliberation or decision concerning the assessment of an office holder if he/she has a close association with the office holder.
- No Shastri agent will participate in any deliberation or decision concerning the assessment of candidates for an office if he/she has a close association with any of the candidates.
- No Shastri agent will participate in the assessment of the decisions or actions of (an)other Shastri agent(s) if these decisions or actions affect individuals or institutions with whom he/she has a close association.

- No Shastri agent will undertake employment or voluntary work of a kind or on a scale as to make it impossible, in the view of an impartial observer, for him/her fully to meet his/her obligations to Shastri.
- No Shastri agent will disclose information received during the deliberations of a committee or council or the Board to those who are not members of the committee, council or Board except as required by the by-laws or conventions of Shastri, nor will he/she attempt to secure benefit from such information or himself/herself or for institutions or individuals with whom he/she has a close association.

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