

CFI Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration Expert Reviewers

The Canada Foundation for Innovation must meet the highest ethical standards in all that it does in order to continue to merit the trust and confidence of the research community, the government and the public at large. CFI expert reviewers must meet very high standards of ethical behaviour in their task and must be perceived as doing so in order to honour and enhance public confidence in the Foundation's ability to act in the public's best interest and for the long-term public good.

CFI expert reviewers are appointed as individuals; they are not the advocates or representatives of their disciplines nor are they the delegates of any organization. Their duty is to make the best possible objective recommendations on the investment of public funds in research infrastructure based on the merits of the cases made to them.

Rules and procedure guidelines can help reviewers meet their obligations but only if they choose to invoke them and to follow them in the spirit in which they were formulated. Given their particularly sensitive mission, reviewers might consider these rules as only minimally adequate for their purposes and may choose to add to them.

Conflict of Interest

Because of the technical content of the issues it must address, CFI reviewers must have current knowledge of the issues in research. However, the activities which maintain that current knowledge could put reviewers in situations of real, potential or apparent conflict between their private interests and their public duties as expert reviewers.

If there is any potential for a real or perceived conflict, there must be full and open disclosure. Where a conflict is found to exist, reviewers will be expected to take whatever measures are necessary to ensure that public interests are protected. The reviewer shall be free to withdraw from further assessment of the proposal potentially putting the reviewer in a conflict and/or the CFI shall take whatever measures are required to ensure ethical behaviour and to preserve the appearance of ethical behaviour.

CFI staff will discuss with the reviewer what measures, if any, are required to ensure that the public interest is protected. Disclosure and compliance measures will be documented and retained for the record.

Confidentiality and Non-Disclosure

Documentation provided by the CFI to expert reviewers contains personal information and may contain confidential scientific, technical or commercial information provided to the CFI by applicant institutions. Documentation must therefore be treated as strictly confidential.

Review documentation provided to expert reviewers must only be used for the purpose for which it was originally collected, i.e., assessing CFI applications and making funding decisions. It must not be used for any other purpose or discussed with or disclosed to others.

Expert reviewers must ensure that CFI documents in their possession are stored in a secure

manner to prevent unauthorized access. They must be transmitted using secure techniques and when they are no longer required they must be destroyed in a secure manner, e.g., by deleting electronic data files, or by shredding or burning paper or arranging for its return to CFI.

Review deliberations are confidential. Comments made by reviewers or committee members during the assessment of applications and the conclusions of reviewers' assessments must never be discussed or disclosed except where the disclosure is:

- i. at the request of the CFI
- ii. required under legal compulsion, such as by order of a court or tribunal

Expert reviewer comments and committee consensus comments on specific applications are recorded and CFI staff will provide such comments to the applicant(s). The CFI Board of Directors reviews the recommendations and makes final decisions. Thus, reviewers must not discuss the results of their assessments.

Enquiries or representations received by expert reviewers from institutions or project leaders about their projects or their review must be referred to CFI staff. There must be not be any disclosure by reviewers on matters arising from the assessment. Similarly, reviewers must not contact the institution or any researcher involved in the application for more information on the proposal. If more information is needed on the application, reviewers are asked to contact the CFI.

Confirmation

The CFI recognizes, of course, that the ultimate guarantee of the integrity of the assessment process is dependent upon the integrity of the individuals appointed as expert reviewers.

By signing below you are confirming that you understand and accept the CFI's requirements concerning conflict of interest, confidentiality and non-disclosure. If however, for whatever reason, you find you cannot comply with the terms as set out in the Declaration, kindly contact the CFI immediately.

I have read the *Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Declaration* including the instructions on the need for disclosure of potential conflict of interest and the requirements to ensure confidentiality with respect to CFI information and review deliberations. I agree to take personal responsibility for complying with these requirements.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE

DATE

Please return a signed copy of this Declaration to the CFI by fax at (613) 943-0923.