

PEQAB Policy 10: Board Member Code of Conduct

Purpose and Application

The purpose of this Code of Conduct (Code) is to establish rules of conduct to govern the professional and ethical responsibilities of Board members in carrying out the responsibilities of the Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board (PEQAB). This Code does not refer to the members' legislated obligations set out in Ontario's *Agency Establishment & Accountability Directive*, the Board's Policy 8. Conflict of Interest Policy & Procedure or the Terms of Reference between PEQAB and the Minister of Colleges and Universities. Also, it is not intended to conflict with any legal or professional requirements.

In accordance with established norms of good governance, the Code is based on the principles of integrity, honesty, openness, and concern for the public interest. It is designed to maintain the effectiveness of PEQAB as a whole and to ensure the fairness of all PEQAB procedures, Recommendations, and decision-making. It addresses common situations that PEQAB members may experience as they carry out their responsibilities, while it recognizes that not all situations can be anticipated. All PEQAB Board members have a responsibility to consider appropriate standards of behaviour and to conduct themselves in an ethical and professional manner. The Code assumes that it is not only the actual situation, but also the perception others may have of it that may lead to a perception of bias, dishonesty or inappropriate conduct.

To Whom Does the Code Apply?

The Code applies to all members of the PEQAB Board.

When is This Code Applicable?

The Code governs the conduct of PEQAB Board members from the date of appointment. It also includes the continuing responsibilities of members after the completion of their terms with respect to decisions and Recommendations made by PEQAB while the person was a member.

General Rules of Conduct

Members are committed to the principles and practices of quality assurance in post-secondary education and adhere to PEQAB's values. When considering applications referred to them, members make decisions on the merits of the application and consider the information provided in good faith and to the best of their ability, not being concerned with the prospect of disapproval from any person, institution, or community.

Board Members' Commitments

In addition to the above, all members of PEQAB commit to the following.

a. Confidentiality

- Discussion in PEQAB meetings or committees is kept in confidence.
- Members do not discuss individual submissions outside the Boards deliberations.
- Members employed by or associated with (or formerly employed by or associated with) a postsecondary institution do not represent their home institution.
- Members do not report to their home institution on confidential information of any type about another institution, nor do they report on decisions regarding their home institution unless those matters are in the public domain.
- Members respect the confidential nature of documents, information and records received as Board members and restrict the use of this information to their work as Board members.
- Members adhere to the intent and requirements of Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, 1990, which applies to all information, material, and records relating to, obtained, created, maintained, submitted or collected during a Review.

b. Communication

- Members do not make public statements on any issues that are currently under consideration by PEQAB or the Minister.
- Members refrain from communicating with the media regarding the deliberations or Recommendations of PEQAB. PEQAB has designated the CEO only to speak to the media.

c. Personal Gain

- Members do not engage in conduct that exploits their positions as members.
- Subject to the Conflict of Interest Guidelines for Board Members, members do not accept money, awards, or gifts from persons who may be, have been, or may be seen to have been affected by a PEQAB decision.

d. Fairness and Objectivity

- Members will act in accordance with the *Ontario Human Rights Code* and, in that context, are sensitive to protected grounds such as age, ancestry, citizenship, ethnic origin, creed, disability, family or marital status, gender, sex and sexual orientation that may affect the conduct of a Review or Recommendation.
- Members deal with groups and persons, with staff and with each other in a manner that reflects open and honest communication, respect, fair play, and ethical conduct.
- Members approach every application and every issue arising with an open mind and avoid doing or saying anything to cause any person to think otherwise.
- Members are independent in decision-making.

e. Collegiality

- Members promote positive relationships among PEQAB members.
- Members demonstrate respect for the views and opinions of colleagues.

- Members share their knowledge and expertise with other members as requested and as appropriate.

f. Commitment

- Members are available on a timely basis to attend meetings and are adequately prepared for the duties expected of them.

November 19, 2024