



KONINKLIJKE NEDERLANDSE AKADEMIE VAN WETENSCHAPPEN

Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies

Introduction

This *Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies* describes various types of possible conflicts of interest and how the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (hereafter referred to as 'Academy') deals with them when assessing nominations for prizes and memberships (Academy, The Young Academy, Society of Arts), applications for subsidies and when granting decisions are taken. This code does not apply to committees for scientific advisory reports, for which the *Code for the Prevention of Improper Influence due to Conflicts of Interest* (January 2012) is intended.

An important basic principle is that the Academy prevents conflicts of interest or the appearance of such (hereafter referred to as 'conflicting interests'). Academy boards, juries and committees are themselves responsible for preventing conflicting interests, assisted by the Academy bureau (in this case the acting secretary and the legal professional).

The following rules are not intended to cover all situations. Members will have to act in the spirit of the Code, where necessary. In the end, it's all about having to determine on a case by case basis whether conflicting interests are involved in a nomination or application and to what extent, what this means for participation on a board, jury or committee, and whether any neutralising measures are sufficient.

This *Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies* goes into effect as of 1 June 2015.

Conflicting interests categories

1. *Involvement within an assessment round:*
 - a. being a nominator/co-nominator or an applicant/co-applicant;
 - b. being a signatory/co-signatory to a nomination or application;
 - c. being a supervisor, project manager, advisor to or for a project of a nominee or applicant or being involved in some other way in a project of a nominee or applicant;
 - d. issuing a letter of recommendation, an endorsement or a declaration of support for a nomination or application;
 - e. being an official (faculty chair, institute director, head of a capacity group, member of the Supervisory Board) of an organisation or the organisation unit of a nominee or applicant;
 - f. being a staff member of the organisation unit (department, research school) or the same organisation (if it has no units) of the applicant and publishing in the same subject areas as the applicant;
 - g. having supervised a nominee or applicant in another phase (guideline: less than five years ago) and/or having published or are still publishing jointly (guideline: less than three years ago);
 - h. being related once removed, twice removed or three times removed to a nominee or applicant;
 - i. being part of the same household and/or the spouse or partner of a nominee or applicant.
2. *Being biased within a round:*
 - a. being biased with regard to a specific nomination or application and therefore assessing that application more negatively or positively than without that bias;
 - b. being involved in a nomination or application that has a substantial overlap with another nomination or application.



3. *Leaking information:*

Leaking information to parties having an interest in the outcome of the assessment process about the actual course of events during the assessment process.

Code rules

1. Boards, juries and committees of the Academy are obliged to observe the *Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies*. The members of such boards, juries and committees must sign the *Conflicts of Interest Form relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies* – in which they declare that they will observe the Code of Conduct – as soon as possible following their appointment and return it to the acting secretary. The acting secretary will file the signed form in the central archive.
2. Members of boards, juries and committees may not submit/co-submit or sign/co-sign nominations or applications where they are involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process (categories 1a and 1b).
3. Members of boards, juries and committees who are involved in one or more nominations or applications in accordance with categories 1c up to and including 1i and 2 will not be permitted to participate in the assessment and decision-making process regarding the nomination or application in question. In that case, they must leave the room temporarily and their departure will be recorded in the minutes.
4. Leaking of information (category 3) is not permitted.
5. Experts who are requested to provide an independent assessment of a nomination or application will be asked the following:
If you agree to act as an expert regarding the specific nomination/application, the Academy will assume that you can actually be considered an independent expert in the field of this nomination/application as referred to in the Academy Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct. If this is not the case or if you have doubts, please let me know as soon as possible.
6. The Academy bureau is continuously active, vigilant and neutral in cases where conflicts of interest may occur. In cases relating to the work of a board, jury or committee member, the Academy bureau will work closely with the board, jury or committee chair.

Escape clause

A board, jury or committee may deviate from code rules 2 and 3 only after written consultations with the legal professional. The final responsibility for the application of the neutralising measures referred to below lies with the chair of the board, jury or committee in question. The Academy cannot therefore apply the escape clause to the chair of a board, jury or committee.

Examples of neutralising measures are:

- presence of an independent observer at the relevant board, jury or committee meeting;
- a temporary or permanent increase in the number of board, jury or committee members;
- an explicit statement from all non-involved board, jury or committee members that, despite the involvement, they are willing to guarantee that the assessment process will be fair;
- the obligatory imposition of an assessment process in which the final decision of the board, jury or committee regarding every proposal to be assessed is arrived at as follows:
 - the board, jury or committee members exchange arguments but arrive at their final judgment independently and anonymously;
 - if the board, jury or committee consists of at least six members, the highest and lowest scores of individual final assessments will be disregarded. The average of the other final assessments will constitute the final assessment of the board, jury or committee. If the board, jury or committee consists of less than six members, the most deviating individual assessment will be disregarded.



Working procedure

- The working procedure should be followed in the case of every prize, membership or subsidy.
 - A member of a board, jury or committee must receive the *Conflicts of Interest Form relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies* together with his or her letter of appointment and must sign and return it as soon as possible to the acting secretary.
 - After a member of a board, jury or committee has received the nominations or applications from the acting secretary, he or she must ascertain as soon as possible whether:
 - his or her interests conflict or may conflict with one or more nominations or applications;
 - conflicting interests or the likelihood of such may occur in the case of one or more nominations or applications.
- If this is the case, the member must inform the acting secretary of such immediately.
- After receiving such a report, the acting secretary will:
 - prepare advice regarding the way in which the chair must deal with the report in accordance with the Code of Conduct;
 - consult, if necessary, with an Academy bureau legal professional.
 - The acting secretary will submit the advice to the relevant chair of the board, jury or committee for approval and will provide feedback to the member who submitted the report to the acting secretary. If the report relates to the chair, the acting secretary will inform the chair of the advice.
 - All reports and advice will be placed on the agenda as the first point to be decided on at the meeting in question of a board, jury or committee. The acting secretary will record decisions in the minutes.
 - The member of a board, jury or committee who submitted the report will not participate in the discussions of a board, jury or committee about his or her report and the decision-making process of a board, jury or committee regarding that report.
 - The board, jury or committee in question will deal with the conflicting interests report in the manner proposed by the Academy bureau, unless there are compelling circumstances for deviating from that advice. A board, jury or committee will confirm such at the meeting and the acting secretary will record this in the minutes.

The Academy board adopted this *Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct relating to Prizes, Memberships and Subsidies* on 18 May 2015. This Code of Conduct replaces the *Conflicts of Interest Code of Conduct* as adopted on 20 October 2008.