

Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) Code of Conduct

January 2023

Preamble

The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies is Canada’s national organization providing leadership, fostering community, and promoting collaboration to advance excellence in graduate education, research, and scholarship (CAGS Mission Statement 2016). As a not-for-profit Corporation and Registered Charity, there is an expectation that the CAGS Board of Directors and its Committees (hereafter: Members) will follow high ethical standards as they work to fulfill the CAGS’ mission.

The intention of a CAGS Code of Conduct is to establish some basic guidelines for Members pertaining to their interactions, activities, and decisions. Explicitly recognizing and adhering to a code of conduct helps maintain the confidence of internal and external stakeholders.

Below is a Code of Conduct for CAGS Board of Directors and Committees. The elements are drawn from a variety of sources including codes for University Boards of Governors and other non-profit organizations, and from advice on best practices for non-profit organizations.

Performance of Duties

- i. Members should perform their duties with integrity, transparency, and objectivity, consistent with CAGS by-laws and policies, and in the best interests of the Association.
- ii. Members must treat other Members with dignity and respect, particularly when differences in opinion arise.
- iii. Members must ensure that the Board and its Committees operate in an environment that is free from discrimination and that promotes diversity and inclusiveness.
- iv. Members will attend meetings called by the President or Committee Chairs and arrive prepared and ready to engage in the discussion of agenda items.
- v. Members must ensure that the resources of the organization are managed responsibly and in the best interests of the Association.

Conflict of Interest

Conflicts of interest, whether real or perceived, must be avoided if CAGS is to maintain the trust of its internal and external stakeholders. All decisions and actions of the CAGS Board and Committees must be based on the best interests of the Association and not on the personal interests of its Members. Therefore,

- i. Members should always seek clarification from the President of the Association if they are unclear about whether a conflict of interest exists.
- ii. Members should declare potential conflicts of interest to the President, annually, and as they arise. Resolution of the conflict of interest should be made in consultation with the President.
- iii. Upon declaring a potential conflict of interest at a meeting, Members should remove themselves without comment from the deliberation and vote. At the discretion of the meeting Chair, they may be asked to withdraw from the meeting during the discussion and vote on the motion. The declaration and response should be noted in the minutes of the meeting.
- iv. On completion of their term, information gained in their capacity as a Member should not be used to their benefit or advantage, recognizing that the general experience gained as a Board member should be a benefit.

Confidentiality (during and after completion of term)

- i. Members will treat all written and verbal information received in the course of their duties as confidential, unless advised otherwise or if the information is in the public domain.
- ii. Only the President (or delegate) may speak publicly or in private correspondence on behalf of the Association.
- iii. Members must have the permission of the President, if they wish to share information discussed by the Board or Committees.
- iv. Members are expected to respect the confidentiality of information received during their membership on the Board or Committee even after the completion of their term.

Responsibility

The Governance and Nominating Committee is responsible for reviewing and updating the CAGS Code of Conduct as necessary.