



Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts
Conseil des Arts de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard

Peer Assessment Review Guide



Peer Assessment – An Adjudicators Guide

Contents

The Importance of Peer Assessment.....	1
Confidentiality.....	2
Conflict of Interest.....	2
Grant Programs	3
Program Descriptions	3
Artist Categories.....	3
Grant Maximums	4
Applicant Eligibility.....	4
Assessment Process	4
Criteria	4
Advance Review.....	5
Initial qualification	5
Preliminary scoring of applications.....	5
The Day of Adjudication.....	6
Final Results.....	6

The Importance of Peer Assessment

¹"Peer assessment" at the Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts is the use of independent artists and other professionals working in the field to assess grant applications, advise on priorities, and make recommendations to the Council on the awarding of grants. Peers, in the Council's definition, are people who, by virtue of their experience, knowledge and open-mindedness, are capable of making a fair and informed assessment of the comparative merits of grant applications. Through peer assessment, the Council involves the arts community directly in its operations.

Of all the decisions the Council is empowered to make, its decisions about which artists and artistic projects will receive grants are the most sensitive, the most visible and the most likely to provoke criticism. Every year the Council receives in excess of 130 grant applications. Some 30 grants are awarded, and some for less than the amount requested. While it is never possible to please everyone who has a stake in the grant decisions, the peer assessment process is the most fair mechanism available to the Council for grant adjudications.

The Council welcomes spirited discussion and disagreement as a natural outcome of its intensely competitive work. At its best, the thrust and parry of democratic debate about arts grants confirms the power of the arts - their unique ability to generate strong passions and equally strong discord. The Council must therefore ensure that its grants to artists and arts

¹ Adapted from the Canada Council for the Arts Peer Review Description

organizations are dispensed with integrity, transparency and fairness and that its policies are clear and consistent.

In the Council's view, it is essential that:

- applicants for Council grants have confidence that they have been assessed by people with the knowledge and expertise to make sound qualitative judgments in their field of the arts;
- artists and other arts professionals who serve as members of peer assessment committees are able to attest to the credibility, honesty and fairness of the process;
- members of the public and Provincial Government know that the Council's assessment system serves the public interest because it is the most equitable means available for evaluating artistic merit and is governed by policies and procedures that are clearly and consistently applied.

The Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts is committed to the use of Peer Assessment in all major grant programs.

Confidentiality

The Peer Assessment Process requires strict adherence to principles of confidentiality. This ensures each participant in the process the freedom to engage in open, honest review.

Adjudicators are required to treat both the contents of applications that they review and the deliberations of the Committee as confidential. They must not divulge information in applicant files outside the meeting. Who applied in the competition, who was recommended for a grant, and any comments made by individual Adjudicators are also confidential matters.

As a matter of policy, the Council publishes lists of grant recipients in each program and never reveals the identity of unsuccessful applicants.

Conflict of Interest

Since the purpose of the peer assessment system is to select qualified and knowledgeable Adjudicators from the field, Adjudicators may have contacts with one or more of the applicants. Where an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, it must be disclosed and the assessor must abstain from any and all participation related to the application, and leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion.

Conflict of interest exists or may exist if adjudicators are asked to assess applications:

- from a full-time employer, a client or an organization where they are a board member;
- where they have a direct financial interest in the success or failure of an application;
- where the applicant is their spouse/partner or immediate family member;

- where their spouse/partner or immediate family member is a senior staff member, contractor or board member with the applicant organization; or
- where they judge that they are unable, for any other reason, to assess an application objectively.

Adjudicators who are in conflict of interest must state this clearly. Adjudicators are not required to state the nature of the conflict. Additionally, adjudicators are asked to refrain from making any comment on the application in question whatsoever.

Grant Programs

Program Descriptions

The Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts offers three grant programs to support art and artists in Prince Edward Island.

Professional Development Grants are intended to support the development of Prince Edward Island artists and arts managers by providing financial assistance for professional development and skill building activities that advance the artistic work and careers of eligible applicants.

Creation/Production Grants are intended to assist in the creation of an artistic work. The grants provide funding for the production of an original artistic expression, production or work, which includes new works as well as the creative interpretation of existing works.

Dissemination/Presentation Grants are intended to create opportunities for Island artists to present completed works to the public, ideally in a critical and/or curatorial context.

Artist Categories

Senior and Emerging Professional Artists may qualify for all grant programs. Amateur Artists and Arts Managers qualify for funding under the Professional Development Grant Program only. Definitions of these categories are found below:

Emerging Professional artists are professional artists at the early stages of their careers. They view art as a vocation, have had specialized artistic training and have created a modest body of work. Specialized training does not necessarily mean training at an academic institution; it can include apprenticeship under a seasoned artist.

Senior Professional artists are established professionals recognized in their artistic discipline by their peers. They have extensive specialized training, and have had opportunity for critical review of their works. The primary differences between an emerging and a senior artist are: the level of exposure, the maturity of their

techniques, and the breadth of their bodies of work. Senior artists' applications will be reviewed with a more critical eye than their emerging counterparts

Amateur Artists have extensive practice in their discipline, but have not necessarily had specialized training. They do not view their art as a vocation, but exhibit potential to become professional artists if given the opportunity for development.

Arts Managers are individuals employed in not-for-profit arts management and administration.

While encouraged to respect the decision made by the artist in the determination of status (amateur, emerging or senior artist), committees reserve the right to transfer an application into a different artist category.

Grant Maximums

Applicants are eligible to apply in more than one category in a grant period, but must not submit more than one application per category.

Total annual maximums across all grant program categories are:

- \$5,000.00 for Senior Professional Artists
- \$3,000.00 for Emerging Professional Artists
- \$500.00 for Amateur Artists
- \$750.00 for Arts Managers

Applicants are eligible for a maximum of \$10,000 over a four-year period across all PEICA grant programs.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must have been a resident of Prince Edward Island for a minimum of six months prior to the submission of their application.

Assessment Process

Criteria

Applications are assessed solely on the materials and information included in the application, and are judged on the following criteria, in order of priority:

1. The artistic merit of the project.
2. The relevance of this work to the artist's development.
3. The potential of the applicant(s) to carry through the project.
4. The significance of the project's contribution to the development of the arts on Prince Edward Island.

Assessment is **not** based on financial need. Applicants are responsible to ensure that the applications are complete and include the necessary support materials and appraisal letters. *Please note that appraisal letters are not required for Professional Development Grants.*

Assessment takes place in two stages. Before they meet, the Peer Assessment Review Committee members conduct an advance review the applications individually. Then, the committee convenes to adjudicate the merits of each application.

Advance Review

Assessors are provided with copies of each application for review in advance of the day of adjudication. This helps to familiarize the assessors with the range and scope of the applications to be considered and aids in expediting the final review. The applications may include support materials for advance review. We ask you to carefully review each application to eliminate applications that are not worthy of support and to provide a preliminary score.

Pre-qualification Review

One purpose of the advance review process is to eliminate from the competition any applications that are considered to be undeserving of funding, based on the assessment criteria set out. In that event that an assessor makes this determination, he or she will identify the file with a red flag. In the interest of expediency, if a file is red-flagged by all six assessors, it will not be considered during the assessment committee deliberations. This mechanism has proved highly effective in reducing time spent on applications that will clearly go unsupported.

Preliminary scoring of eligible applications

For all eligible applications, each assessor will:

1. Assign a preliminary score for each application on the ballot sheets provided, with 1 being the lowest score and 10 being the highest. (Assessors are free to change their scores during the deliberations with the committee, and the final score is determined after the committee discussion.)
2. Record any comments or questions about the application for discussion during the deliberations.
3. Indicate if there are any concerns about the amount of funding requested. The Council encourages the granting of the full amount requested unless the budget is unrealistic or incomplete.

We ask the committee members to conduct this advance review prior to the adjudication day in order to ensure that the discussions are informed and the proceedings flow smoothly. Discussion is encouraged for each application; however, the time allocated for each application is limited.

The Day of Adjudication

The day will begin at 9:30am with a brief orientation of the process by the Chair, or the Chair's designate. The Chair will review the directions for the day and remind the assessors on what principles the applications should be assessed. These criteria are, in order,

1. The artistic merit of the project.
2. The relevance of this work to the Artist's development.
3. The potential of the applicant(s) to carry through the project.
4. The significance of the project's contribution to the development of the Arts on Prince Edward Island.

When the assessment begins, the Chair will provide the order. Council staff will present support material (e.g. images, audio recordings, etc) as included in the applications. The Chair will prompt discussion of the application and then ask the assessors for their score. Committee scores are entered into a spreadsheet, and calculations are then made automatically

The committee's comments will be documented by the Council staff, which may be released to the applicant if feedback is requested. These comments are a brief composite of the key points of the committee's discussion; the identities of individual speakers are not revealed. The committee can also opt to provide specific feedback to the applicant which will be included in the grant decision letter.

At the end of the evaluations, based on the averages of the scores provided by the committee, funds will be allocated to the highest ranking projects in each discipline according to the Council's distribution model. This model reflects the competitive nature of the process and incorporates historic and current demand from the discipline and the amount available to allocate for the period.

Final Results

When the deliberations are complete, the final results then are brought before the Board of Directors for ratifications. Details of the successful applicants are available to the general public after the following occur:

1. All applicants are notified
2. The Minister of Tourism and Culture is provided with a Summary Report

Details of unsuccessful application (applicant names, project details) are never made public.

As per the agreement to the Confidentiality Policy, assessors may not comment on specific applications. Any questions should be referred directly to the Council.

© 2005 Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts

Prince Edward Island Council of the Arts
115 Richmond Street
Charlottetown, PE C1A 1H7

TOLL FREE: 1-888-PEI ARTISTS (1-888-734-2784)
902.368-4410 (tel) in Charlottetown and area
902.368-4418 (fax)

<http://www.peiartscouncil.com>
E-mail: info@peiartscouncil.com

Prepared November 22, 2005 by D.G. White
Revised November 23, 2006; August 8, 2011