



BRITISH COLUMBIA ARTS COUNCIL

An agency of the Province of British Columbia

Guide for Advisors, Jurors and Assessors

Welcome to the BC Arts Council. Peer Assessment is at the core of our grant programs – we can't do it without you! You're about to spend a significant amount of time and a significant amount of thought in assisting with the determination of recipients of grant funds. We hope that this document will help you with the process and your participation.

BC Arts Council

The BC Arts Council is an independent agency that supports arts and cultural activity in communities across British Columbia. From professional dance companies to art galleries, local museums and music festivals, Council works to enrich the lives of British Columbians in virtually every community in the province.

The British Columbia Arts Council supports arts and cultural activity in communities across British Columbia. From professional dance companies, to art galleries, local museums and music festivals – the Council works to enrich the lives of British Columbians in virtually every community in the province. The Council supports a range of activities that includes funding for professional artists and arts organizations, community initiatives, training and scholarships.

Council's Mandate, Mission, Core Values and Goals are presented in the guidelines for each program and included in the 'Prior to the meeting' section below.

Administrative support for Council is provided through the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture.

Merit-based, independent adjudication is the primary method of evaluation.

Applications for Operating Assistance are assessed by peer Advisory Committees while applications for Project Assistance are assessed by peer review Juries. Committees are comprised of individuals with expertise in a particular artistic discipline(s), genre(s), or practice(s).

When selecting jury and advisory members, Council considers broad professional knowledge, expertise, geographical representation and diverse aesthetic, institutional, and cultural viewpoints, including those from Indigenous perspectives.

How committees are formed

Council maintains a database of potential jurors and advisors. Anyone may submit nominations, in writing, along with Curriculum Vitae, of people who would be suitable to serve on Council committees. For additional details please visit <https://www.bcartscouncil.ca/about/Adjudication.htm>.

In selecting peer assessors, Council searches for individuals with professional experience and knowledge of the disciplines and organizations under review. Assessors' qualifications should be credible to both applicants and Council.

Council is committed to an adjudication process of peer evaluation that allows for representation by a wide diversity of specializations, artistic practices, cultural backgrounds and regional perspectives. Other key considerations include breadth of vision, open-mindedness, generosity of spirit, the ability to work collaboratively and the willingness to express opinions while respecting and considering the opinions of others. It is a specific goal of Council to include Indigenous expertise in the review process.

Council selects individuals to be a part of an Advisory Committee or Jury, or to be an Individual Assessor, based on a variety of criteria, including:

- *Diversity of artistic practice (representation of different artistic styles and philosophies);*
- *Diversity of professional specialization (representation of different professional roles within the arts, such as creators, interpreters, administrators, directors, etc.);*
- *Professional recognition (possessing a range of knowledge in their specific fields as well as in the arts and culture in general);*
- *Ability to work in a group environment providing aesthetic content to the discussion while contributing to fair-minded comparative evaluation and respecting other points of view;*
- *Ability to articulate an opinion, and to comment upon an organization's or artist's role in its artistic/geographic community;*
- *Collectively reflect the pool of applicants' diversity of*
 - *Region (representation from various regions of B.C.);*
 - *Gender Identity*
 - *Age (representation of different artistic "generations," from younger professionals to their seniors);*
 - *Cultural diversity (representation of artists and arts professionals from the diverse ethnic and cultural communities of British Columbia);*
- *Absence of conflict of interest with a significant number of applicants; and*
- *Availability.*

Council recognizes that no single group of three to five people can represent all characteristics, but over time it requires that its juries and advisory committees achieve diversity with respect to the needs of each field.

Assembling assessment panels is a major responsibility of Council's staff. For each competition, assessors are identified from artistic discipline(s) giving particular consideration to the factors listed above. In addition to having expertise and knowledge appropriate to the program, assessors must be capable of providing a fair evaluation of a wide range of artistic styles and practices and be able to work effectively in a group.

Advisory Committees, Juries, Advisors

Council uses three kinds of committees in making decisions:

1. **Advisory Committee:** is the method used for recommending awards of a continuing nature to organizations (Operating Assistance). Committees evaluate an applicant's proposal relative to the needs of the community in a specific discipline and make recommendations to Council. The Advisory Committee also assists with the development of policies and program criteria specific to the disciplines. A Council board may be present at Advisory Committee meetings for orientation purposes, but he or she does not participate in the adjudication process. Advisory Committees convene up to three times per year for meetings lasting from one to five days. Advisory Committees are created annually and may include members who have previously served, in order to provide some continuity of discussion and assessment from year to year.
2. **Jury:** is the method used to assess programs for Individual Arts Awards, Project Assistance, special project Assistance, and Scholarship Awards. Applicants in these programs are evaluated competitively against one another. A jury makes a final decision as to which requests will be funded and the specific amounts to be allocated. A jury will only convene once for a specific competition for meetings lasting from one to five days.
3. **Management Committee:** is the method used when funding decisions are based upon formulae or non-subjective criteria, or when applications qualify for a Management Committee award as a result of time restrictions or other extenuating circumstances. This Committee uses Program Officers and Council management in assessing applications.

Occasionally Council calls on an **Individual Assessor** from the field to provide specialized expertise that supplements the work of a jury or advisory committee; for example, to provide a written report on a performance or a script, or to assist with an application in a language other than English.

The Contract

After Advisors/Jurors are identified and have agreed to serve, they are sent a Contract Package via email. Individuals must sign and return the following components of the Contract Package, before any of the meeting materials are sent.

The Contract Package includes:

- **Service Contract or Letter of Agreement (LoA)**, listing the terms of the tenure and confirming name and contact information;
- **Schedule B (included in Service Contract but not LoA)**, detailing allowable expenses;
- **Declaration of Interest**, declaring all potential conflicts of interest. Staff works with members to determine any potential conflicts prior to sending out meeting materials;
- **Permission to Release Name Form.**

and for after the meeting:

- **Expense Claim Form**, which needs to be returned along with relevant receipts in order for members to be paid for their services and reimbursed for expenses.

Members are paid a fee of \$225/day for the meeting days and a reading fee per file which varies depending on the kind of application (e.g. Operating, Individuals). Travel and accommodation expenses supported by receipts will be reimbursed according to government rates.

Meeting Materials

Members are sent documents including program guidelines and application forms, scoring sheets, copies of applications and any additional materials required by the program.

As part of an ongoing commitment to “going green”, Council’s practice since spring 2014 has been to deliver applications and jury or advisory materials as Adobe files via USB stick. If members are unable to utilize this method, paper copies may be provided. We appreciate feedback from panel members about this process.

When applications arrive at the BC Arts Council, they are reviewed by Council staff, who are responsible for determining if the applicant and project meet the eligibility criteria for the program. All eligible applications are sent to the jury/committee. In some instances, a committee may also be asked to help determine the eligibility of a submission.

Travel and Accommodation

If required, travel expenses are reimbursed after the meeting and after expense claims are submitted. Members are reimbursed expenses to the maximum outlined in the contract, with consideration to the most economical method of travel available. Council staff may reserve accommodation on behalf of advisors/jurors from out of town in order to ensure availability and billing under provincial government rates. They will confirm the dates in advance of the meeting but members will be required to pay for accommodation on checkout and will be reimbursed through the expense claim. Private accommodation arrangements may be made at a flat rate of \$30/day. If a member cannot pay for expenses directly, please contact the Program Officer immediately to make alternative arrangements.

Conflict of Interest

Advisors are asked to declare any conflicts of interest they may have with respect to any applications before the committee.

Conflict of interest may arise in any situation where an Advisor, Advisor’s family member, or Advisor’s organization could obtain material or personal gain from an application or applicants under review.

Instances of direct conflict of interest may occur include but are not limited to, membership on boards of organizations, ownership of assets, receipt of gifts, employment, and financial or professional benefits accruing to advisors as well as to:

- A family member,
- A business partner,
- An organization or business in which an advisor serves as an officer, director, trustee, partner or employee,

- Any person or organization with which an advisor is negotiating or has any arrangement concerning prospective employment.

Indirect conflict of interest is where a member would be perceived to lack impartiality about an applicant or application, even though no direct conflict of interest exists. This is also known as the perception of conflict of interest.

Prior to the meeting

- Committee members must read the relevant program guidelines, which include the purpose of the program, eligibility requirements, and application requirements. Guidelines also list ASSESSMENT CRITERIA which are important for the meeting and the process.
- Members read each file, considering applicants' responses to program guideline, application questions and ASSESSMENT CRITERIA. They note questions or thoughts about the application and any highlights. They may also observe which applicants are exceeding criteria or failing to meet them.
- Members write notes for each file, which will help in discussion of the applications at the meeting. Score sheets are provided. For most programs, members provide a preliminary ranking on the score sheets. For programs where evaluation is dependent on support material that is viewed or heard at the meeting, members will only make notes on applications prior to the meeting. Further details on scoring are included with the reading packet.
- To reduce the burden on our environment and shipping costs, reading packages are distributed on an encrypted USB key. If there are any concerns around this, adjudicators are encouraged to discuss with a Program Officer.
- Committee members should consider the Council's Mission, Values and Goals:
 - BC ARTS COUNCIL MISSION: Engage all British Columbians in a healthy arts and cultural community that is recognized for excellence
 - CORE VALUES: The vision and goals of the BC Arts Council are guided by the following six core values: Artistic Excellence, Recognition, Access, Aboriginal Engagement, Consultation and Governance
 - FOUR OVERARCHING GOALS OF COUNCIL:
 - Goal 1: Foster Artistic Excellence in all art forms and practices
 - Goal 2: Strengthen engagement in the arts
 - Goal 3: Support the richness of Aboriginal artists and communities in British Columbia
 - Goal 4: Enhance support for arts and culture in British Columbia

Please note that these are the *overarching goals* of the BC Arts Council. They are not the assessment criteria upon which you will make your initial and final assessments of each application, but rather serve as a backdrop or context for the recommendations and feedback you will provide.

The goals provide the context in which the arms-length peer adjudication process functions; the assessment criteria, the questions answered and the proposals you have before you now are the mechanisms by which the applicant makes the case for support within this context.

- When scoring each application, jurors and advisors are encouraged to use the FULL range of scores available to you, as a tool to separate the truly excellent proposals from those that should receive lower priority, based on the assessment criteria for this program, as well as the overarching goals of the BC Arts Council. If you use the full range of scores at your disposal, you will find the final part of the process- the allocation of funds- to be much clearer.

At the meeting

The meeting will convene at the appointed time. The committee/jury is formally briefed (the “charge”) with its responsibilities and on the meeting process. Council’s priorities, program objectives and assessment criteria are also reviewed and any questions about the process are answered.

Assessors proceed to discuss each application against program guidelines, assessment criteria and Council priorities. Adjudicators are asked to please bring a laptop to review the electronic package materials (laptops can be provided upon request; please contact the Program Officer in advance of the meeting to make arrangements). They may also view, read or listen to additional support material from the applicants (e.g., images in the case of visual artists, audio recordings in the case of musicians, etc.). Where relevant, they consider written assessments prepared by independent assessors. Each application is discussed in turn and given rankings by committee members. After much discussion, by the conclusion of the meeting the committee will have collectively ranked the applications in priority order for funding and made award recommendations/decisions.

The meeting chair and Program Officer (sometimes the role is combined) manage the assessment process. They ensure that each application is examined with respect to program guidelines and assessment criteria, that the weighting of the criteria (as applicable) is respected, and that all applicants are treated equitably. Staff manages conflict of interest and oversees compliance with Council policies while encouraging participation by each assessor and helping the group to reach final agreement. Staff does not comment on artistic merit, but is able to provide factual or background information on issues such as organizational management and financial position, if requested by the jury/committee.

Staff records discussion and proceedings of the jury by taking notes on each file. Notes are available to applicants in discussion with their officers. Comments are aggregated and not attributed to individual members.

The jury decisions/ advisory recommendations and specific comments that may be conveyed to applicants are then confirmed with committee members and recorded by staff.

Confidentiality

Advisors are required to maintain the confidentiality of the information submitted (applications, meeting packages etc.), committee discussions, and the identity of fellow Advisors.

Council does not disclose the names of Advisors during the year of their appointment. Permission, however, is requested on the Permission to Release Name Form to list advisors each year in the Annual Report of the British Columbia Arts Council.

After the meeting

After deliberations members have a policy discussion and are asked to comment on the assessment process and the program guidelines.

At the end of the meeting, to protect confidentiality, all meeting materials, including Meeting Packages and Assessor's notes (written and electronic formats), are collected by Council staff as transitory records which will be disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Results are processed and applicants are notified of those results via postal mail or email, depending on the program..

Returning Home

Expense claims should be submitted as soon as possible after returning home – reimbursement is generally within 2 weeks of receiving the claim. It is important that expense claim forms are signed.

For Further Information

Please contact a Program Officer at the BC Arts Council. Enquiry BC 1-800-663-7867 (ask for the BC Arts Council at 250-356-1718, or the relevant Program Officer).