

Bias or Conflict of Interest in PACE

In PACE, an impartial assessment is of utmost importance to both the candidate and the assessor who conducts the assessment on behalf of the College.

The impartiality of the assessment in PACE may be affected by:

- Bias (actual or perceived)
- Conflict of interest (actual or potential)

Bias

A bias is a favourable or unfavourable preconception.

Examples of a bias in PACE include but are not limited to:

- Direct involvement in educating, hiring and/or assessing the individual candidate in their pharmacy program or preparations to meet the registration requirements
- An opinion about the candidate's origin or pharmacy education program
- Knowledge of awards or recognition that the candidate has received
- An extremely positive or negative experience with another pharmacy professional whose background is similar to that of the candidate
- Assessment site familiarity in which the candidate has had previous exposure to the assessment site as a patient, student, volunteer or employee

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest (COI) is a personal or financial interest that would reasonably be viewed as influencing an assessor's ability to make an impartial decision.

Examples of a possible COI in PACE include but are not limited to:

- Familial relationship in which the candidate and assessor are related
- Personal relationship in which the candidate and assessor are acquainted
- Financial relationship in which the candidate has any business connection with the assessor, designated manager or owner of the assessment site

Expectations of Assessors and Candidates

Assessors and candidates should understand how a bias or COI would affect the assessor's ability to impartially assess the candidate's performance.

During the PACE application process and before the assessment begins, the assessor must declare and provide details about any actual or perceived bias or any actual or potential conflict of interest; the candidate must declare and provide details about any actual or potential conflict of interest.

Before completing the bias or COI declaration(s), both the assessor and the candidate should consider the following questions:

- Do I recognize the person (by name or in person)?
- Have I heard or learned something about the person that affects my opinion of their practice or how they will perform their role in PACE?

- Are there any assumed or stated expectations for this assessor to help this candidate be successful in PACE?
- As an assessor, are there any external motivators to you or your pharmacy for the candidate to successfully complete PACE as soon as possible?
- As an assessor, would you feel uncomfortable interacting with your PACE candidate or with any mutual relatives or acquaintances in the future if the candidate was unsuccessful?

If you answered “No” to all these questions, then you should be able to declare that you have no bias or COI.

If you answer “Yes” to or are unsure how to answer any of these questions, then you should declare that you may have a bias or COI and explain the circumstances

Management of a Declared Bias or Conflict of Interest

When a bias or COI is declared, College staff will review the circumstances.

If the declared bias or COI is not considered to affect the impartiality of PACE, the candidate and assessor will be allowed to complete PACE together.

If the declared bias or COI is believed to affect the impartiality of PACE, the candidate must select another site.

Management and Consequences of an Undeclared Bias or Conflict of Interest

If the College becomes aware of a bias or COI that was not declared on the application or before starting PACE, the PACE relationship will be immediately terminated and no OPPCAT or TAPT will be completed for the candidate. The candidate will be referred to a [panel of the Registration Committee](#), and may be required to redo PACE under an assessor acceptable to the panel. The assessor’s appointment as a PACE assessor may be withdrawn.

If you have any questions about PACE, please contact regprograms@ocpinfo.com or 416-962-4861 or 1-800-220-1921, ext. 2397.