



**Virginia SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct for  
Board of Examiners, Editors, Team Mentors and Panel of Judges**

Members of the U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Award for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) Board of Examiners, Editors, Team Mentors, and Panel of Judges pledge to uphold their professional principles in the fulfillment of their responsibilities as defined in the bylaws that established Virginia SPQA. In promoting high standards of public service and ethical conduct, individuals serving as Examiners, Editors, Mentors, and Judges will:

- Conduct themselves professionally, with truth, accuracy, fairness, respect, and responsibility to the public
- Avoid representing conflicting or competing interests, or placing themselves in such a position where their interest may be in conflict, or appear to be in conflict, with the purposes and administration of the Award
- Safeguard the confidences of all parties involved in the judging or examination of present or former applicants
- Protect confidential information and avoid disclosures that may in any way influence the Award integrity or process, currently or in the future
- Do not serve any private or special interest in their fulfillment of the duties of an Examiners Editor, Mentor, or Judge, therefore excluding by definition the examination of any organization or subunit of an organization that employs them or has a consulting arrangement in effect or anticipated with them
- Do not serve as an Examiners Editor, Mentor, or Judge of a primary competitor, customer, or supplier of any organization (or subunit of an organization) that employs them, that they have a financial interest in, or with which they anticipate a consulting arrangement, or are otherwise involved
- Do not intentionally communicate false or misleading information that may compromise the integrity of the Award process or decisions therein
- Make it clear, when establishing links from their own Web sites to the Virginia SPQA Web sites, that users will be taken to the official Virginia SPQA Web site
- Never approach an organization they have evaluated for their personal gain, including the establishment of an employment or consulting relationship, and, if approached by an organization they have evaluated, do not accept employment from that organization for a period of five years after the evaluation
- Maintain and safeguard fairness in the examination process and the confidentiality of all Award application information, including the identity of applicants
- Do not communicate with applicant organizations or in any manner seek additional documentation, information, or clarification. This restriction includes Internet searches.
- Treat as confidential all information about the applicant and the applicant's operation gained through the evaluation process, and take the following precautions:
  - Applicant information is not discussed with anyone, including other Examiners, with the exception of designated team members, Judges, the Award Administrator, and Virginia SPQA

representatives. This includes information contained in the written application, as well as any additional information obtained during a site visit.

- Names of applicants are not disclosed during or after the application review process.
- No copies of application information are made or retained. (SPQA will notify Examiners when to delete and /or shred materials.)
- Do not reveal or discuss with other Examiners, either during training or during the application review phases, their participation with an organization in the preparation of an Award application.
- Physically safeguard all information concerning the applicant and their operation by taking the following precautions:
  - Put an unmarked cover page on any paper copies of the application or self-assessment, and/or place in an unmarked file or folder, such that the name is not easily discernable.
  - Keep the application (or self-assessment) and all related materials in a safe/secure location. If in a vehicle, it should be locked in the trunk, or under the seat with the vehicle locked. This includes computers with electronic applications.
  - Close electronic files when unattended.
- Personally and independently score all assigned applications
- Report any violations of the SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct, confidentiality, or COIs to their Team Leader or SPQA Board.
- Upon completion of the Examiner Preparation Course, may use the following designation: Examiner, U.S. Senate Productivity and Quality Awards Program for Virginia, and year(s) served. However, the Virginia SPQA logo may not be used in advertising or promotion, or on business cards and this includes the Examiner designation or the Virginia SPQA logo.
- Furthermore, pledge that as a member in good standing of the Virginia SPQA Board of Examiners, an Editor, Team Mentor or member of the Panel of Judges, strive to enhance and advance the Award program as it serves to stimulate organizations in Virginia and the District of Columbia to improve quality, productivity, and overall performance.

*I have read, and pledge to abide by, the Standards for Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest contained in the Virginia SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct for Examiners, Editors, Team Mentors and Panel of Judges.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature



## **Recognition and Discovery Programs DISCIPLINARY ACTION EXAMINERS, EDITORS, MENTORS & JUDGES**

The success and integrity of the SPQA is largely dependent on its Examiners, Editors, Mentors and Judges and the manner in which they execute their duties. Individuals selected to serve in these roles are required to review and evaluate information from Applicants to the Recognition Program and/or Participants in the Discovery Program. Because information may be proprietary and/or sensitive in nature, Examiners, Editors, Mentors and Judges are required to adhere to Conflict of Interest procedures and follow the SPQA Code of Ethical Conduct.

In executing their duties, Examiners, Editors, Mentors and Judges are also required to function in a team environment, and the success of the teams is dependent on the full participation of its members and timely completion of assigned work.

**Grounds for disciplinary action and/or dismissal** from the role of Examiner, Editor, Mentor, or Judge are:

1. Violation of ethical conduct
2. Breach of confidentiality
3. Loss of applicant-specific information due to negligence (Negligence is defined as failure to safeguard the information as outlined in the Code of Ethical Conduct.)
4. Failure to disclose conflict of interest
5. Failure to fulfill defined team expectations, including but not limited to: required training, meeting deadlines, submitting independent review and feedback comments, and participating in consensus meeting.



## CONFLICT OF INTEREST DETERMINATION WORKSHEET

*Immediately upon receipt of the application or submission, please check for conflicts of interest*

The purpose of this worksheet is to ensure that you do not have a real conflict of interest or what could be perceived as a conflict of interest with this organization. The integrity of the U.S. Senate Productivity & Quality Awards Program for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) hinges in large part on the avoidance of conflicts of interest.

Examples of such conflicts include the following:

- You know someone on the organization chart.
- A close relative works for the applicant.
- You have made a personal visit to the applicant or vice versa.
- You have recently interviewed with the applicant
- You or your organization has been involved in benchmarking studies with the applicant.

### Conflict of Interest Determination Process

#### Step #1

*Read the Eligibility Certification Form, the Additional Information Needed Form, the Organizational Profile, and the organizations charts, and skim all figures in the application.*

#### Step #2

*Answer the following questions. If you answer "Yes" or "Don't Know (DK)" to one or more of the questions below, immediately contact your Virginia SPQA contact. Do not inquire within your own organization; as such inquiry could reveal the identity of the applicant.*

Questions	Yes	No	DK
1 Is the organization your current employer, client, or parent organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2 Is the organization currently owned or controlled by your employer, client, or parent (e.g., another subunit of your parent)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3 Is the organization your employer, your client, or your employer's or client's parent from more than two (2) years ago?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 Have you recently (within five years) left or retired from the organization, the organization's parent, or another subunit of the parent?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 Is your employer or client listed as a key supplier, partner, customer, competitor, or benchmark of the organization?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6 Is the organization or its parent a key partner, customer, or competitor of your employer, your parent, or a subdivision of your employer? ("Key" may be defined as constituting at least 5 percent.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 7 Did you help prepare or review (paid or unpaid) all or part of the application or evaluate the organization within the last two (2) years?
- 8 Is your employer, parent, or client an organization in the same SPQA Award category?
- 9 Did you help prepare the SPQA application of another current applicant in this same Award category?
- 10 Do you or a family member have a financial interest in the applicant, the applicant's parent, or a key competitor of the applicant? (This includes financial interests such as stocks, bonds, and retirement funds. Mutual fund holdings are of concern only if the mutual fund family is the applicant.)
- 11 Do you have considerable knowledge about an applicant through personal interactions (paid or unpaid), company relationships, family, or friends?
- 12 Do you know of any reason that there might be a real or perceived conflict with this applicant?



## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

As a member of the U.S. Senate Productivity & Quality Awards Program for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) Board for Examiners, I have voluntarily disclosed to the Administrators of the Award Program the identity of my employers and clients—past, present, or potential—whose interest could be favorably or unfavorably affected by my actions while acting as a member of the board. This includes disclosure of:

- Organizations in which I have financial holdings, including stock ownership and pension interests
- Affiliations that may present or seem to present a conflict of interest, including my current and recent employers' key customers, key suppliers, key competitors, and other key stakeholders, as well as the employers of my immediate family members

I confirm the accuracy of the submissions I have made, and I reaffirm my willingness to abide by the Code of Ethical Conduct.

I reaffirm that I am not aware of any personal conflict of interest with this applicant. I will not disclose any information gained through the evaluation of the applicant about the applicant; the applicant's clients, competitors, customers, or suppliers; or any other associated person or organization to anyone other than those in the U.S. Senate Productivity & Quality Awards for Virginia (Virginia SPQA) Program directly involved with the applicant review process.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature