



# Ethical Considerations in the Governance of Canada

**Mary E. Dawson**

Former Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner

May 27, 2019

9:00am – 4:30pm

## **Summary**

In this one-day workshop, Mary Dawson, Canada's former Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner will discuss the role the Ethics office plays in ensuring ethical conduct in Canadian governance within the context of other oversight bodies.

She will call upon her experience in applying the Conflict of Interest Act and the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons in discussing the provisions of the Act and Code and their interpretation. She will also discuss how the office carries out investigations and will refer to some of the decisions that have been publicly reported.

Are today's public officials more, or less, ethical than in the past? How can we ensure the highest standard of ethical governance? Are there changes that would be appropriate?

In this workshop, participants will also have the opportunity to work together, under Ms. Dawson's guidance, to tackle realistic cases of conflict of interest and ethical misconduct.

Workshops on Social Science Research (WSSR)  
1455 de Maisonneuve W. – H1 2Z5 30  
Montreal, Qc H3G 1M8  
Telephone: 514-848-2424 x5473





## Outline

### **9:00am-10:30am - Introduction**

Ethics regimes in Canada

- History of Canadian model of ethics
- Current Canadian landscape (federal/provincial/territorial)
- Roles of other Officers/agents of Parliament who seek to hold elected and appointed officials to account

Mandate and approach

- Commissioner's relationship to Parliament
- Mandate (apply *Conflict of Interest Act* for public office holders and *Conflict of Interest Code* for Members of the House of Commons)
- Organization and resourcing of the Office
- Activities of the Office

### **10:30am-10:45am – BREAK**

### **10:45am-12:00pm - Key elements of Act and Code**

- Reporting Requirements
- Rules of Conduct
- Gifts
- Preventive measures
- Enforcement

### **12:00pm-1:30pm – LUNCH**

### **1:30pm-2:15pm – Case Study – Small Group Exercise**

- Imagine you are the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner of Canada and are presented with a situation to be examined and reported on. Based on what you have learned so far, how would you deal with the case? Under what regime does the case fall?
- What procedures would you follow to deal with the case?
- What rules are involved?
- What tools are available to assist you in carrying out your mandate?
- What decision would you come to?
- Would you make any additional comments or recommendations?

### **2:15pm-3:15pm - Presentation and Discussion of Group Findings**

### **3:15pm-3:30pm – BREAK**

### **3:30pm-4:30pm – Wrap up Discussion, Questions and Comments**

Future Directions

- Processes for change
- Strengths and weaknesses of current regimes (Act and Code)
- Any changes to suggest for the current conflict of interest regimes?





## **Required Readings**

Fact Sheet – [Overview of the Conflict of Interest Act](#)

Fact Sheet – [Overview of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons](#)

Participants should also read at least the executive summaries for each of the following:

- Dawson, Mary. 2010. "[The Cheques Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2014. "[The Glover Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2015. "[Referral from the Public Sector Integrity Commissioner: The Bonner Report](#)" *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2015. "[The Finley Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2017. "[The Trudeau Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2017. "[The Wright Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.
- Dawson, Mary. 2017. "[The Toews Report](#)", *Office of the Conflict and Ethics Commissioner*. Ottawa: Parliament of Canada.

## **Additional Resources**

Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner Website: <http://ciec-ccie.parl.gc.ca/> and in particular,

- 2015 Fact Sheet: [The Role and Mandate of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner](#)
- The Conflict of Interest Act: Five-Year Review - [Submission to the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics](#)
- The 2015 Review of the Conflict of Interest Code for Members of the House of Commons - [Submission to the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs](#)
- 2016-2017 Annual Report: [The 2016-2017 Annual Report](#)

