

Code of Conduct for the Certification Mentorship Program

The Certification Mentorship Program is designed to educate applicants on artistic concepts related to their entries. As a personal teacher, the mentor plays a vital role in helping applicants overcome challenges encountered while painting. Their guidance is instrumental in helping applicants understand what judges are looking for when completing the critique form.

Both mentor and applicant must acknowledge and adhere to the program's Code of Conduct. These guidelines are essential to maintaining the integrity of the Certification Program and ensuring a fair, unbiased, and independent mentorship experience.

To preserve impartiality, applicants may not discuss their specific color schemes or backgrounds with their mentor. Because MDAs also serve as Certification judges, any knowledge that could identify an applicant's work would require the mentor to recuse themselves from judging that entry.

Applicants are encouraged to ask general, technique-based questions. Examples include:

1. Tips for creating a focal area
2. How to paint cast or sit-down shadows
3. Where to begin a painting
4. Techniques for painting flowers
5. Methods for embellishing flowers in a stroke design

Mentors should be used as teachers and guides throughout the process.

Discussions must remain general in nature. Applicants may not reference specific color choices within their design elements. For example, asking, "I'm having trouble with my red rose and yellow daisy—how should I shade and highlight them?" reveals identifiable details. If a mentor later judges an entry with those elements, they would be required to disqualify themselves.

Applicants may not share photos of any portion of their current entry.

Mentors are permitted to review and discuss an applicant's past entries and critiques, including offering insight into how those works could have achieved a higher score.

The Certification Program has always emphasized independent thinking and problem-solving. The mentorship program is not intended to be a solution for every challenge, but rather a resource to help applicants navigate their artistic journey. Applicants are encouraged to respect their mentor's time and come prepared with thoughtful, focused questions for each consultation.