

# Chapter 4. Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

## Table of Contents

4.1	Introduction.....	1
4.2	IITPSA Code of Conduct.....	1
4.2.1	Integrity .....	2
4.2.2	Confidentiality .....	2
4.2.3	Impartiality .....	2
4.2.4	Responsibility .....	2
4.2.5	Relationship with IITPSA.....	2
4.2.6	Non-discrimination .....	3
4.2.7	Disciplinary Procedure .....	3
4.3	IITPSA Code of Practice.....	3
4.3.1	Personal Requirements .....	4
4.3.2	Organization and Management .....	4
4.3.3	Contracting .....	4
4.3.4	Privacy, Security and Integrity .....	4
4.3.5	Development.....	5
4.3.6	Implementation.....	5
4.3.7	Live Systems.....	5
4.4	BCS Codes of Conduct and Practice.....	6
4.4.1	The BCS Code of Conduct .....	6
4.4.2	The BCS Code of Practice.....	7

## 4.1 Introduction

A code of ethics is a statement of collective wisdom of the members of the profession that expresses experience and consensus of many members. The code itself has several roles:

- Serve the interests of the Public.
- Protects the Public.
- Promotes worthy practices.
- Statement of shared commitment of members of the profession.
- Statement of agreed values.
- Statement of agreed rules.
- Sensitises members to important issues.
- Mechanism for educating for those entering the profession, companies and clients.

The code also ensures collective responsibility, so that various parties do not only think of individuals in the profession but rather a collective unit of the profession. If a profession speaks out on an issue, it is more effective as a group. Examples of this are issues such as protection of whistle blowers and gender bias.

## 4.2 IITPSA Code of Conduct

IITPSA, The Institute of Information Technology Professionals South Africa (<http://www.iitpsa.org.za/>), formerly

Computer Society South Africa (CSSA), is a South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) recognised Professional Body for South Africa's professional community of ICT practitioners. IITPSA has a code of conduct – a guide on how to handle issues. It maintains a complaint structure which involves the Committee of Enquiry and the Disciplinary Committee. The code addresses several key issues – integrity, confidentiality, impartiality, responsibility, relationship to the CSSA and non-discrimination.

## 4.2.1 Integrity

This principle required that member must:

- Behave at all times with integrity:
  - Not knowingly lay claim to a level of competence not possessed.
  - At all times exercise competence at least to the level claimed.
- Will act with complete loyalty towards a client when entrusted with confidential information.
- Will act with impartiality when purporting to give independent advice and must disclose any relevant interests.
- Will accept full responsibility for any work undertaken and will construct and deliver that which has been agreed to.
- Will not seek personal advantage to the detriment of the Institute and will actively seek to enhance the image of the Institute.
- Will not engage in discriminatory practices in professional activities on any basis whatsoever.

## 4.2.2 Confidentiality

A member will act with complete loyalty towards a client when entrusted with confidential information. A member shall take adequate measures to ensure the confidentiality of a client's information. A member should not disclose, or permit to be disclosed, or use to personal advantage, any confidential information relating to the affairs of present or previous employers or customers without their prior permission. The principle covers the need to protect confidential data. Various kinds of information can be considered by a client or employer to be confidential. Even the fact that a project exists may be sensitive. Business plans, trade secrets, personal information are all examples of confidential data. Training is required for all staff on measures to ensure confidentiality, to guard against the possibility of a third party intentionally or inadvertently misusing data and to be vigilant for leaks of confidentiality arising from careless use of data or indiscretions.

## 4.2.3 Impartiality

A member will act with impartiality when purporting to give independent advice and will disclose any relevant interests.” The principle is primarily directed to the case where a member or members' relatives or friends may make a private profit if the client or employer follows advice given. Any such interest should be disclosed in advance. A second interpretation is where there is no immediate personal profit but the future business or scope of influence of the department depends on a certain solution being accepted. Whereas salespersons are assumed to have a bias towards their own company, an internal consultant should always consider the welfare of the organization as a whole and not just the increased application of computers.

## 4.2.4 Responsibility

Member must take full responsibility for any work done and the work should be completed in agreed time and budget. In cases of delay, the client must be alerted to any late delivery. Additionally, generic information (not confidential information) about an area should be fed back to the Profession. Members are also required to combat ignorance about technology.

## 4.2.5 Relationship with IITPSA

Member must:

- Not seek personal advantage to the detriment of the society
- Actively seek to enhance the image of the Society
- Not bring the Society into disrepute by personal behaviour
- Not misrepresent the views of the society
- When faced with conflict of interest, declare their position

## 4.2.6 Non-discrimination

Member must not engage in illegal discriminatory practices on any bases and must hire personnel based on skills, experience and performance. Remuneration must be done on equal opportunity basis. Additionally, employers should initiate and/or support programs that encourage development and training on equal opportunity basis.

## 4.2.7 Disciplinary Procedure

This procedure exists so that anyone may lay a complaint against a member. The level of the member determines his/her responsibility. For example, consultants carry more obligations. The Society, however, has no legal standing between member and employer, but where appropriate the Society will give support to member losing job or censuring employer for violating the Society's code of conduct.

The society has regulations that required all complaints to be in writing. The complaint will first be investigated by a Committee of Enquiry which has the power to summon the member involved. If misconduct is established by the committee, the member is given 21 days to response to the complaints. If this response is unsatisfactory, the issue is referred to the Disciplinary Committee.

The Disciplinary Committee sets a formal hearing where witnesses may be called. No legal representation is allowed and the proceeding is carried out in camera. If the member is found to be guilty, he or she can be warned, reprimanded, suspended or expelled.

### Activity 1

Do you think this procedure is fair, adequate, and constitutional?

## 4.3 IITPSA Code of Practice

This Code of Practice is directed to all professional members of IITPSA. It consists, essentially, of a series of statements that prescribe minimum standards of practice, to be observed by members. The Code is concerned with professional responsibility. All members have responsibilities – to clients, to users, to the State and to society at large. Those members who are employees also have responsibilities to their employers and employers' customers and, often, to a Trade Union.

- Personal Development
- Organisation and Management
- Contracting
- Privacy, Security and Integrity
- Development of a System
- Implementation
- Live Systems

A summary of the Code of Practice is provided here. The full code is accessible on the IITPSA website.

### 4.3.1 Personal Requirements

Statement	Rationale
Make sure that members and their subordinates are kept up to date on new technologies, practices, legal requirements and standards	Others will expect this of you
Ensure that subordinates are trained and that this is based on equal opportunity basis	Improve subordinates effectiveness and advancement opportunities
Only accept work for which you are competent or else obtain additional expertise first	Be aware of your own limitation and your duty to the client
Seek opportunities for increasing efficiency	As a professional you should be eliminated inefficiencies and be innovative by using new methods.

### 4.3.2 Organization and Management

Statement	Rationale
Plan, establish and review objectives for both yourself and your subordinates	Keep overall objectives of the project in mind and use well established management practices to keep track.
Ensure tasks are allocated to people according to their ability and competence	Need to balance competence of subordinate to the job, their need to learn new things and responsibility to the client
Establish and maintain channels of communication to seniors, equals and subordinates	Effective communication improves quality of the job and this can be improved by formal training
Be accountable for quality, timeliness and use of resources	Professionalism implies provision of agreed level of service, timeliness and within budget

### 4.3.3 Contracting

Statement	Rationale
Seek expert advice in preparation of formal contract	Contract needs to meet the needs of both parties. Member should use specialists where necessary (e.g. Tax and risk evaluation)
Adequately cover all requirements and responsibilities	Professional status implies that all details are covered

### 4.3.4 Privacy, Security and Integrity

Statement	Rationale
Ascertain and evaluate all risks with respect to cost, effectiveness and security level	Essential to determine what value would be lost if security is breached. Allocate to the areas of protection, detection, suppression and recovery.
Recommend appropriate security levels to risks	Risks can be mandatory (e.g. health and safety) or non-mandatory (e.g. security of data etc).
Apply, monitor and report on the effectiveness of the levels of security	People can become lax. Employment of new technology maybe appropriate (e.g. when combating new attacks)

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Ensure all staff is trained to protect life, data and equipments in cases of disaster.	Safety of people is the first priority. Backup facilities for programs, data are essential because of consequential losses.
Need to take all reasonable steps to protect confidential information	People's private information is at the root of an individual's right to privacy
Competent people must be in charge of accuracy and integrity of data	Staff assigned to a job must be competent and adequately trained for the job.
An individual must have the right to review their data, correct it and appeal if necessary	Individual has a right to freedom.

### 4.3.5 Development

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Exercise impartiality when evaluating each project	Impartiality is a Professional imperative
Effectively plan, monitor, adjust and report on all aspects of the project	Need to control all aspects of a project
Use standard procedures and ensure that documentation is available and used.	Professionalism implies using standard, accepted, appropriate procedures. People should know how, when, or who must do the work.
Specify system objectives, completion data, cost, security requirements and acceptance requirements.	Clear statement of objective, agreed by client must be the rationale of the project.
Client should participate in all stages of analysis, development and implementation	The system is for the client. The closer the client's involvement the better the system will be
Tasks completed within job in a defined order	Plan the system logically
Specify and conduct program and system tests	Show system functions as intended, as well as detect and eliminate errors.
Ensure design is sufficiently documented to facilitate audit, maintenance, enhancement and comprehension by user	Ensure system is usable
I/O designed for easy use	Simple I/O ensures less errors and easier acceptance.
Data that is erroneous, redundant or out of date must be easily changed or deleted, if necessary	Data must be correct while the privacy of individual is respected.
Backup procedures for data and programs	Consequential losses need to be minimized
Ensure projects are technically sound, use most appropriate technology, while staying within time/cost constraints	Professional should solve the clients problem in the most appropriate manner

### 4.3.6 Implementation

<b>Statement</b>	<b>Rationale</b>
Provide adequate provision for staff training	System will not work properly unless staff knows how to use it. Education of users empowers them and allays fears of new system.
Changeover to new operational system – plan it, monitor the transition, adjust if necessary and report	Ensure new operation works well

### 4.3.7 Live Systems

Statement	Rationale
Plan and operate efficient and reliable processing within the budget	Reliability and efficiency is expected of a professional
Monitor performance and quality. Hold review regularly to assess efficiency, effectiveness and security	Requirements of systems change with time hence the need for review
Plan for maintenance and enhancements	Correct errors and upgrade system
Keep good liaison with users and set up mechanism for dealing with queries	Ensure any problems are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

## 4.4 BCS Codes of Conduct and Practice

The British Computer Society (BCS) [<http://www.bcs.org>] sets the professional standards of competence, conduct and ethical practice for computing in the United Kingdom. The Royal Charter incorporated the Society in July 1984. This code of conduct is directed to all members of The British Computer Society. As an aid to understanding, these rules have been grouped into the principal duties, which all members should endeavour to discharge in pursuing their professional lives:

- The Public Interest.
- Professional Competence and Integrity.
- Duty to Relevant Authority.
- Duty to the Profession.

### 4.4.1 The BCS Code of Conduct

#### **The Public Interest**

A member shall:

- have due regard for public health, privacy, security and wellbeing of others and the environment.
- have due regard for the legitimate rights of Third Parties\*.
- conduct their professional activities without discrimination on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, marital status, nationality, colour, race, ethnic origin, religion, age or disability, or of any other condition or requirement
- promote equal access to the benefits of IT and seek to promote the inclusion of all sectors in society wherever opportunities arise.

#### **Professional Competence and Integrity**

A member shall:

- only undertake to do work or provide a service that is within your professional competence.
- NOT claim any level of competence that you do not possess.
- develop their professional knowledge, skills and competence on a continuing basis, maintaining awareness of technological developments, procedures, and standards that are relevant to your field.
- ensure that they have the knowledge and understanding of Legislation\* and that you comply with such Legislation, in carrying out your professional responsibilities.
- respect and value alternative viewpoints and, seek, accept and offer honest criticisms of work.
- avoid injuring others, their property, reputation, or employment by false or malicious or negligent action or inaction.
- reject and will not make any offer of bribery or unethical inducement.

#### **Duty to Relevant Authority**

A member shall:

- carry out their professional responsibilities with due care and diligence in accordance with the Relevant

## Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

Authority's requirements whilst exercising your professional judgement at all times.

- seek to avoid any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest between you and your Relevant Authority.
- accept professional responsibility for their work and for the work of colleagues who are defined in a given context as working under your supervision.
- NOT disclose or authorise to be disclosed, or use for personal gain or to benefit a third party, confidential information except with the permission of your Relevant Authority, or as required by Legislation
- NOT misrepresent or withhold information on the performance of products, systems or services (unless lawfully bound by a duty of confidentiality not to disclose such information), or take advantage of the lack of relevant knowledge or inexperience of others.

### **Duty to the Profession**

A member shall:

- accept their personal duty to uphold the reputation of the profession and not take any action which could bring the profession into disrepute.
- seek to improve professional standards through participation in their development, use and enforcement.
- uphold the reputation and good standing of BCS, the Chartered Institute for IT.
- act with integrity and respect in their professional relationships with all members of BCS and with members of other professions with whom you work in a professional capacity.
- notify BCS if convicted of a criminal offence or upon becoming bankrupt or disqualified as a Company Director and in each case give details of the relevant jurisdiction.
- encourage and support fellow members in their professional development.

## **4.4.2 The BCS Code of Practice**

The British Computer Society Code of Practice is directed to all members of The British Computer Society. It consists, essentially, of a series of statements, which prescribe minimum standards of practice, to be observed by all members.

The Code of Practice is concerned with professional responsibility. All members have responsibilities: to clients, to users, to the State and society at large. Those members who are employees also have responsibilities to their employers and employers' customers and, often, to a Trade Union. In the event of apparent clash in responsibilities, obligations or prescribed practice the Society's Secretary-General should be consulted at the earliest opportunity.

The Code is to be viewed as a whole: individual parts are not intended to be used in isolation to justify errors or omissions or commission. The Code is intended to be observed in the spirit and not merely the word. The BCS membership covers all occupations relevant to the use of computers and it is not possible to define the Code in terms directly relevant to each individual member. For this reason the Code is set out in two levels to enable every member to reach appropriate interpretations.

The BCS Code of Practice can be found at the following Web site: <http://www.bcs.org/>

### **Activity 2: Comparing Codes**

Compare and contrast CSSA's codes to that of BCS. What are the differences and similarities. Also have a look at the ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct [<http://www.acm.org/about/code-of-ethics>].