

The ICE Code of Professional Conduct

Made by the Council on 21 July 2004 to come into effect on 1 November 2004, in accordance with By-law **34**. Modified in accordance with By-law **34** by the Council on 20 May 2008 and taking effect from 10 June 2008; modified by the Council on 17 July 2012 and taking immediate effect; further modified by the Council on 15 April 2014 and taking immediate effect; further modified by the Council on 17 October 2017 and taking effect from 7 November 2017; further modified by the Trustee Board on 21 June 2022 and taking immediate effect; further modified by the Trustee Board on 10 January 2025 and taking immediate effect; further modified by the Trustee Board on 24 March 2026 and taking immediate effect

Introduction

The ICE Code of Professional Conduct lays down the standards of professional conduct and ethical behaviour by which its Members shall abide.

Membership of the ICE is a badge of integrity and good faith. The duty upon Members to behave ethically is, in effect, the duty to conduct themselves honourably – to always ‘do the right thing’. At its most basic, it means that Members should be honest and have a positive impact upon the engineering profession.

The Institution reserves the right to take disciplinary action if it becomes aware of any conduct by a Member that causes concerns in relation to the Code of Professional Conduct.

The purpose of the ICE Code of Professional Conduct

In accordance with its status as a Professional Engineering Institution, the ICE provides this Code to direct Members as to the Rules of Professional Conduct and ethical behaviour by which they should abide in all aspects of their professional lives.

The Code applies to all Members, irrespective of their grade, the professional role they fulfil and the countries in which they practise.

A Member’s obligation under this Code is to comply with the Rules and act in accordance with the Guidance Notes to the maximum extent possible without breaching applicable laws. In addition to adhering to applicable laws, Members should act in accordance with this Code, the Royal Charter and the By-laws.

The Guidance Notes and Glossary are designed to help Members interpret and apply the Rules. They are not exhaustive and do not cover all potential scenarios. An act that is not in accordance with the guidance is likely to breach one or more of the Rules.

Further information

Members are encouraged to use the support provided by the ICE’s network of regional offices and branches and to engage with the Institution’s comprehensive knowledge programme, which includes in-person events, webinars and digital resources published on the ICE [Knowledge Hub](#).

For further information, see the ICE publication [Advice on Ethical Conduct](#). This provides guidance on specific areas of professional practice that the Institution would like its Members to review and comply with.

Members should demonstrate a commitment to upholding the current [Statement of Ethical Principles](#) for all engineering professionals published by the Engineering Council and the Royal Academy of Engineering.

Should a Member feel that it is impossible for them to comply with the Code owing to conflicting requirements (e.g. because local laws, contractual conditions, organisational constraints or similar would prevent them from doing so) they should seek advice from the Professional Conduct Panel via the [Professional Conduct](#) page on the ICE website.

If you have concerns, or wish to make a complaint, about an ICE Member

If you have concerns about a Member's conduct, please seek advice from the Professional Conduct Panel via the [Professional Conduct](#) page on the ICE website.

The ICE would encourage anyone who may be dissatisfied with the professional conduct of a Member to refer to the [Guidelines for making a complaint about an ICE Member](#).

The Rules of Professional Conduct

- 1. All Members shall discharge their professional duties with integrity and act in a manner that upholds the reputation and standing of the Institution and the engineering profession.**
- 2. All Members shall undertake only work that they are competent to do.**
- 3. All Members shall have full regard for the public interest, particularly in relation to matters of health and safety, and to the wellbeing of future generations.**
- 4. All Members shall have full regard for the environment and for the sustainable management of natural resources.**
- 5. All Members shall develop relevant professional knowledge, skills and competence on a continuing basis and give all reasonable assistance to further the education, training and continuing professional development of others.**
- 6. All Members shall:**
 - a. Promptly notify the Institution upon receipt of a criminal conviction, or an adverse civil court judgement or equivalent in any applicable jurisdiction, related to any aspect of the Code.**

- b. Promptly notify the Institution if they have had membership of another professional body terminated as the result of a disciplinary procedure**
- c. Promptly notify the Institution upon becoming bankrupt or disqualified as a company director, charity trustee or equivalent in any applicable jurisdiction.**
- d. Promptly notify the Institution where the Member, in good faith, believes that there has been a significant breach of the Rules of Professional Conduct by another Member.**
- e. Promptly notify the employer or relevant authority where a Member has a genuine concern and they are protected under whistle-blowing or similar good-faith reporting legislation.**
- f. Support a colleague or any other person to whom the Member has a duty of care who in good faith raises a concern covered by Rules 6d or 6e.**
- g. Fully engage with the disciplinary process in the event that the Member is accused of misconduct.**

Guidance Notes on interpreting and applying the Rules of Professional Conduct

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 1:

- i. Members should commit to upholding the reputation and standing of the Institution and the engineering profession so that society continues to have confidence in the profession. Members should note that this covers both their professional and personal conduct.
- ii. Members should use sound engineering judgement to perform their professional duties with integrity, objectivity, transparency and impartiality, always acting in a trustworthy manner.
- iii. Members must always act in good faith, show due regard for everyone they deal with and aim to seek positive outcomes.
- iv. Members must treat everyone with respect and without bias, helping to ensure that the workplace is a fair and inclusive environment where discrimination, harassment and bullying will not be tolerated.
- v. Members who feel that they may not be able to comply with one or more elements of the Code must demonstrate having made reasonable efforts to both comply to the maximum extent possible and fully consider the relevant issues, including seeking independent advice and/or consulting affected parties, where applicable.
- vi. Members are expected to meet the highest standards of conduct and accountability. They must never act maliciously or recklessly. They should also give due consideration to any relevant employer's code of conduct or similar. Accountability cannot be delegated to technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).
- vii. Members must have due regard to their duty of digital privacy, confidentiality and security in relation to all

- parties they have dealt with professionally, including past employers and/or clients.
- viii. Members should avoid any situation giving rise to an actual or perceived conflict of interest but make all relevant parties aware wherever such a situation is unavoidable.
 - ix. Members must not, directly or indirectly, improperly attempt to replace another person or entity.
 - x. Members must present all work honestly and take measures to prevent untrue or misleading statements.
 - xi. Members must not commit or aid any form of plagiarism. Members must disclose the level of their use of AI or similar technologies.
 - xii. Members must avoid entering any contract that would undermine their overall responsibility to comply with this Code. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:
 - a. Taking reasonable steps to ensure that clients and relevant third parties understand agreement terms, risks and legal duties. These should cover aspects including health, safety and welfare responsibilities; data handling, use and ownership; the proposed scope of work; the schedule for completion; and the fees to be charged. This information should be communicated in writing and, wherever practicable, issued to the client and confirmed before the project starts.
 - b. Have due regard to Members' duty of care to their clients, especially lay clients in domestic or small works engagements.
 - c. Outline in writing the potential risks to the client throughout the project. Where appropriate, obtain professional indemnity insurance to cover risks and liabilities that could arise from the work. Advise clients if this is not in place before the project starts.

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 2:

- i. Members must work within the limits of their competence in relation to all professional undertakings, having regard to the nature and extent of their involvement in a project.
- ii. Members who are responsible for interpreting data from AI or similar technologies must understand the limitations and risks of using these tools.
- iii. Members who are responsible for managing other people and supervising or checking their work should accept responsibility for work done by those people.
 - a. Members must therefore ensure that all such people are competent, qualified and supervised in manner appropriate to their competence, and that such people have full regard for the public interest.
 - b. Members must also ensure that they have the expertise to effectively oversee the work for which they are accountable.
 - c. Members must pay particular attention to work done under their supervision that has been aided by AI or similar technologies.

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 3:

- i. Members must take all reasonable steps to protect the health and safety of the public and everyone engaged in the project throughout its life. Members must recognise that taking all reasonable steps may sometimes mean doing more than laws, regulations and industry best practices require.
- ii. Members must seek positive outcomes from their work, recognising its wider effects on communities' quality of life and its potential impact on future

generations. They must support the continuous improvement of health, safety and wellbeing best practices everywhere they work.

- iii. Members must assess and manage relevant risks to their projects, making their best efforts to communicate these to all stakeholders and ensure their understanding of them.
- iv. Members must innovate in a responsible way and minimise risk. They should pay particular attention to unknowns and the possibility that new methods and technologies may not perform as expected.
- v. Members should not increase health, safety or welfare risks to any person in their pursuit of commercial competitiveness.
- vi. Members should, as far as is reasonable, keep abreast of emerging risks and maintain an up-to-date record of these.
- vii. Members shall ensure that any use of AI or similar technologies is justified, proportionate to risk and in the public interest, with clear benefits relative to alternative methods.
- viii. Members shall have regard for how they select data for analysis, especially when using AI or similar technologies, to prevent bias from being introduced or amplified in their work.

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 4:

- i. In all the work that they do, Members must be able to demonstrate, by means of an appropriate audit trail, having taken every reasonable step to account for all relevant factors relating to their work's impact on the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources.
- ii. Members must take all reasonable steps to minimise environmental harm throughout the lifetime of a project, seeking positive outcomes by creating solutions that enhance natural systems.
- iii. Members should proactively promote nature-positive working practices and sustainable solutions. They must take account of the wider impacts of their work on natural systems, not least by the responsible and efficient use of land, water, materials and energy.
- iv. Members should broaden their awareness of natural systems and cycles (especially carbon and water) and of how their work affects these.

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 5:

- i. Members are expected to support each other with honesty and in good faith.
- ii. Members should strive for excellence through their commitment to continuous learning and maintaining a broad awareness of issues affecting the profession.
- iii. Members should maintain records of professional development planning and action undertaken, in line with the ICE's [Continuing Professional Development Guidance](#).
- iv. Members should give all reasonable assistance to the advancement of others as well as themselves, including engaging with the ICE's activities and keeping abreast of emerging technologies.
- v. Members should recognise the importance of the ICE to the public good and should proactively promote and spread awareness of this to current and future Members.

Guidance to help interpret and apply Rule 6:

- i. Members should promptly notify the Institution if they are convicted, whether any custodial sentence is imposed or not. There is no need for a Member to declare a spent conviction unless notification of that conviction had been deliberately withheld during their membership.
- ii. Members should support a colleague or any other person to whom they have a duty of care who in good faith raises any concern about a danger, risk or wrongdoing that affects others.

- iii. Prospective Members are expected to disclose details of any matter that may breach the Rules before applying for membership.
- iv. Members must not wilfully ignore or conceal any wrongdoing (deliberate or inadvertent) that they believe has occurred.

Glossary

Bullying. Unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting. This includes an abuse or misuse of power that undermines, humiliates or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

Code. The ICE Code of Professional Conduct.

Competence. The ability to apply the appropriate professional knowledge, skills and judgement to perform a given role effectively. As part of maintaining competence, Members must keep up to date with relevant statutory documents, industry standards and developments in their sector.

Conflict of interest. A set of circumstances creating a risk that a person's ability to act with good judgement in one role could be affected by other interests. This may occur in any situation whereby a person or organisation could benefit by exploiting an existing arrangement or relationship.

Integrity. The quality of being honest and having strong moral principles. A person of integrity will always 'do the right thing, even when no one is looking'.

Plagiarism. Using the work of others without permission, acknowledgement or reference and presenting it as if it were your original work – e.g. copying and pasting material from a source document or AI, without attribution or declaration, into a report you are writing. This material could include text, data, diagrams, illustrations or photographs.