

ACE Code of Business Practice

Last amended at the December 2021 AGM

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Members of ACE (“Members”) shall maintain professional and ethical standards so as to uphold the dignity and reputation of their profession. They shall exercise their professional skill and judgement and discharge their professional responsibilities with independence of thought and action, objectivity and integrity.

1.2 ACE members have a responsibility to understand and promote the principles of sustainable development in their professional conduct, that is, development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, as defined by the 1987 Brundtland Report. Members shall give due regard to the effects of their actions and advice on the sustainability of the economy, society and environment, and shall seek to promote sustainability in all three areas in their work and in their engagement with clients.

In addition, ACE members shall:

- Make a public commitment (ideally through an existing pledge scheme such as Pledge to Net Zero or Race to Zero) to reduce their own emissions and make meaningful progress in meeting this pledge
- When providing client advice will take a view on how aligned a client’s project is both to a relevant regulatory deadline for a net zero economy and to broader social/sustainability/inclusion aims
- Communicate this view to the client, and be ready to advise on how alignment could be improved

1.3 ACE members have a responsibility to understand and promote the need for greater diversity and inclusion in the industry and in the workplace. This applies to operations, policy and recruitment at all organisational levels and refers to a wide range of issues including gender, race, ethnicity, religion, age, sexual orientation or disability. Members should have due regard to the positive impacts and indeed the business imperative of achieving greater inclusion in the workplace of people from underrepresented groups. The benefits range from improved individual professional development to meeting the skills shortages in both members' businesses and in the wider industry, and these benefits in turn help members to achieve a competitive edge.

Members are encouraged to have appropriate policies in place which are designed to prevent discrimination and to attract the best employees.

ACE would like to draw its members’ attention to the work and recommendations of a number of leading organisations in or related to the areas of diversity and inclusion including the Royal Academy of Engineering through its Diversity Leadership Group, the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Construction Industry Council (CIC) through its Diversity Forum.

2.0 Client relations

2.1 In matters relating to a client's affairs, Members shall act in the legitimate interests of the client.

2.2 Members shall not enter into any arrangement which might detract from the objectivity and impartiality of advice given to the client.

2.3 Members shall disclose, at the earliest opportunity, any special relationships, circumstances or business interests which might influence or impair, or could be seen by the client or others to influence or impair, the Members judgement or objectivity on a particular assignment.

3.0 Professional standards

3.1 Members shall:

- a) Only accept work for which they are competent and have capacity to undertake.
- b) Foster appropriate standards of professional competence amongst those for whom they are responsible.
- c) Comply with the letter and the spirit of:
 - i. Contractual obligations.
 - ii. Any relevant and reasonable guidance which may from time to time be issued by ACE.
- d) Reject any business practice which might reasonably be deemed improper.
- e) Keep confidential all confidential information regarding the client's business and staff.
- f) Set and to seek to agree terms of remuneration and the basis of calculation thereof with the client in advance, or define and agree terms of engagement, the nature of an assignment to be carried out, how the work will be performed, the desired outcomes of the assignments, how performance will be evaluated, the terms of remuneration, and the basis of calculation thereof, and the provision for termination.

4.0 Independence

4.1 Where a Member is a subsidiary of a parent body, or enters into an alliance with a body, which is not a consultancy practice, Members shall ensure that all advice will be untied and independent of any influence of that parent body or alliance partner.

5.0 Reviewing or taking over work

5.1 Members shall not take over the work of another Member until that Member's appointment has been terminated or has come to an end.

5.2 Members shall not review, check or comment on the work of another Member for the same client until that Member has been notified. However, a Member may proceed without such

notification in exceptional circumstances meriting strict confidentiality if (and only if) the clients permission for such notification has been sought in writing.

6.0 Insurance

6.1 Members shall maintain appropriate professional indemnity insurance arrangements.

7.0 Fairness to others

7.1 Members shall:

- a) At all times act so as to maintain or improve the status of consultancy as a profession.
- b) Act with fairness and integrity towards all persons with whom their work is connected and towards other Members.

8.0 Complaints procedure

8.1 Where there has been a material breach of this Code of Practice by a Member and it has been brought to the attention of the ACE it shall be put before the Disciplinary Panel in accordance with the procedure set out in the Articles of Association, but only after the Member has been allowed due time to comment on the allegation.

8.2 Where, following the completion of the procedure set out in the Articles, a finding is made that there has been a breach of the Code of Business Practice, the Board may recommend, inter alia, the following sanctions:

- a) Reprimand.
- b) Conditions imposed on continued membership.
- c) Suspension from membership.
- d) Expulsion from membership.

9.0 Scope of this code

9.1 For the avoidance of doubt conduct of a Member outside of the United Kingdom may constitute an infringement of the Code of Business Practice as if it were conduct in the United Kingdom where such conduct is likely to become known within the United Kingdom and where it presents a risk to the reputation of ACE, the consultancy profession or the individual member.