

# RIBA



Royal Institute  
of British Architects

---

# Code of Professional Conduct

**January 2005**

# Code of Professional Conduct

## For members of the Royal Institute of British Architects

### Introduction

1. This Code and its accompanying Guidance Notes set out and explain the standards of professional conduct and practice that the Royal Institute requires of its members.
2. This Code comprises:
  - **three principles** of professional conduct
  - **professional values** that support those principles
  - **Guidance Notes** which explain how the principles can be upheld.

# The Royal Institute's Values

Honesty, integrity and competency, as well as concern for others and for the environment, are the foundations of the Royal Institute's three principles of professional conduct set out below. All members of the Royal Institute are required to comply.

## The Three Principles

### Principle 1: Integrity

*Members shall act with honesty and integrity at all times.*

### Principle 2: Competence

*In the performance of their work Members shall act competently, conscientiously and responsibly. Members must be able to provide the knowledge, the ability and the financial and technical resources appropriate for their work.*

### Principle 3: Relationships

*Members shall respect the relevant rights and interests of others.*

## **Upholding the Principles**

The notes below offer some brief guidance on how members can uphold the three principles. More detailed advice is set out in Guidance Notes to the Code, which are available separately from the Royal Institute.

### **1. Principle 1 – Honesty and Integrity**

- 1.1 The Royal Institute expects its Members to act with impartiality, responsibility and truthfulness at all times in their professional and business activities.
- 1.2 Members should not allow themselves to be improperly influenced either by their own, or others', self-interest.
- 1.3 Members should not be a party to any statement which they know to be untrue, misleading, unfair to others or contrary to their own professional knowledge.
- 1.4 Members should avoid conflicts of interest. If a conflict arises, they should declare it to those parties affected and either remove its cause, or withdraw from that situation.
- 1.5 Members should respect confidentiality and the privacy of others.
- 1.6 Members should not offer or take bribes in connection with their professional work.

### **2. Principle 2 – Competence**

- 2.1 Members are expected to apply high standards of skill, knowledge and care in all their work. They must also apply their informed and impartial judgment in reaching any decisions, which may require members to balance differing and sometimes opposing demands (for example, the stakeholders' interests with the community's and the project's capital costs with its overall performance).
- 2.2 Members should realistically appraise their ability to undertake and achieve any proposed work. They should also make their clients aware of the likelihood of achieving the client's requirements and aspirations. If members feel they are unable to comply, they should not quote for, or accept, the work.
- 2.3 Members should ensure that their terms of appointment, the scope of their work and the essential project requirements are clear and recorded in writing. They should explain to their clients the implications of any conditions of engagement and how their fees are to be calculated and charged. Members should maintain appropriate records throughout their engagement.
- 2.4 Members should keep their clients informed of the progress of a project and of the key decisions made on the client's behalf.
- 2.5 Members are expected to use their best endeavours to meet the client's agreed time, cost and quality requirements for the project.

### **3. Principle 3 – Relationships**

- 3.1 Members should respect the beliefs and opinions of other people, recognise social diversity and treat everyone fairly. They should also have a proper concern and due regard for the effect that their work may have on its users and the local community.
- 3.2 Members should be aware of the environmental impact of their work.
- 3.3 Members are expected to comply with good employment practice and the RIBA Employment Policy, in their capacity as an employer or an employee.
- 3.4 Where members are engaged in any form of competition to win work or awards, they should act fairly and honestly with potential clients and competitors. Any competition process in which they are participating must be known to be reasonable, transparent and impartial. If members find this not to be the case, they should endeavour to rectify the competition process or withdraw.
- 3.5 Members are expected to have in place (or have access to) effective procedures for dealing promptly and appropriately with disputes or complaints.

## The supporting Guidance Notes

	<b>Guidance note</b>	<b>Related principle(s)</b>
1.	Integrity, Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality and Privacy, Corruption and Bribery	Principle 1, Principle 3
2.	Competition	Principle 1, Principle 3
3.	Advertising	Principle 1
4.	Appointments	Principle 2
5.	Insurance	Principle 2
6.	CPD	Principle 2
7.	Relationships	Principle 3
8.	Employment and Equal Opportunities	Principle 3
9.	Complaints and Dispute Resolution	Principle 3

## Application of the Code

1. **Professionalism**  
The purpose of this Code is to promote professional good conduct and best practice. Members should at all times be guided by its spirit as well as its precise and express terms.
2. **The Law**  
Members must comply with all relevant legal obligations. It is not the remit of this Code to duplicate the provisions of business, employment, health and safety, environmental and discrimination law.
3. **Amendments and Additions**  
Periodically the Royal Institute will publish further guidance on specific aspects of professional practice and conduct. Members must observe such amendments and additions as they come into effect.

## Other Applicable Codes

1. **United Kingdom Codes**  
Chartered Members who are also registered in the United Kingdom are subject to **The Architects' Code**, published by the **Architects Registration Board (ARB)**.
2. **Other National Codes**  
A member practising in a country outside the United Kingdom may be required to be a member of, or registered by, that country's professional or regulatory body for architects. If this is the case the Royal Institute recognises that a member's first obligation will be to comply with the rules of conduct published by the local professional or regulatory body.
3. **Other Professions' Codes**  
This Code applies to all members regardless of their fields of activity, contracts of employment or membership of other professional organisations. The Royal Institute recognises that members may participate in other professional activities and that when they do so the rules of the relevant professions' governing bodies will take precedence over this Code. Under normal circumstances the Royal Institute would take no action under this Code if the matter is also under consideration by another, more directly involved, professional body. However, such action may be considered necessary if the matter raises issues connected with a member's status as a member or an architect.

## Discipline

1. **Contraventions of this Code**

Any member who contravenes this Code shall in accordance with **Byelaw 4** of the Royal Institute's Charter and Byelaws, be liable to reprimand, suspension or expulsion. The power to sanction a member for professional misconduct is exercised by a RIBA hearing panel on behalf of the Royal Institute's Council through a delegation of authority made under Byelaw 4.4.
2. **Remit**

Members' conduct outside the practice of architecture will not normally fall within the remit of this Code and the Royal Institute's Disciplinary Procedures, unless a RIBA hearing panel determines that such conduct generally offends against the honour and integrity of the profession.
3. **Judgments from External Competent Authorities**

A judgment from a competent court or tribunal against a member in his or her professional capacity as an architect may be considered sufficient evidence of a breach of this Code.
4. **Investigations**

Any member, against whom a complaint of professional misconduct has been received, may be required to answer inquiries arising under the **Disciplinary Procedure Regulations**. At the conclusion of an investigation, a RIBA hearing panel may reprimand, suspend or expel any member whose conduct is found to be in contravention of this Code or otherwise inconsistent with the status of a member.
5. **Professional Conduct Committee Judgments from the ARB**

Where a member is sanctioned by the ARB's Professional Conduct Committee, a RIBA appraisal team shall determine whether or not to refer the matter to a RIBA hearing panel who will have the power to impose the same, or an alternative, sanction on behalf of the Royal Institute.