
Code of Professional Conduct

Guidance Note 1

Integrity

Conflicts of Interest

Confidentiality and Privacy

Corruption and Bribery

Integrity

- 1.1 Members are expected to act with integrity in all their professional and business activities. This means acting with honesty, fairness and impartiality at all times and not allowing oneself to be improperly influenced either by self-interest or the interests of others.
- 1.2 Members should avoid actions or situations which are inconsistent with their professional obligations. If members find themselves in such a situation, they should remove themselves from it as soon as possible. In the most serious circumstances, they should resign from the commission.
- 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, either by making it themselves, or acquiescing to its being made by others.
- 1.4 Members should seek appropriate advice when faced with a situation which they recognise as being outside their own or their practice's experience, knowledge or competence.

Conflicts of Interest

- 1.5 Members' personal, private, religious, political or financial interests should not conflict with their duties and obligations to their clients or employers (see GN7 Relationships). Should such a conflict arise it should be declared to the client or employer, and, if the conflict is unacceptable or cannot be resolved, the member should withdraw from the engagement or resign from the employment.
- 1.6 Members involved in any other business activity which might impact, even indirectly, on their practice of architecture, must declare that involvement to the client or employer before any contract is finalised. If the other activity is unacceptable to the client members should either withdraw from it during the engagement, or decline the commission; if the other activity is unacceptable to the employer, members must either withdraw from it during the employment or resign from/refuse to accept the job.

- 1.7 Members must not undertake any architectural functions which require independence and impartiality (such as the issue of Architect's Certificates) if they are connected to the contracting party.

Confidentiality

- 1.8 Private information acquired during the course work should be regarded as privileged and treated as confidential. Such information must not be used by members for their personal benefit, nor should it be disclosed to any third party without the prior consent, preferably in writing, of the person or company it concerns.
- 1.9 It is recognised that there are certain specific circumstances in which the disclosure of confidential information may be required, for example, planning and Building Regulation applications, a court order made for any reason, prevailing legislation (such as the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002). In such circumstances, members are expected to obey the law and disclose the information they hold to the appropriate authorities.

Privacy

- 1.10 Members must adhere to any reasonable contractual provisions regarding confidentiality and should also comply with the legal rights of privacy. For example, members should be cautious about taking photographs of private buildings from public highways with the intention of publishing them, or discussing private details with third parties such as journalists, if there has been no explicit permission to do so. Members should therefore ascertain from their clients what type of publicity they will allow about their project, and agree the terms and conditions for publication. This also applies to a member's own promotional material.
- 1.11 Data held by members concerning others must be handled in accordance with the prevailing data protection legislation.

Corruption and Bribery.

1.12 Acting Corruptly

The Royal Institute shall regard members as acting corruptly if they give or offer a gift or advantage to someone with the intention of persuading them to act against their professional obligations and/or the interests of those to whom they owe a duty (such as a client or employer). Members who request and/or accept and act on such an incentive shall be regarded as acting corruptly.

1.13 A Bribe

An incentive to act against one's professional obligations or duty to others is a bribe. However, the exchange of small gifts and advantages in the normal course of business (such as promotional gifts or corporate hospitality) is not prohibited so long as the value to the recipient is not such that it exerts an improper influence over them.