
Code of Professional Conduct

Guidance Note 7

Relationships

7.1 Personal beliefs and duties

The Royal Institute expects its members to place their duty to their clients and/or employers ahead of their personal religious beliefs or political convictions (see also Guidance Note 1 on conflicts of interest and Guidance Note 8 on employment). If members are faced with an instruction from a client or employer which presents them with a personal moral dilemma, they should withdraw from the situation if at all possible and explain their reasons for doing so to the client or employer. Where members are the ‘conscientious objector’s’ employer, agreement to the withdrawal should not unreasonably be withheld.

7.2 Duties to other architects

Members should neither maliciously nor unfairly seek to damage another member’s reputation or practice.

7.3 Supplanting other architects

Members should not deliberately approach another architect’s client in a conscious attempt to take over an active project. Members should therefore avoid, as far as possible, sending advertising mailshots, or any other forms of practice publicity, aimed at a specific project where it is apparent that another architect has already been appointed. This does not prohibit speculative approaches to clients (such as developers) who regularly engage architects.

7.4 Verifying offers of work

When members are approached by clients to undertake work on an existing project, reasonable enquiries should be made to establish whether or not any other architects are already involved. If there are, members must clarify with the client whether their role will be to replace an appointed architect or take on separate work within the same project. Members should, unless there is a justifiable reason not to, inform the appointed architect(s) that the client has approached them. However, if the client denies or fails to mention that another architect is already engaged for this work, the Royal Institute is unlikely to regard an omission to notify the original architect as professional misconduct.

7.5 Taking over someone else’s work

In whatever circumstances a member takes over a project started by someone else, the Royal Institute regards it as good practice to contact the consultants previously engaged in order to establish that their appointment was properly determined and the client holds a licence to use any information (such as drawings, specifications, calculations etc.) they

prepared during their commission. (See Guidance Note 4 on Appointments)

7.6 Acknowledging the contribution of others

The contribution of others to a member's work should be appropriately acknowledged. Members should not seek to pass off someone else's work as their own.

7.7 Commenting on the work of others

Members engaged to review, appraise or comment on another member's work should do so fairly and objectively, based on their own knowledge and experience. Members should not engage in personal criticisms of other members, nor attempt to discredit their work in order to gain advantage.

7.8 Recognising the need for external advice

Members should seek appropriate advice when faced with a situation which they recognise as being outside their own or their practice's experience or capabilities.

7.9 Maintaining professional service

Members should make arrangements with an appropriately qualified person for the running of their office and the administration of contracts during absences (particularly for periods of more than five working days) and should inform their clients of those arrangements. When in practice as a sole practitioner or sole principal, members could achieve this by establishing networks with other members.

7.10 Notification of breaches of the Code

If members become aware of a breach of the Code of Professional Conduct by another member, they should report it to the Royal Institute, with such supporting documentary evidence as is available, for investigation under the Disciplinary Procedures. Failure to report a breach may only be justified when prevented by law or the courts (such as an agreed settlement which precludes any further action).

7.11 Criminal conviction/disqualification as a director

A criminal conviction which relates in any way to a member's practice of architecture may be regarded as sufficient grounds for automatic expulsion from membership. Members disqualified from acting as a director, must report this to the Royal Institute for possible investigation under the Disciplinary Procedures.