

The CQI code of conduct

Code of Ethics for Quality Professionals

Statement of personal responsibility

It is the professional and ethical responsibility of everyone who practices in the field of quality management to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct in the exercise of their professional duties.

Our profession has a responsibility to uphold the standards under which we operate. In doing so, we hope to make a positive contribution to society and commerce. We aspire to the core values articulated in this code of ethics and we acknowledge our commitment to adhering to these ideals in our profession.

Fundamental principles

Quality professionals must maintain exemplary standards of integrity, competence, objectivity, honesty, courage, fairness and respect in all aspects of their work – to demonstrate the epitome of professionalism.

Quality professionals shall:

- Have a primary **duty** to ensure our employers' activities are conducted in compliance with the laws and regulations of the authorities under which we operate, consistent with advancing the principles of excellence.
- Be **competent** to perform the services we have been hired or retained to perform. As quality professionals we must commit ourselves to continual learning while being able to acknowledge areas that are outside of our expertise.
- Act in an **objective** manner. As quality professionals we must base decisions on factual information. We must not be unduly influenced by competing or conflicting interests.
- Have **integrity**. As quality professionals we must be principled and consistent in applying our views. We must live up to our commitments, and be trustworthy and scrupulous at all times.
- Be **honest** in all dealings with our employers and others with whom we interact. As quality professionals we must ensure that information and communications, whether oral or written, are accurate and complete. We acknowledge that personal and institutional credibility are crucial to our success.
- Have the **courage** to make difficult decisions and present all relevant information to our organisations to promote wise decisions. As quality professionals we must be able to withstand challenges to our views, while at the same time be accountable for our mistakes.
- Be **fair** in our dealings with all parties. As quality professionals we must apply legal and regulatory standards equitably. We must be just in considering the interests of all parties in decision processes.
- Be **respectful** of others, whether it is our peers, subordinates or external parties with whom we interact. As quality professionals we must treat all individuals with dignity and courtesy.
- Maintain transparency, honesty and sound probity in all financial and **commercial** matters both within our own companies and when dealing with, or acting on behalf of, clients.

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These nine fundamental principles are further expanded on the following pages.

Duty

Our role as quality professionals is defined by our duty to advise individuals and organizations regarding the appropriate quality improvement actions they may want to take.

Quality professionals:

- Have a primary duty to the unbiased dissemination and interpretation of relevant governmental regulations, industry and management standards and good practice guidelines.
- Have a duty to our employers and clients to act at all times in their best interests and ensure innovation, care, and excellence.
- Have a duty to those who rely upon our professional judgement and advice
- Have a duty to our peers to maintain the long-term integrity of our profession and to strive to deserve the public's confidence and respect.

Competence

Competence means that a quality professional has the knowledge, abilities and skills necessary to effectively identify, analyze and solve or recommend solutions to quality challenges. Competent quality professionals lend credibility to the profession by demonstrating they have the knowledge, experience, dedication and flexibility to adapt to the ever-changing realm of the quality profession and the Body of Quality Knowledge.

The diversity of individuals and organizational contexts within the quality profession necessitates commitment to a standard level of knowledge, defined by the Body of Quality Knowledge. This standard may be achieved through a variety of means: education, work experience, and professional training and certifications. Just as the quality profession continues to evolve, maintaining competence within the field is a continual learning process.

Quality professionals:

- Seek to remain informed and knowledgeable about current and future trends.

- Avoid claims of competence in any area in which they do not have a thorough understanding.
- Encourage and support opportunities for professional growth and development among peers and subordinates so that all who work in the field can gain and demonstrate competence in the profession.

Objectivity

Objectivity is treating or dealing with facts without distortion by personal feelings or biases. Quality professionals must be objective. Although the quality professional may need to evaluate information from several points of view, he/she must rely on a basic understanding of facts.

Quality professionals:

- Respond carefully to an opinion issue, recognizing that there is rarely a single right or wrong answer. Opinions can often take on a partisan perspective. Caution must prevail and guide the professional to offer an unbiased expression of facts.
- Present all reasonable options and associated risks when developing improvement strategies.
- Clearly differentiate among professional requirements, internal requirements and personal preferences.
- Disclose new information appropriately with the proper context.

Integrity

Integrity is a commitment to a set of values. Individuals with integrity are principled, scrupulous and trustworthy. Having integrity suggests that one is "whole," that one's beliefs, words and actions are congruent and consistent. Quality professionals with integrity will not compromise their values or trustworthiness for personal gain or professional enhancement.

Quality professionals:

- Are not influenced by competing or conflicting interests
- Ensures conflicts of interests are declared

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- Live up to commitments.
- Give credit for the work of others.
- Maintain the confidentiality of information, and never disclose information concerning the business or technical affairs of employers or clients without their consent.
- Seek advice from another individual or group whose opinion they respect when uncertain.
- When asked to compromise integrity for the sake of one party over another, reconsider their obligations and the long-term consequences of their actions.
- Avoid being placed in situations that put their integrity at risk.
- Hold strong to beliefs, recognizing that what they believe may be the best course of action may not be in the short-term interest of their employer.
- Never accept compensation that is not earned.
- Avoid professional employment or assignments which may give rise to conflict of interest without prior written notification of and agreement by all parties to the potential conflict.

Honesty

Honesty is understood as truthfulness, candour and sincerity. It requires a person to act in ways free from deceit or deception, including dishonesty by omission—failing to say something. Honesty requires one to be candid and forthcoming, not simply to refrain from false statements. Quality professionals, in fulfilling their duty to customers, to their employer and to all stakeholders, must exhibit honesty in all of their activities. Honesty builds trust, essential to fostering effective working relationships among all stakeholders and individual quality professionals.

Quality professionals:

- Ensure any information provided to customers, employers and stakeholders is accurate and complete.
- Ensure there have not been significant omissions of information or false impressions implied.
- Resist pressures to relax standards of honesty; for example, to achieve expediency.

Courage

Courage is the act of choosing what one believes to be the right thing even when doing so is difficult. Quality professionals must have the courage to evaluate, conclude, and provide consistent and accurate advice. They must have the courage to demand access to information that is required to do their job, and they must do their job as completely as possible. There will be situations where quality advice needs to be retracted or corrected. The quality professional must have the courage to bring forth the error and accept accountability, where appropriate.

Quality professionals:

- Review and reiterate their advice and strategy when necessary or when challenged, and change it when appropriate.
- Ask for help when needed.
- Encourage an open exchange of views that challenge quality advice.
- Admit to mistakes and take appropriate measures to promptly correct them.
- Deliver bad news quickly to management.
- Provide information about risks and consequences if quality advice is overruled or ignored.

Fairness

Fairness means that all persons are being treated equitably. In particular, it includes the principle of treating all persons equally in accordance with the law and holding all those with common responsibilities to a common standard. Quality professionals must consider the rights and needs of all parties affected by outcomes to which they contribute. This includes the wise consideration of laws, science and appropriate societal norms.

Quality professionals:

- Respect the letter and spirit of governmental laws, regulations and quality standards.
- Apply the appropriate standards, taking into account cultural and regional differences and local requirements.

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- Present the facts and analysis of information using sound interpretation, (which may include statistical interpretation), that strives to minimize bias.
- Strive to ensure that the interests of all parties are appropriately considered in decision processes.

Respect

Respect is the regard for, or appreciation of, the worth or value of someone or something. First and foremost, quality professionals will respect the role of their colleagues. As quality professionals we must also be prepared to recognize and acknowledge the worth of all parties. This recognition demonstrates the belief that everyone has value.

Quality professionals:

- Listen to what others have to say in a fair and objective way.
- Refrain from embarrassing, ridiculing or hurting others in their actions or omission of actions.
- Treat all parties, regardless of level or position, with dignity, civility and courtesy.
- Accept that personal differences will occur, but work diligently toward finding a position that accommodates those differences.
- Create a positive environment that encourages and promotes respect.
- Share what they know in a non-intimidating way and are tolerant of those who do not initially understand.
- Avoid conflict where possible. If not possible, find creative ways to resolve conflict in an effort to preserve a positive business relationship.
- Are patient and forgiving when others make mistakes and work to prevent the mistakes from recurring rather than assigning blame.

Commercial issues

Professional integrity means we must be commercially aware for our own businesses and for those we advise, and ensure transparency and honesty in all financial and business matters.

Quality professionals:

- Shall not offer, give, request or receive any financial or other material inducement with a view to improperly influencing any technical, professional or commercial decision, and shall disclose in advance of entering into a legally binding agreement with a client details of any third-party fees or commissions related to the agreement.
- Shall provide the client with a written estimate of the likely fee, or agree a process within the exercise by which this will be established, before entering into a legally binding agreement for a professional assignment, and shall ensure that estimates are not exceeded except within an agreed process.
- Shall secure arrangements to protect the client's financial interest where payment is made by a client in advance of a service being supplied, or where monies are not beneficially owned by the quality professional,
- Shall behave at all times with the utmost financial probity, ensuring that insofar as is possible contracts and financial arrangements are unambiguous and protect the valid interests of all parties concerned.
- Shall ensure all advertising is decent, legal, honest and factual, and shall not make false, misleading or unfair comparisons with other professional services.