

AIAST Code of Ethics

For the proper conduct of members of the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology, whether in Australia or overseas.

General

The quality of work performed by agriculturists depends on their competence and the values they hold with respect to the community and environment in which they operate.

Members of the Institute should reflect in their professional conduct a society that values honesty, constructive criticism, open timely communication, provides working environments that support integrity and equality, and encourages adherence to the highest professional standards.

Members of the Institute employed by particular organisations such as the CSIRO, universities, state departments and most private companies will be largely governed in their professional and business activities by codes of conduct for those particular organisations.

The Institute's Code of Ethics adopts common principles of fairness and equity for all members and provides for more specific guidance for members who are self-employed or who work for organisations which do not have formal codes of conduct.

Standards of Practice

1. Members should maintain the highest standards of honesty and integrity towards all those with whom they come in contact. All work undertaken by members should be of high quality and be fitting of the public's expectations of a professionally trained and experienced agriculturist.
2. Members shall not refer to their academic qualifications, or status in the Australian Institute of Agricultural Science and Technology, unless such reference shall be specific and accurate.
3. Members shall not misuse the name or misrepresent qualifications of any party in securing or completing work.
4. Whilst recognising that direction from other persons is necessary in some situations, members shall not permit any such directions to compromise their professional judgement.
5. Members must take all necessary precautions to safeguard the interests of employers or clients in so far that such actions do not breach this code or the wider community laws.
6. Members shall respond to professional correspondence and enquiries expeditiously and accurately to the best of their ability and knowledge.
7. A member shall not accept any instructions where that member has an interest, either directly or indirectly, unless this is clearly indicated to the instructing party prior to acceptance.
8. A member shall not receive, directly or indirectly, any royalty, gratuity or commission in respect to any aspect of work unless the fact is fully disclosed in writing to the employer or client.
9. A member shall inform his/her employer or client if circumstances arise in which the member's judgement or advice may be called into question by reason of business connection, personal relationship, interest or affiliation.
10. Members are permitted to market their services provided they do not use any unfair or improper method of securing professional work or advancement and that the content or nature of any material used to market their services is not false, misleading, deceptive or in any way reflects adversely on the profession.

11. Members shall not encourage any employer or client to undertake more work than is required to reach the contracted outcome.
12. Members shall provide to the client or employer all information that the member knows or ought to know is relevant in reaching a decision regarding the commissioning of any work, or proceeding with further segments of a phased contract.
13. Members shall co-operate with the Ethics Committee and any committee of inquiry that may be established to investigate a complaint brought before the Institute. Members shall provide all relevant documentation and not withhold information or act in any manner that is dishonest or not consistent with allowing the committee to reach a fully informed determination.
14. Members will agree to abide by and respect any penalties (subject to the appeal mechanism) imposed by the Ethics Committee or Council of the AIAST.
15. Members must not breach this Code, any wider community laws or regulations. Responsibility to Clients
16. A member shall not disclose, or use for personal advantage, information obtained from a client, employer or colleague which that member knows or ought to know is confidential to such person except with such person's permission or unless the member believes that the information relates to illegal activities. Where members believe the latter is the case, they may use their discretion in bringing the information to the attention of the relevant authority. At all time members should use the utmost tact in disclosing information technical or otherwise.
17. A member shall not refuse to accept a client without sound reason.
18. A member shall not accept a client unless that member can give adequate service in the matter. Should such a situation arise in the course of rendering services outside the member's expertise, that member shall inform the client in writing, and if required, shall seek appropriate advice or assistance acceptable to the client or employer.
19. A member shall ensure that tasks are allocated to personnel with the appropriate level of competence.
20. Where a member nominates the services of another professional in securing a contract this professional must be used as represented unless the client or employer agrees in writing to a change.
21. A member shall be responsible for any services to or on behalf of clients by assistants who are employed or sub-contracted by that member.
22. Members must not accept instructions if their employment is contingent upon reporting a pre-determined or specified outcome.
23. A member shall not recommend to a client any business, process, substance, material or matter in which that member has a personal or financial interest, without first informing that client of such interest.
24. Members will identify to clients the sections of reports which have been substantially used in reports for other clients.
25. Members engaged to prepare a legal expert report, which may lead to giving evidence in Court, must not accept work of this nature, if the matter in dispute lies outside their area of expertise. Prior to engagement, members must also disclose any potential conflict of interests they may have in the matter. Members engaged in this manner, must diligently abide by the guidelines for experts issued by the Court. In particular, members must ensure that details in their Curriculum Vitae, which must be submitted to the Court, accurately reflect their level of expertise based on both experience in, and competence in, areas relevant to the case.

Relationships with Colleagues

26. A member shall not unfairly, falsely, or maliciously, undertake any actions which may injure the professional career, reputation, prospects or business of another member.
27. A member must not engage in any activities which may adversely reflect on the professionalism and reputation of the Institute.
28. A member in the employment of another member shall exercise the same diligence as if the practice was that member's own and carry out duties and behave in such manner so that that member shall not discredit the employer.
29. Members shall acknowledge the source of any information published by them, and where this information is not already in the public domain, they should obtain permission to publish such information.
30. A member who acts as a sub-contractor for any part of a project shall be responsible to the contracting member for that part.

Responsibility to the Community

31. Members shall regard the health, welfare and safety of the community and the environment as their prime responsibility and will not knowingly contribute to actions which will threaten human health. Members shall be aware of the occupational health, safety and welfare, legal and moral requirements and ensure that they contribute to maintaining a safe working environment.
32. Results of research, or factual information, should not be presented to the public in a way showing bias or unfair interpretation.
33. Members shall provide equal opportunity in all circumstance and show no preference on the basis of gender, colour, race, nationality or religion and be aware of statutory legislation relating to equal opportunity and to adhere to such legislation, regulations and principles.

Environmental and Resource Management

34. It is the member's responsibility to be aware of all statutory obligations and to ensure that that member's actions do not breach any welfare or environmental, biological or chemical use, genetic, or other relevant regulations.
35. Members shall use their best endeavours to promote and develop the principles of sustainability as defined below:
Sustainable agriculture is the use of farming practices and systems which maintain or enhance:
economic viability of agricultural production;
the natural resource base; and
other ecosystems which are influenced by agricultural activities.
The principles of sustainable agriculture are that:
Farm productivity is sustained or enhanced over the long term
Adverse impacts on the natural resource base of agriculture and associated ecosystems are ameliorated, minimised or avoided.
Residues resulting from the use of chemicals in agriculture are minimised.
The net social benefit derived from agriculture is maximised.
Farm systems are sufficiently flexible to manage risks associated with the vagaries of climate and markets.
36. Members should support environmental impact studies related to agriculture where appropriate and assist in scientific interpretation as required.

Research

37. A member shall issue or publish only such reports or statements as are an accurate record of soundly based experimentation and observation and of logical deduction therefrom.
38. Members publishing or presenting research should acknowledge all those who made a substantial contribution to the work, and any significant facilitators where appropriate.
39. Members who submit substantially similar work to more than one publisher shall disclose that fact to the publishers at the time of submission.
40. Members who use animals for teaching, scientific, research or production purposes will treat the animals with respect and consider their welfare as an essential factor in planning experimentation or and must be familiar with, and adhere to, the 'Australian Code of Practice for the Care and Use of Animals for Scientific Purposes', and relevant state legislation.

Education PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

41. Members who provide education or training services will ensure that the information they provide is up-to date and relevant.
42. Members must continue professional development to improve personal standards of expertise and competence and to maintain a high quality of service to clients.