



For Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

All the global signatories see ethics at the centre of our personal and professional lives. It is the glue that forms who we are, what we do, the values we support, the decisions we take, the way we interact with people, including those we work with, and what we believe is 'right' and 'wrong', and is, or is not 'true'.

Ethics form our moral compass, the passions that guide us, and each of us is different. We have different backgrounds, cultures, experiences, and geographies, and this will, of course, impact our responses. Fundamentally, ethics exists in our relationships, and we relate across differences which, used in its broadest sense, include geography, gender, neurodiversity, sexual identity and orientation, age, heritage, religion, disability. This will impact our experiences and those of the people we work with. So when we meet our coachees, mentees and supervisees, we are each bringing our own beliefs.

Part of our work is our need to discover, hear and acknowledge the particular norms, prejudices and assumptions that we can fall into. We may hold what we think are truths unconsciously. How will this affect the decisions we make personally and professionally? And how does a Global Code of Ethics help us? Why is it important, relevant and inspiring to our practice?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Code reflects the aspired state of professionalism and the professional core values that we strive for. Even the reference to 'global' reminds us that what we might believe from our own ethical standpoint may not be the case in other cultures.

So our Code helps us navigate the world now and in the future. This will include providing support in a changing world, where we are becoming increasingly professionalised and supported by digital technologies, including data science and Artificial Intelligence (AI). And a world where we see that the 'other-than-human' world faces major challenges in the current climate and biodiversity crisis, from wildfires, to floods, drought, crop failure and famine. A world where racism is still prevalent and impacting ours' and others' experiences.

All our members, in their roles as coaches, mentors, supervisors, trainers/training providers, and students, as part of their continuing membership, agree to adhere to the elements and principles of this Code of Ethics and to use them as the basis for discussion and, if appropriate, complaints. We understand that to adhere to a code takes lasting self-work, work we will continue to do throughout our personal and professional lives. It aligns with the Professional Charter for Coaching and Mentoring, which is drafted in accordance with European law, and is registered on the dedicated European Union database, which lists self-regulation initiatives in Europe.

While our Code cannot be legally binding or a rule book exactly, we only have to remember how many member countries there are with different legal frameworks - it helps us to think about our practice. We can use its guidance as we come across questions and challenges to promote the development of professional excellence and to make ethics come alive.

VALUES

These are the values that we support, along with definitions and examples of behaviours.

Integrity

Acting with honesty, fairness, and consistency in all professional interactions

- I understand confidentiality is crucial to working together (except in the unlikely event of illegality or risk of harm).
- I seek to be fair in my dealings with all people.
- I genuinely value you and value everyone equally.
- I respect boundaries in coaching/mentoring/supervision, for example, it is not counselling, psychotherapy or medical intervention.

Courage

Choosing to act ethically, even when it feels uncomfortable

- I approach and clarify situations that may constitute an ethical dilemma.
- I acknowledge that each session has a unique identity and richness.
- I approach each session with an open mind and innovation.

Respect

Valuing people, cultures, and perspectives, and responding in ways that honour their dignity

- I treat people and their personalities with dignity.
- I listen actively.
- I seek to understand.
- I bring my 'whole self' into the session.

Responsibility

Being accountable for our actions and committed to doing what is ethically required

- I support coaching, mentoring and supervision as professional practice.
- I commit to my continuous learning and development and will be guided by the Code.
- I value individual uniqueness and creativity, and support collaborative action to meet development needs.
- I aim to support the client/learner's best interests and cultural identity.

Making a difference

Creating a positive impact through our work

- I aim to help the client/learner grow through each interaction.
- I desire to make a positive contribution to the sectors in which I coach/mentor/supervise.
- I thrive in navigating clients/learners through seasons of change and transition.

THE CODE OF ETHICS

The Code is arranged into five sections and covers the bodies' general expectations of professional behaviour and conduct, as well as the list of all the membership bodies that have signed up to this Code of Ethics:

1. **Words and languages**
2. **Beginnings and endings**
3. **Professional conduct**
4. **Excellent practice**
5. **Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics**

1. Words and languages

The Code is currently available in various languages. If you can help with translation into your language, please contact administrator@emccglobal.org

For reasons of brevity, this Code, where appropriate, refers to:

- Coachees, mentees, supervisees, and students as 'clients or learners'
- Coaches, mentors, supervisors, and trainers/training providers as 'practising members' or 'members'.
- Coaching, mentoring, and supervision work as 'professional work'.
- Coaching, mentoring, and supervision as a 'profession'.

The signatories to this Code acknowledge that the terms 'profession' and 'professional' are being used for activities that are not always under statutory regulation but are being increasingly professionalised and self-regulated.

The signatories to this Code acknowledge that the titles 'Coach', 'Mentor' and 'Supervisor' are not protected and may be used by anyone in the field of practice, member or not member of a professional body. Each signatory will define exactly which of its members and other stakeholders are expected to abide by this Code (who are hereafter collectively referred to as 'the members').

For a proper understanding of this Code, members use their own professional body's definitions and terminology for the precise keywords, e.g., coach, coaching, client, learner, member, mentor, mentoring, sponsor, supervisor, supervision, and technology.

2. Beginnings

When professionally working with clients or learners in any capacity, members conduct themselves in accordance with this Code, committed to delivering the level of service that may reasonably be expected of a practising member.

Before they start working with a client or learner, members make this Code available and explain and make explicit their commitment to abide by this Code. Members will also make their clients, learners and sponsors aware of their respective bodies' complaints procedures.

Before starting work with a client or learner, members ensure that the client, learner or sponsor knows and fully understands the nature, terms, and conditions of the coaching, mentoring, or supervision agreement, including financial, logistical, and confidentiality arrangements.

Members use their professional knowledge and experience to understand their clients, learners and sponsors' expectations and reach an agreement on how they plan to meet them. Members will also try to take into account the needs and expectations of other relevant stakeholders.

Members are open and transparent about the methods used initially and introduced flexibly to meet the client or learner's contextual needs. Members willingly share available information about the processes and standards involved.

Members ensure that the duration of the work is appropriate to achieve the client, learner and sponsor goals, and actively promote the client or learner's independence, self-reliance and sense of empowerment.

Members check on the setting in which any coaching, mentoring or supervision takes place to maintain optimal conditions for learning and reflection towards achieving agreed goals.

Members are guided by their client or learner's interests while remaining aware of the shared responsibility to safeguard that these interests do not harm those of sponsors, stakeholders, wider society, or the natural environment.

3. Professional conduct

Integrity

Members are suitably qualified to work with their chosen client, learner group and honestly represent their relevant experience, professional qualifications, memberships, and certifications/accreditations to clients, learners, sponsors, stakeholders, and fellow practitioners.

In communication with any party, members accurately represent the value they provide and have been accredited with by clients or learners, as a coach, mentor, or supervisor.

Members ensure that no false or misleading claims are made, or implied, about their professional competence, qualifications, or accreditation in any published, promotional material, or otherwise. Members always attribute ownership of work, ideas, and materials of others to the originator and not claim them as their own.

Members disclose any conflict of interest and act within applicable law and not in any way encourage, assist or collude with conduct that is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional, unjust, or discriminatory.

Confidentiality

When working with clients/learners, members maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all client, learner and sponsor information unless the release of information is required by law.

Members are explicit with clients, learners and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality cannot be maintained (e.g., illegal activity, danger to self or others) and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality wherever possible.

Members keep, store and dispose of all data and records of their client, learner work, including digital notes, files and communications, in a manner that ensures the best possible confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in their client's country regarding data protection and privacy.

Members inform clients or learners that they are receiving supervision and identify that the client or learner may be referred to anonymously in this context. The client or learner should be assured that the supervision relationship is itself confidential.

If the client or learner is a child or a vulnerable adult, members make arrangements with the client's sponsors or guardian to ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality and safeguarding boundary in the interest of the client or learner, also complying with all relevant legislation and safeguarding practices.

Inappropriate interactions

Members are responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern all physical and virtual interactions with clients, learners or sponsors.

Members strictly avoid pursuing and refrain from engaging in any romantic or sexual relationships with current clients, learners or sponsors.

Conflicts of interest

Members do not exploit a client or learner, or seek to gain any inappropriate financial or non-financial advantage from the relationship, nor use the client or learner's personal, professional or other data, without their consent.

To avoid any conflict of interest, members actively separate a professional relationship with a client or learner from other forms of relationships.

Members remain vigilant about potential conflicts of interest of either a commercial or personal nature arising through the working relationship and address them quickly and effectively in order to ensure that there is no detriment to the client, learner or sponsor.

Members consider the impact of any client or learner relationships on other client or learner relationships and discuss any potential conflict of interest with those who might be affected.

Members disclose any conflict of interest openly and transparently with the client or learner, and if a conflict arises that cannot be managed effectively, agree to withdraw from the relationship.

Ending professional relationships and ongoing responsibilities

Members respect the client's or learner's right to end the engagement at any point in the process, subject to the provisions of the coaching, mentoring, or supervision service agreement.

Members encourage the client, learner or sponsor to terminate the coaching, mentoring, or supervision engagement if it is believed that the client, learner or sponsor would be better served by a different form of professional help.

Members have clear service continuity plans in place if they are unexpectedly unable to complete an engagement, and these will be shared so that clients or learners are prepared.

This could be through the member's own sudden incapacitation or that of a family member, their own deterioration mentally or physically or their unexpected death.

Members are required to have a provision for the transfer of current clients and learners and their records in the event of the planned termination of practice, for example, through retirement.

Members understand that their professional responsibilities continue beyond the end of the professional relationship. These include:

- Maintenance of confidentiality of all information in relation to clients, learners and sponsors with careful and ethical management of confidential, personal, or other data.
- Avoidance of any exploitation of the former relationship, which could damage the professionalism or integrity of the member or the professional community.
- Provision of any follow-up evaluation or action that has been agreed to.

Maintaining the reputation of the profession

Members behave in a way that always enhances the positive reputation of a professional service, for example, ensuring that the use of technology is aligned with professional or legal standards.

Members demonstrate respect for the innovative variety of practices used by members and other individuals in the profession and the diverse ethically informed approaches to coaching, mentoring, and supervision, including the use of data technologies and AI.

Acting responsibly

Members abide by their respective bodies' statements and policies on inclusion, diversity, social responsibility and climate change.

Members avoid knowingly discriminating on any grounds and will seek to enhance their own awareness of possible areas for discrimination and bias, including in the use of technology or inaccurate or fake data.

Members remain aware of the potential for unconscious bias and systemic injustice and seek to ensure that they take a respectful and inclusive approach, which embraces and explores individual differences.

Members challenge constructively and offer support to any colleagues, employees, service providers and clients who are perceived to be discriminatory or unwilling to take responsibility for their behaviour and actions.

Members monitor their spoken, written, and non-verbal communication for implicit bias or discrimination.

Members engage in professional development activities that contribute to increased self-awareness in relation to inclusion, diversity, technology, latest developments in societal or environmental needs.

Breaches of professional conduct

Members accept that any breach of the code that is upheld in a complaints procedure may result in sanctions, including loss of accredited status and/or body membership.

A member will challenge another member if they have reasonable cause to believe that the member is acting in an unethical manner and, failing resolution, report that person to the relevant professional body.

Legal and statutory obligations and duties

Members are obliged to stay up to date and comply with:

- All relevant statutory requirements in the countries in which their professional work takes place
- Safeguarding legislation when working with children or vulnerable adults
- The relevant organisational policies and procedures of the work context

Members hold appropriate professional indemnity insurance to cover their coaching, mentoring and supervising work for the countries in which they operate and where such indemnity insurance is available.

4. Excellent practice

Ability to perform

Members operate within the limit of their professional competence. Members should refer the client or learner to a more experienced or suitably qualified practicing member where appropriate.

Members will be fit and healthy enough to practice. If they are not, or are unsure if they are able to practice safely for health reasons, they will seek professional guidance or support.

On-going supervision

Members engage in supervision with a suitably qualified/experienced supervisor or peer supervision with a level of frequency that is appropriate to their coaching, mentoring or supervision practice, the requirements of their professional body and level of accreditation, and maintain evidence of engagement in reflective practice.

Members ensure that any other existing relationship within the supervision, professional or personal, does not interfere with the quality of the supervision space.

Members discuss any ethical dilemmas and potential, or actual, breaches of this Code, including any arising from the use of AI and technology, with their supervisor or peer supervision group for support and guidance.

Continuing professional development

Members develop their coaching, mentoring and supervision capabilities by participating in sustainable, creative and ethically attuned training and future-focused, continuing professional development (CPD) activities.

Members are expected to make a contribution to the professional community that is appropriate to their level of expertise. Forms this may take include informal peer support to fellow practising members, contributing to advancing the profession - research, writing, volunteering, etc.

Members systematically reflect on and evaluate the quality and relevance of their work and outcomes through feedback from clients, learners, sponsors and stakeholders, and other CPD activities, to improve their practice and insight.

5. Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors

All the signatories to the code are professional bodies.

The Global Code of Ethics is an overarching ethical framework for the signatories and does not cover complaint procedures or every potential ethical dilemma. Instead, it devolves responsibility for overall governance to each signatory to develop and apply specific policies and procedures that reflect the range of ethical nuances relating to diversity of practice and local or specific contexts.

Any such additions will not contradict the essence of the Code, nor carry an obligation for other co-signatories to adopt. These additions may be shared by signatories as part of ongoing collaborative exchanges between professional bodies.

Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics will not become involved in any complaint that relates to another signatory organisation. Any such complaint should be taken directly to that organisation.

For more details about each code signatory, including membership, accreditation, standards, governance, and complaints procedures, please visit the signatory's relevant websites.

The current signatories to the code can be found here: [Co-Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics](#)

To explore how to become a Signatory to the Global Code of Ethics, please contact: administrator@emccglobal.org