Code of professional standards and ethics

CHARTER

Scientific and technological investigation shall be undertaken by rigorous method and with integrity in order to expand the knowledge of our universe; investigative methods and practices and their application shall be open to scrutiny and criticism from any competent quarter; investigations and applications shall not impact to the detriment of the living and physical environment and shall be undertaken in accordance with an accepted code of professional standards and ethics.

TITLE

The Code may be cited as The Royal Society of New Zealand Code of Professional Standards and Ethics.

APPLICATION

This is a voluntary Code for all scientists and technologists in New Zealand. All members of The Royal Society of New Zealand subscribe to the Code and they will be asked to account to the Society should their conduct be considered to breach any provisions of the Code.

GENERAL PURPOSES AND PRINCIPLES

The quality of science and technology depends on the competence of scientists and technologists, their values and the environment in which they work. Scientific and technological investigation flourishes in an open society that values honesty, criticism and communication, and in work environments that support the ethos and recognise the benefits of science and technology and where adherence to the highest professional standards and ethics prevails.

INTEGRITY AND PROFESSIONALISM

1) Members shall behave with integrity and professionalism.

Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- conduct themselves in a manner that strives to enhance the reputation of their scientific or technological profession
- show respect, consideration and courtesy to clients and the public
- demonstrate integrity and professionalism and observe fairness and equity in research and the management of research
- demonstrate integrity and professionalism and observe fairness and equity in all aspects of the application of science and technology and in the transfer of technology
- strive not to compromise the welfare, health and safety of the community and the environment
- strive not to compromise the welfare, health and safety of people associated with scientific and technological endeavours
- avoid or declare real, or apparent, conflicts of interest.

HONESTY

2) Members shall be intellectually honest.

Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- not falsify results and fairly represent results as they honestly perceive them
- fairly record the intellectual, material and practical contributions of others to their work
- ensure joint authors of publications and reports share responsibility for their contents
retain all types of records for as long as is practical and, where not commercially or personally sensitive, make them available for others to access
not falsify results, qualifications or experience
not allow or commit plagiarism
be scrupulously honest in the application of science and technology and in the transfer of technology.

RELATIONSHIP WITH COLLEAGUES

3) Scientists and technologists shall support ethical behaviour, and professional conduct, of their New Zealand and overseas colleagues. Specifically, Members shall at all times strive to:

- review the work of colleagues without bias and treat all information so provided as privileged and confidential
- not falsely or maliciously attempt to impugn the reputation of colleagues
- support the career development of colleagues by providing honest comment on career prospects, the conduct of work, proposals, manuscripts and papers
- encourage the development of emerging scientists
- not seek to gain advantage for oneself or one's employer through review processes
- not compromise or denigrate colleagues in order to achieve commercial or personal goals
- treat fairly the assumptions, points of view and perspectives of colleagues of other cultures
- be aware of ethical, social, legal and environmental implications and consequences of science and technology

COMPETENCE AND STANDARDS

4) Scientists and technologists shall claim expertise only within their fields of competence, make optimum use of available resources, and follow acceptable work practices. Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- represent themselves only in their fields of competence as defined by formal qualifications and subsequent work experience
- ensure that there is appropriate disclosure of any limitations on their work due to insufficient resources
- adhere to the requirements specified in relevant New Zealand legislation and regulations, and any appropriate codes of work practice or ethical standards
- adhere to the codes and disciplinary standards of societies and organisations of which they are members or by which they are registered. Where there is any discrepancy or conflict in standards the higher standard shall prevail
- have regard to the requirements, work practices and ethical practices of the International Council of Scientific Unions or any other relevant international organisation

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COMMUNITY

5) Scientists and technologists shall endeavour to make the results of their work available as widely as possible. Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- endeavour to communicate the results of their work to the wider community where this is in the public interest
- endeavour to ensure all public statements are accurate and are supported by competent research
- ensure that all speculative and interpretative statements are identified as such.
- not condone the manipulation of results to meet the perceived needs, or requirements, of employers, funding agencies, the media or other interested parties
- accept that researchers working on different approaches to the same question may each reach different but valid conclusions within the context of their research
- not attempt to influence public policy decisions where there is contradictory or inconclusive scientific evidence without disclosure of the circumstances
support the publication and dissemination of all competent research, even when its conclusions appear contradictory or contrary to perceived concepts

RELATIONSHIP WITH FUNDERS OF RESEARCH

6) Scientific and technological knowledge should be freely and publicly available whenever possible. Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- endeavour to ensure that the purchasers of scientific and technological research accept that the research experience of scientists and technologists will eventually become part of their research competence
- ensure where possible the public dissemination of all scientific and technological research that is publicly funded
- encourage their employers to permit the public disclosure of their research results
- provide to funding agencies, within the appropriate time frames, accurate reports that are supported by competent research

RELATIONSHIP WITH CLIENTS

7) When scientists and technologists transfer technology to paying clients the interests of the clients are paramount. Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- Render service to clients with absolute fidelity
- conduct themselves at all times in a manner that upholds the reputation of the Society or Societies of which they are members or through which they are registered and upholds the dignity and standing of the profession
- adhere to the specific rules, regulations and codes of practice of the professional organisations to which they belong
- promote and maintain proper standards of professionalism in relation to other members
- take all reasonable steps to maintain a level of technical competence and to become familiar with recent advances in their area of expertise

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

8) Scientists and technologists shall consider the environmental implications of their work. Specifically, Members shall at all times:

- seek to observe the principles and practices of sustainable management and the needs of future, as well as present, generations the world over
- strive to identify impacts of their work on the environment, endeavour to assess and report on such impacts and seek to avoid or mitigate adverse environmental impacts
- strive to encourage within the wider community and internationally the avoidance or minimisation of adverse effects of science and technology on the environment
- pay due regard to international agreements and protocols on the environment and biodiversity
- foster environmental awareness within the science and technology profession and among the public.