

# **Professional Conduct Procedure**

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## **The Code of Conduct**

## About this document

The Institution's member conduct and disciplinary procedures are governed by its Royal Charter, By-laws and Regulations. As a supplement to these the Institution publishes a series of information documents, of which this is one. The relationship between these different types of document is shown below.

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<b>1</b>	<b>Royal Charter</b>	The Royal Charter is an instrument of incorporation granted by the UK monarch. It confers independent legal personality on the Institution and defines its objectives, constitution and powers to govern its own affairs including the power to make By-laws.
<b>2</b>	<b>By-laws</b>	The By-laws are approved by the Privy Council. They set out the rules that govern the actions of the Institution. They set out the general standards of conduct required of Institution members and require the Trustee Board to make Code of Conduct Regulations. They also define improper conduct, require the Trustee Board to make Disciplinary Regulations and set out members' liability to be penalised if found guilty of improper conduct.
<b>3</b>	<b>Regulations</b>	The Regulations set out the directives made by the Institution Trustees in defined subject areas, including the Code of Conduct Regulations and the Disciplinary Regulations.
<b>4</b>	<b>Information</b>	Information documents supplement the Regulations and are intended to help people who engage with the Disciplinary Procedures.

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All of the documents listed above are available on the Institution's website.

### The Code of Conduct

#### Introduction

1. All leading professional bodies, such as the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (the Institution), have a code of conduct (the Code) that their members are obliged to observe.
2. The Code sets the standard of behaviour required of members and acts as a guide for them in their practice as professionals. It also raises the level of public trust and confidence in the individual members and in the profession as a whole.
3. The Code is an expression of the standard of conduct expected of our members. It is not a hard and fast set of rules. Whether or not the conduct of an Institution member is consistent with the Code is a matter of judgement made by fellow members appointed for that purpose.
4. All institution members are obliged to conduct themselves in a way that is consistent with the Code, irrespective of their membership grade, the country in which they live or work and whether acting in a professional, personal or voluntary capacity. Our members express their commitment to this when they join the Institution; at the same time, they agree to accept subsequent changes to the Code made by the Institution Trustees from time to time.

#### The Code of Conduct

5. The Code comprises a series of requirements grouped under these four main headings:
  - a. Members are to act with care and competence.
  - b. Members are to act with integrity and in a reliable and trustworthy manner.
  - c. Members are to engage responsibly with the environment.
  - d. Members are to contribute positively to the culture and public perception of the profession and the Institution.
6. The Institution also publishes Code of Conduct Instructions (the Instructions) to provide clarity and more information on the interpretation of the Code of Conduct in greater detail to help those who are subject to or responsible for applying it. In particular, the Instructions expand on the conduct requirements set out in the Code.
7. The Code and the Instructions are available on the Institution's website.

- Illustrative not exhaustive**
8. The Code illustrates a standard of conduct; it is not exhaustive and, therefore, conduct that is not specifically covered within the Code may still be considered to be improper for an Institution member.
- The public interest**
9. Consistent with its responsibilities as a charity, the Institution prioritises the public interest over the rights of its individual members.
- Past conduct**
10. The Code sets the standard of conduct expected of Institution members at all times; this includes the time before they were elected as an Institution member. It may be appropriate therefore, to investigate a complaint made about a member's conduct before they joined the Institution.
- Changes**
11. The Trustee Board may, from time to time, amend the Code to reflect a range of evolving matters, such as communications technology, the ethical demands on engineers and societal and cultural norms.
- Authority**
12. The authority for the Code stems from the Institution Royal Charter and By-laws. By-law 30 sets out the core ethical obligations for all members of the Institution, as follows:
- "All members shall conduct their professional work and relationships with integrity and objectivity and with due regard for the welfare of the people, the organisations and the environment with which they interact."
13. The Code is founded on the principles contained within this By-law and on the Statement of Ethical Principles published by EC(UK) 2007 (replaced by a joint Royal Academy of Engineering and Engineering Council statement dated July 2017).