

**THE BRITISH COMPUTER SOCIETY**  
**TRUSTEE BOARD REGULATIONS - SCHEDULE 3**  
**CODE OF CONDUCT FOR BCS MEMBERS**

**Introduction**

This Code sets out the professional standards required by the Society as a condition of membership. It applies to members of all grades, including Students, and Affiliates, and also non-members who offer their expertise as part of the Society's Professional Advice Service.

Within this document, the term "relevant authority" is used to identify the person or organisation which has authority over your activity as an individual. If you are a practising professional, this is normally an employer or client. If you are a student, this is normally an academic institution.

The Code governs your personal conduct as an individual member of the BCS and not the nature of business or ethics of the relevant authority. It will, therefore, be a matter of your exercising your personal judgement in meeting the Code's requirements.

**Any breach of the Code of Conduct brought to the attention of the Society will be considered under the Society's Disciplinary procedures. You should also ensure that you notify the Society of any significant violation of this Code by another BCS member.**

**The Public Interest**

- 1 In your professional role you shall have regard for the public health, safety and environment.
  - This is a general responsibility, which may be governed by legislation, convention or protocol.
  - If in doubt over the appropriate course of action to take in particular circumstances, you should seek the counsel of a peer or colleague.
- 2 You shall have regard to the legitimate rights of third parties.
  - The term 'Third Party' includes professional colleagues, or possibly competitors, or members of 'the public' who might be affected by an IT System without their being directly aware of its existence.
- 3 You shall ensure that within your professional field/s you have knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, regulations and standards, and that you comply with such requirements.
  - As examples, relevant legislation could, in the UK, include the Public Interest Disclosure Act, Disability Discrimination Act, Data Protection or Privacy legislation, Computer Misuse law, legislation concerned with the export or import of technology, possibly for national security reasons, or law relating to intellectual property. This list is not exhaustive, and you should ensure that you are aware of any legislation relevant to your professional responsibilities.
  - In the international context, you should be aware of, and understand, the requirements of law specific to the jurisdiction within which you are working, and, where relevant, to supranational legislation such as EU law and regulation. You should seek specialist advice when necessary.

- 4 You shall conduct your professional activities without discrimination against clients or colleagues
- Grounds of discrimination include, but are not limited to race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability
  - All colleagues have a right to be treated with dignity and respect.
  - You should adhere to the relevant law within the jurisdiction where you are working and, if appropriate, the European Convention on Human Rights.
  - You are encouraged to promote equal access to the benefits of IT by all groups in society, and to avoid and reduce 'social exclusion' from IT wherever opportunities arise.
- 5 You shall reject and shall not make any offer of bribery or inducement.

### **Duty to Relevant Authority**

- 6 You shall carry out work or study with due care and diligence in accordance with the relevant authority's requirements, and the interests of system users. If your professional judgement is overruled, you shall indicate the likely risks and consequences.
- The crux of the issue here, familiar to all professionals in whatever field, is the potential conflict between full and committed compliance with the "relevant authority's wishes, and the independent and considered exercise of your judgement.
  - If your judgement is overruled, you are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from a peer or colleague on how best to respond.
- 7 You shall avoid any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest between you and your relevant authority. You shall make full and immediate disclosure to them if any conflict is likely to occur or be seen by a third party as likely to occur. You shall endeavour to complete work undertaken on time to budget and shall advise the relevant authority as soon as practicable if any overrun is foreseen.
- 8 You shall not disclose or authorise to be disclosed, or use for personal gain or to benefit a third party, confidential information except with the permission of your relevant authority, or at the direction of a court of law.
- 9 You shall not misrepresent or withhold information on the performance of products, systems or services, or take advantage of the lack of relevant knowledge or inexperience of others.

### **Duty to the Profession**

- 10 You shall uphold the reputation and good standing of the BCS in particular, and the profession in general, and shall seek to improve professional standards through participation in their development, use and enforcement.
- As a Member of the BCS you also have a wider responsibility to promote public understanding of IT – its benefits and pitfalls – and, whenever practical, to counter misinformation that brings or could bring the profession into disrepute.
  - You should encourage and support fellow members in their professional development and, where possible, provide opportunities for the professional development of new members, particularly student members. Enlightened mutual assistance between IT

professionals furthers the reputation of the profession, and assists individual members.

- 11 You shall act with integrity in your relationships with all members of the BCS and with members of other professions with whom you work in a professional capacity.
- 12 You shall have due regard for the possible consequences of your statements on others. You shall not make any public statement in your professional capacity unless you are properly qualified and, where appropriate, authorised to do so. You shall not purport to represent the BCS unless authorised to do so.
- The offering of an opinion in public, holding oneself out to be an expert in the subject in question, is a major personal responsibility and should not be undertaken lightly.
  - To give an opinion that subsequently proves ill founded is a disservice to the profession, and to the BCS.
- 13 You shall notify the Society if convicted of a criminal offence or upon becoming bankrupt or disqualified as Company Director
- This does not apply, in the UK, to convictions spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, to discharged bankruptcy, or to expired disqualification under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.
  - Not all convictions are seen as relevant to membership in the Society and each case will be considered individually .

### **Professional Competence and Integrity**

- 14 You shall seek to upgrade your professional knowledge and skill, and shall maintain awareness of technological developments, procedures and standards which are relevant to your field, and encourage your subordinates to do likewise.
- 15 You shall not claim any level of competence that you do not possess. You shall only offer to do work or provide a service that is within your professional competence.
- You can self-assess your professional competence for undertaking a particular job or role by asking, for example,
    - (i) *am I familiar with the technology involved, or have I worked with similar technology before?*
    - (ii) *have I successfully completed similar assignments or roles in the past?*
    - (iii) *can I demonstrate adequate knowledge of the specific business application and requirements successfully to undertake the work?*
- 16 In addition to this Code of Conduct, you shall observe whatever clauses you regard as relevant from the BCS Code of Good Practice and any other relevant standards, and you shall encourage your colleagues to do likewise.
- 17 You shall accept professional responsibility for your work and for the work of colleagues who are defined in a given context as working under your supervision.