

THE ETHOS OF THE SEC

The Society aims to advance the profession of education consultancy by establishing high standards of performance and conduct for its members and by promoting the knowledge and skills required.

For the Society's purposes, an education consultant is someone who provides an educational consultancy service in schools, colleges, professional bodies, local education authorities, government departments or other public and private bodies, organisations or individuals concerned with education. A member of the Society must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of any client that (s)he can fulfill the requirements of the Society's Code of Practice.

SEC Principles

Each member of the Society shall, in pursuing the profession of education consultant:

- give balanced advice;
- maintain high standards of personal conduct;
- exercise independence of thought and action;
- seek to advance the professional standards of education consultancy;
- take steps to enhance the quality of her/his work.

SEC Practice

When seeking or accepting professional engagements a member shall:

- seek or accept only those engagements for which (s)he has suitable knowledge and experience;
- ensure that her/his resources are sufficient to carry out the assignment;
- define clearly, and confirm in writing, the terms and conditions of the assignment or service, including the scope, nature and period of the service to be provided, the allocation of responsibilities, and the basis for remuneration;
- negotiate agreements and charges for professional services in an ethical and proper way.

When undertaking a professional engagement, a member shall safeguard the position of her/his client by:

- regarding the client's requirements and interests as paramount, subject to any overriding legal constraint or ethical consideration;
- sub-contracting work only with the prior agreement of the client;

- holding as strictly confidential all information concerning the affairs of a client unless the client has released the information for public use or has given specific permission for its disclosure;
- ensuring that, as appropriate, all products programmes and advice have been discussed with the client in good time before they are finalised;
- exercising good management through careful planning, regular progress reviews, and effective controls;
- taking responsibility for the quality of any work undertaken by her/himself or any sub-contractors;
- where (s)he recommends further consultancy, declaring any personal interest that may exist in such further work;
- discussing and agreeing with the client any significant changes in the objectives, scope, approach or anticipated benefits of the assignment which might arise during the course of carrying it out.

During the course of an assignment a member of the Society shall maintain her/his own professional independence by:

- avoiding any action which might be seen to compromise her/his integrity;
- ensuring that advice and recommendations are based on impartial consideration of all pertinent facts, circumstances and opinions developed from reliable and relevant sources;
- declaring at the first possible opportunity any personal, financial or business relationship or interest which might be thought to influence her/his judgement of objectivity, and withdrawing from any assignment when her/his judgement of objectivity is or might be compromised;
- having a proper regard for the professional/legal obligations of those with whom (s)he is working;
- initiating or accepting a joint assignment with another consultant only if (s)he is satisfied that the assignment will be carried out in accordance with the principles and standards of this Code;
- giving only information which is factual and relevant to the profession of educational consultancy when publicising her/his work or services;
- acknowledging the source of any published or other research material used in her/his work.

During the course of an assignment a member shall guard against circumstances which might compromise her/his personal integrity and in particular:

- shall not accept inducements to show favour;
- shall only recommend the need for additional consultancy if, following discussion of the options, the client considers that there are no effective alternative strategies to meet her/his needs;
- shall not use knowingly and without permission, copyright material or proprietary data or material, to which (s)he is not entitled.

Quality

Each member of the Society undertakes to take steps to maintain and enhance the quality of her/his work by ensuring that (s)he personally has:

- the necessary professional experience for any assignment undertaken;
- appropriate professional knowledge and the ability to make sound and independent judgements based on that knowledge;
- appropriate strategies for ensuring her/his professional development and for keeping well informed of current issues in education;
- the specific skills needed for any assignment undertaken, which might include those required in:
 - providing initial advice to clients;
 - estimating the scale of a proposed assignment;
 - planning and managing a project;
 - interviewing and other forms of data collection and analysis;
 - initial presentation of findings to clients;
 - designing and delivering training programmes;
 - counselling;
 - oral communication;
 - report writing and other forms of written communication;
 - a soundly organised and well-managed business, appropriate in size and structure to the assignments it undertakes.

Use of the Code

Each member shall:

- inform a client of her/his membership of the Society and of the existence of this Code of Practice at the start of any engagement where the member is either the principal consultant in whose name the engagement has been made or the lead consultant or relevant partner in the consultancy with whom the client has entered into a contract, and supply a copy of the Code on request;
- respond to any complaint from a client concerning compliance with this Code and co-operate with the Society's officers in the investigation of any complaint made to the Society.