



# **CHARTERED ECOLOGIST CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) is the professional body for ecologists and environmental managers.

CIEEM's Competency Framework<sup>1</sup> sets the standards for admission to the Register of Chartered Ecologists and for Registrants' continuing competence. The Continuing Professional Development (CPD) obligation sets the standards for the development and maintenance of knowledge and skills required for registration as a Chartered Ecologist.

The Code of Professional Conduct describes the Registration Authority's expectations of Registrants in all aspects of their professional lives. Chartered Ecologists are bound, through their continuing registration, to adhere to this Code and to accept disciplinary decisions made in relation to any alleged breach of the Code, in accordance with CIEEM's published professional conduct inquiry procedures<sup>2</sup>.

### **CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

As a Chartered Ecologist I shall:

- 1) Uphold the reputation of the profession.
- 2) Maintain my professional knowledge and skills, including undertaking and recording such continuing professional development as CIEEM shall require and providing evidence thereof when requested to do so.
- 3) Only undertake work that I have the competence to do to the expected standard and seek appropriate advice, training and assistance if I am involved in topics beyond my competence.
- 4) Exercise sound professional judgement in my work, identifying clearly the limitations and applying objectivity, relevance, accuracy, proportionality and impartiality to information and professional advice I provide, including having regard to the relevant published technical guidance and standards and complying with all laws.
- 5) Act at all times with professional integrity, avoiding or managing any conflicts of interest and avoiding actions that are inconsistent with my professional obligations and the standards expected of a Chartered Ecologist.
- 6) Ensure those working for me are appropriately qualified, trained, competent, supervised and supported.
- 7) Cooperate fully with, and provide full assistance to, CIEEM in any Professional Conduct Inquiry Process undertaken in accordance with the Professional Conduct Inquiry Procedures.
- 8) Not interfere with, frustrate or otherwise seek to compromise, whether through any act or omission, the due process of any Professional Conduct Inquiry Process undertaken in accordance with the Professional Conduct Inquiry Procedures.
- 9) Demonstrate a commitment to avoiding discriminatory practices in my professional activities.
- 10) Accept responsibility for my actions and decisions.
- 11) Comply with the Code of Conduct of my own professional body.

<sup>1</sup> See <https://cieem.net/i-am/continuing-professional-development/competency-framework/>

<sup>2</sup> See <https://cieem.net/resource/professional-conduct-inquiry-procedures/>

## Supplementary Notes

These Supplementary Notes are provided to aid interpretation of the Code of Professional Conduct and set out a non-exhaustive list of factors which will be taken into account when considering a complaint in relation to an alleged breach of the Code.

A reference in the Supplementary Notes to any other document or policy is a reference to it as it is in force for the time being. If there is any inconsistency between any of the provisions of the Code of Professional Conduct and any other document to which it refers, the provisions of the Code shall prevail.

- 1) Chartered Ecologists, through their professional conduct, have a responsibility to ensure that they do not bring the ecological and environmental management profession into disrepute. This covers all of their activities (whether actions or omissions) and behaviours as a professional ecologist wherever they may work. This would not normally cover their private life, including if convicted of a criminal offence, unless that offence is relevant to their professional work or brings the Register into disrepute.
- 2) Undertaking continuing professional development (CPD) is an obligation of registration as a Chartered Ecologist. Registrants are required to record their CPD in the format prescribed by CIEEM and provide evidence of having done so in accordance with the CPD obligation of registration.
- 3) Competence is defined as:
  - You know what to do.
  - You know why you do it.
  - You know when to do it.
  - You know how to do it.
  - You can do it consistently well, and
  - You know your limits and when to seek assistance.

The competence expectations for Chartered Ecologists are set out in CIEEM's Competency Framework. Registrants are expected to use the Framework in order to assess their own competence and areas for development.

- 4) Professional judgement is the process of applying knowledge and experience when making decisions or providing advice. It is an important skill of any professional person, but such judgement can be open to challenge. A Registrant must be able to explain how they have applied their judgement and the justification for doing so. Examples of where professional judgement might need to be applied, and justified, include applying proportionality in response to a particular set of circumstances or context.

It is important to understand that non-adherence by a Registrant to published technical guidance is not necessarily a breach of the Code. Registrants are expected to demonstrate awareness of all relevant industry-accepted published technical guidance. However, they may, through applying their professional judgement, deviate from such guidance provided that they can show justifiable grounds for having done so.

Chartered Ecologists are expected to comply fully with all laws in conducting their professional activities (e.g. those laws pertaining to the protection and management of the environment). Non-compliance with laws is likely to be regarded as a breach of the Code unless exceptional circumstances apply.

- 5) Acting with professional integrity includes acting honestly, honourably and in accordance with ethical principles such as fairness, impartiality, confidentiality, respecting others and avoiding or managing conflicts of interest.

Professional obligations include, but are not restricted to:

- the requirement to comply with the Chartered Ecologist registration obligations as set out in the CIEEM Byelaws<sup>3</sup>;
  - the requirement to comply with professional standards (but note the reference to professional judgement in the application of published technical guidance and standards as set out in note (4));
  - the requirement to undertake work with due skill, care and diligence, including reporting fully with regard to any findings and recommendations;
  - the requirement to act in the public interest subject to any legal constraints (e.g. by taking all reasonable measures, subject to any legal constraints, to (i) prevent the commission of wildlife crime by others; and (ii) support the enforcement agencies in their roles to investigate, prosecute and/or secure remediation of the effects of wildlife crime, in either case whether through reporting wildlife crime / suspected wildlife crime or otherwise);
  - the requirement to share, wherever possible, data and other relevant information and to otherwise work to protect and enhance the natural environment;
  - the requirement to demonstrate a duty of care to others when carrying out professional activities, for instance by complying with relevant health and safety standards;
  - the requirement to conduct business relationships appropriately, including using (where relevant) clear Terms and Conditions for commissioned work and having in place appropriate levels of professional indemnity and public liability insurance (or ensuring that your employer does so) and avoiding any discriminatory practices; and
  - the requirement to use best endeavours to resolve differences of professional opinion in a constructive way.
- 6) Registrants, as employers, managers or supervisors, have a responsibility to encourage and support those working for them to maintain and enhance their professional competence. As a minimum Registrants must take all reasonable measures to ensure that those working for them or supervised by them are competent for the tasks that they are undertaking and undertake those tasks safely and to the standard required.
- 7) Registrants (whether the subject of a complaint or not) are expected to cooperate fully with and assist CIEEM in relation any Professional Conduct Inquiry Process undertaken under in accordance with the Professional Conduct Inquiry Procedures. For example:
- a. Registrants must not seek to dissuade or discourage a person from bringing any complaint or from pursuing any complaint that relates to the Registrant's own, or any other Registrant's, professional competence; and must not in any way penalise or threaten to penalise a person who has made such a complaint or who is pursuing such a complaint; and
  - b. A Registrant shall not resign before or during the course of a Professional Conduct Inquiry Process in order to frustrate it and, if such a Registrant does resign, then CIEEM will deem their registration to continue for the purposes of completing the investigation.

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<sup>3</sup> See <https://cieem.net/resource/royal-charter/>

- c. All Registrants involved in any Professional Conduct Inquiry Process must consider and respect the confidentiality of the process and are expected to restrict discussions about the complaint to those parties involved (including any witnesses), except where such disclosure is required by law or, where necessary or appropriate, to the party's immediate family or legal or professional advisors, provided that they agree to keep the information confidential.
- 8) Registrants are required, at all times, to demonstrate adherence with relevant legislation in respect of avoiding discrimination. Registrants are encouraged to promote equality of opportunities in their professional activities.
- 9) Registrants are expected to take responsibility for their actions and behaviour. Registrants can demonstrate doing so through the subsequent actions that they take to acknowledge any mistakes and to put things right.
- 10) Registrants are expected at all times to comply with the Code of Conduct set by their own professional body in addition to the Code of Professional Conduct for Chartered Ecologists. If a Registrant feels that there is a conflict between their professional body's Code and this code for Chartered Ecologists, they should draw it to CIEEM's attention at the earliest opportunity

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE**

Complaints of alleged breaches of the Code may be made by any individual or organisation and may also be made by CIEEM.

The process for investigating an alleged breach of the Code of Professional Conduct is set out in the Professional Conduct Inquiry Procedures.

CIEEM will not normally refer Registrants to disciplinary hearings for alleged minor transgressions of this Code unless it forms part of a pattern of alleged unacceptable professional conduct. The decision as to whether or not an alleged transgression warrants referral to a hearing will be made during the preliminary investigation phase of the Professional Conduct Inquiries Procedure.

When a Registrant is found to be in breach of the Code of Professional Conduct this fact will be published, after time for an appeal has passed, in accordance with CIEEM's Professional Conduct Inquiries Publications Policy<sup>4</sup>. Their own professional body will also be notified and may wish to take further action.

**ENDS**

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<sup>4</sup> See <https://cieem.net/professional-conduct-inquiries-publications-policy>