

Soil Science Australia CPSS Rules of Conduct

The Rules of Conduct are an interpretation and expansion of the Code of Ethics of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc. These Rules are mandatory for all Certified Professional Soil Scientist members.

Rule 1: Professional and Personal Conduct

- 1.1 Members shall conduct their professional duties and activities in a manner that reflects credit upon themselves and their profession. High standards of competence, honesty, loyalty, integrity and fairness shall be observed at all times.
- 1.2 Members are bound by and agree to abide by all fundamental Rules, which include the Code of Ethics, Rules of Conduct, Constitution, By-Laws, Practice Standards and compliance with Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) as adopted by the Society.
- 1.3 Members shall not accept an assignment or undertake work that is contingent upon or influenced by any condition or requirement for a predetermined result where the exercise of objective judgment is required. Members shall maintain the strictest independence and impartiality in undertaking their professional duties. To this end, no Member shall:
 - (a) adopt the role of advocate in a case where their duty is to exercise independence and impartiality;
 - (b) allow the performance of their professional duties to be improperly influenced by the needs or preferences of a client or other party;
 - (c) rely upon critical information supplied by a client without appropriate verification or confirmation from other sources, unless that information is clearly identified in any report arising from that assignment; or
 - (d) act in any other way inconsistent with the duties of independence and impartiality.
- 1.4 Members shall not provide any advice or make any statement without reasonable foundation unless it is appropriately qualified or limited.
- 1.5 Members shall not claim or present professional qualifications which may be subject to erroneous interpretations or which they do not possess.
- 1.6 Members shall not accept instructions or undertake work beyond their competence; however, assignments may be undertaken in conjunction with a person having the required competence after disclosure to the client.
- 1.7 Members shall not reproduce any work or reference prepared and presented by any other Member, person, body or authority which creates the impression that it is their own.
- 1.8 Members shall be fair and honest in any public criticism of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc or fellow Members.
- 1.9 Members shall include in reports references to any relevant assumptions, conditions, requirements and limitations arising from their instructions or inquiries, or imposed from any other source.
- 1.10 Members shall retain scientific notes where appropriate to substantiate publication of research results. With respect to other reports or publications, Members shall retain for as long as legally required, adequate file notes which substantiate their opinions reached by way of inquiry, objective comparison, deduction and calculation.
- 1.11 Where information critical to work being undertaken is derived from external sources, it must be clearly identified in any related report or advice prepared by a Member and appropriately acknowledged.
- 1.12 Members shall accept full responsibility for conclusions presented in their reports. Where the report relies on professional opinion from outside experts, the degree of reliance must be indicated.
- 1.13 Co-signatories to reports shall indicate the extent of their involvement or the capacity in which they are signing.
- 1.14 Members will fully cooperate with any request for information or directive from the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc where a complaint has been lodged or where there is deemed to be a *prima facie* breach of the Rules of Conduct.
- 1.15 Members shall not maliciously or carelessly do anything to injure, directly or indirectly, the reputation, prospects or business of other Members.
- 1.16 Fees may be negotiated with a client on any agreed basis that does not infringe on any statute, rule of conduct or regulation.
- 1.17 No Member shall pay by commission, allowance or other benefit any person who may introduce clients to them without appropriate disclosure.
- 1.18 Members shall not accept payment or favours from another party, which may affect their relationship with a client.
- 1.19 Instructions or work contracts accepted by Members should preferably be in writing and/or be confirmed in writing by the Member in sufficient detail to avoid any misinterpretation. Any variations or extensions of the original instructions should similarly be confirmed in writing.
- 1.20 A Member who is convicted of an offence involving dishonesty is in breach of these Rules of Conduct and may face disciplinary action and possible termination and suspension of society membership and accreditation.

Rule 2: Conflict of Interest

Members shall not accept or carry out any work where there may be, or may reasonably be construed to be a conflict of interest. Members shall withdraw from any work if a conflict of interest arises or becomes known after the work has been accepted. An exception to this rule is where the conflict of interest is disclosed to and accepted by the party or parties.

- 2.1 Where a conflict of interest arises or could arise a Member shall promptly disclose the relevant facts to the client and where appropriate:
 - (a) advise the client to obtain independent professional advice;
 - (b) inform the client that neither the Member nor the Member's firm or organisation can act or continue to act for the client unless the appointment or instruction is confirmed in writing acknowledging the actual or potential conflict of interest; and
 - (c) disclose the matter in any relevant document or report.
- 2.2 Where a conflict arises or could arise between the interests of different clients of a Member or a firm or organisation of which a Member is a partner, director or employee, a Member shall promptly disclose the relevant facts to the instructing client and where appropriate:
 - (a) advise the client to obtain independent professional advice;
 - (b) inform the client that neither the Member nor the firm can act or continue to act for the client unless the appointment or instruction is confirmed in writing acknowledging the actual or potential conflict of interest; and
 - (c) disclose the matter in any relevant document or report.

Rule 3: Client Relationships

- 3.1 Members shall not disclose to any other person or party any confidential information provided directly or indirectly by a client or to a client without the permission of the client except where there is a legal requirement for disclosure or the information is of public or common knowledge.
- 3.2 Members shall conduct themselves in a manner and demeanour, which is neither detrimental to their profession nor likely to lessen the confidence of clients or the public in the ASSSI or the profession.
- 3.3 Members shall act promptly and efficiently in carrying out work for which they have been engaged. Members shall, in the case of unavoidable delay, communicate to the client the progress being made in respect of the instructions issued to the Member.
- 3.4 Consistent with the duty of a Member to preserve the confidentiality of a client's affairs, a Member shall not accept a retainer to act for another person in any action or proceedings against, or in conflict with, the interests of the client.

Rule 4: Advertising

- 4.1 Any advertisement by a Member must not reflect adversely on the professional integrity of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc or its Members.
- 4.2 Members shall not include exaggerated or false claims in any advertisement.

Rule 5: Reference to the ASSSI

No Member or Members shall:

- (a) purport to represent the views of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc unless expressly authorised to do so;
- (b) publicise the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc or its Members using terminology which has not either already appeared in an advertisement published by the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc or received the approval of the Australian Society of Soil Science Inc.

Rule 6: Inducements for the Introduction of Clients

- 6.1 No Member shall invite instructions for work except in accordance with these Rules.
- 6.2 No Member shall directly or indirectly exert undue pressure or influence on any persons, whether by the offer or provision of any payment, gift or favour or otherwise, for the purpose of securing instructions for work, or accept instructions from any person where there is reason to believe that undue pressure or influence may have been exerted by a third party in expectation of receiving a reward for the introduction.

Rule 7: Departure Provisions

Where a Member considers circumstances that warrant departure from or noncompliance with any rule herein, the Member may submit a report that includes a statement outlining the reasons for the departure or non-compliance and any impact on the content of the report.