

# PMI Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct





Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data has been applied for.

Book title

ISBN: 978-1-62825-XXX-X

**Published by:**

Project Management Institute, Inc.  
18 Campus Blvd., Ste. 150  
Newtown Square, Pennsylvania 19073-3299 USA  
Phone: +1 610 356 4600  
PMI.org  
Online Support: [www.pmi.org/about/contact](http://www.pmi.org/about/contact)

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



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## Glossary



# Vision and Applicability

The PMI Code of Ethics reminds us: every choice matters. Together, our conduct elevates the profession worldwide.

## 1.1 Vision and Purpose

As practitioners of project management, we are committed to doing what is right and honorable.

We set high standards for ourselves and we aspire to meet these standards in all aspects of our lives—at work, at home, and in service to our profession.

This Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct describes the expectations we have of ourselves and our fellow practitioners in the global project management community. It articulates the ideals to which we aspire as well as the behaviors that are mandatory in our professional and volunteer roles.

The purpose of this Code is to instill confidence in the project management profession and to help an individual become a better practitioner.

We do this by establishing a profession-wide understanding of appropriate behavior. We believe the credibility and reputation of the project management profession are shaped by the collective conduct of individual practitioners.

We believe we can advance our profession, both individually and collectively, by embracing this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. We also believe this Code will assist us in making wise decisions, particularly when faced with difficult situations where we may be asked to compromise our integrity or our values.

Our aim is that this Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct will serve as a catalyst for others to study, deliberate, and write about ethics and values. Further, we hope this Code will ultimately be used to build upon and evolve our profession.



## 1.2 Persons to Whom the Code Applies

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct applies to individuals who meet one or more of the following criteria:

- 1.2.1 PMI members
- 1.2.2 PMI certification holders
- 1.2.3 Applicants commencing a PMI certification process
- 1.2.4 PMI volunteers



## 1.3 Structure of the Code

The Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is divided into sections that contain standards of conduct, which are aligned with the four values that were identified as most important to the project management community.

Some sections of this Code include comments, examples, and links to tools. These additions are not mandatory parts of the Code but provide examples and other clarification.

Finally, a glossary can be found at the end of the Code. The glossary defines words and phrases used in the Code.

For convenience, those terms defined in the glossary are hyperlinked in the text of the Code.





## 1.4 Ethical Values That Support This Code

Practitioners from the global project management community were asked to identify the ethical values that formed the basis of their decision-making and guided their actions.

The ethical values the global project management community defined as most important were responsibility, respect, fairness, and honesty. This Code affirms these four values as its foundation.

Comment: Ethical values are essential, they form the foundation upon which ethical standards are built. Ethical values are the core beliefs or principles that individuals or groups hold as important, guiding their behavior and decision-making.

In contrast, ethical standards are the specific rules or guidelines that emerge from these values to govern conduct in particular contexts. The ethical values that underpin this Code may differ from those that inform other areas, such as team building, strategic planning, or corporate culture.

## 1.5 Aspirational and Mandatory Conduct

Each section of the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct includes both aspirational standards and mandatory standards.

The aspirational standards describe the conduct we strive to uphold as practitioners.

Although adherence to the aspirational standards is not easily measured, conducting ourselves in accordance with these is a shared expectation we have of ourselves as professionals.

The mandatory standards establish firm requirements and, in some cases, limit or prohibit practitioner behavior. Practitioners who do not conduct themselves in accordance with these standards will be subject to disciplinary procedures before PMI's Ethics Review Committee.

Comment: The conduct covered under the aspirational standards and conduct covered under the mandatory standards are not mutually exclusive; that is, one specific act or omission could violate both aspirational and mandatory standards.





# Chapter 2

# Responsibility



## 2.1 Description of Responsibility

Responsibility is our duty to take ownership for the decisions we make or fail to make, the actions we take or fail to take, and the resulting consequences.

## 2.2 Responsibility: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community:

2.2.1 We make decisions and take actions based on the best interests of society, public health and safety, and the environment.

—◆— Comment: We recognize the importance of stewardship and sustainability in project management. As practitioners, we are committed to promoting the responsible and ethical management of resources and the environment throughout the project life cycle. We believe in preserving and enhancing the long-term well-being of our communities and the planet.

2.2.2 We are responsible for our leadership, management, and deployment of technology including, but not limited to, artificial intelligence (“AI”) and other emerging technologies.

—◆— Comment: AI refers to the science and technology that simulates human intelligence or human functions through machines.

AI allows a machine, especially a computer, to perform a task that would generally require human thinking, functioning, or perception. Some examples include speech, writing, translation, visual perception, emotional perception, problem-solving, decision-making, learning from experience, adapting to a new situation, and creating new data such as images, music, text, or code.



2.2.3 We accept only those assignments that are consistent with our background, experience, skills, and qualifications.

—◆—  
*Comment: When we are considering a developmental or stretch assignment, we ensure key stakeholders receive timely and complete information regarding the gaps in our qualifications so they may make informed decisions regarding our suitability for a particular assignment. In the case of a contracting arrangement, we only bid on work our organization is qualified to perform and we assign only qualified individuals to perform the work.*



2.2.4 —◆—  
**We fulfill the commitments we undertake—we do what we say we will do.**

2.2.5 When we make or discover errors or omissions, by ourselves or others, we take prompt corrective action. We accept responsibility for any issues resulting from our errors or omissions and any resulting consequences.

—◆—  
*Comment: When we discover errors or omissions, we communicate them to the appropriate authority as soon as they are discovered and we take corrective action.*

2.2.6 We protect proprietary or confidential information that has been entrusted to us.

—◆—  
*Comment: To follow this standard, we must understand what information is proprietary or confidential. Proprietary information may include reserved information, formulas, processes, methods, designs, plans, contracts, or lists.*

2.2.7 —◆—  
**We uphold this Code and hold one another accountable to it.**



## 2.3 Responsibility: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners.

### Regulations and Legal Requirements

We inform ourselves of, and uphold, the policies, rules, regulations, and laws that govern our work, professional, and volunteer activities.

- 2.3.2 We report unethical or illegal conduct to appropriate management and, if necessary, to those affected by the conduct.



Comment: These provisions have several implications. Specifically, we do not engage in any illegal behavior, including but not limited to theft, fraud, corruption, embezzlement, or bribery. Further, we neither take nor abuse the property of others, including intellectual property, nor do we engage in slander or libel. In focus groups conducted with practitioners around the globe, these types of illegal behaviors were mentioned as being problematic. In addition, we do not engage in conduct that may be legal, but which violates obligations we have agreed to be bound by such as policies or rules.

As practitioners and representatives of our profession, we do not condone or assist others in engaging in illegal behavior. We report any illegal or unethical conduct. Reporting may not be easy and we recognize it may have negative consequences. Many organizations have adopted policies to protect employees who reveal the truth about illegal or unethical activities. Some governments have also adopted legislation to protect employees who come forward with the truth.

### Ethics Complaints

- 2.3.3 We bring violations of this Code to the attention of the appropriate authority for resolution.
- 2.3.4 We file ethics complaints only when they are substantiated by facts.
- 2.3.5 We do not retaliate against persons for raising good faith ethical concerns. Such retaliatory conduct is subject to disciplinary action.



Comment: These provisions have several implications. We cooperate with PMI concerning ethics violations and the collection of related information whether we are a complainant or a respondent. We also abstain from accusing others of ethical misconduct when we do not have all the facts. Further, we pursue disciplinary action against individuals who knowingly make false allegations against others.





# Chapter 3

# Respect

## 3.1 Description of Respect

Respect is our duty to show a high regard for ourselves, others, and the resources entrusted to us. Resources entrusted to us may include people, money, reputation, the safety of others, and natural or environmental resources.

Condoning disrespectful actions is a violation of the Code. An environment of respect fosters trust, confidence, and performance excellence by encouraging mutual cooperation.



## 3.2 Respect: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community:

- 3.2.1 We strive to be inclusive leaders, be aware of our biases, and actively seek to build a diverse team.
- 3.2.2 We educate ourselves about the norms and customs of others and avoid engaging in behaviors they might consider disrespectful.
- 3.2.3 We actively listen to other's points of view, seeking to understand them.



Comment: This means that we should adopt the discipline of critical thinking to become aware of our biases and work to minimize their impact. We also must be mindful of the Standards for Fairness, as outlined in Chapter 4.

PMI has adopted a statement of beliefs regarding PMI's commitment to Culture and Diversity used to strengthen the PMI workforce and lead the organization, shown here.

- 3.2.4 We encourage and value diverse perspectives.

- 3.2.5 We foster an environment where each person feels valued intrinsically, feels valued in sharing their contributions, and has the specific support they need to contribute and grow.



Comment: We strive to create an equitable environment where people feel they belong and are able to contribute fully toward a shared goal.



3.2.6 We avoid engaging in gossip, spreading false or unconfirmed information, and/or making remarks to undermine another person's reputation.

—◆— *Comment: We also have a duty under this Code to confront others who engage in these types of behaviors.*

3.2.7 When we have a conflict or disagreement, we assess the situation and select the best course of action to resolve the conflict or disagreement. Ideally, we directly approach those persons with whom we have a conflict or disagreement.



3.2.8

**We conduct ourselves in a professional manner, even when it is not reciprocated.**

## 3.3 Respect: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

3.3.1 We negotiate in good faith.

—◆— *Comment: Good faith means that those who make an agreement work with each other honestly, openly, fairly and with sincere motives so the other party is able to receive the agreed upon benefits.*

3.3.2 We do not exercise the power of our expertise or position to influence the decisions or actions of others in order to benefit personally at their expense.

3.3.3 **We do not act in an abusive manner toward others.**

3.3.4 We respect the property rights of others.

—◆— *Comment: Property rights are the legal ownership rights of any type of resource and the rights in how that property can be used. Property can include, but is not limited to, physical items such as a building, documents, or equipment, as well as intangible items such as data or other intellectual property.*



# Chapter 4

# Fairness



## 4.1 Description of Fairness

Fairness is our duty to make decisions and act impartially and objectively. Our conduct must be free from competing self-interest, prejudice, and favoritism. Condoning unfair actions is a violation of the Code.

## 4.2 Fairness: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community:

4.2.1 We demonstrate transparency in our decision-making process.

4.2.2 We constantly reexamine our impartiality and objectivity, taking corrective action as appropriate.

4.2.3 We provide equal access to information to those who are authorized to have that information.

Comment: Research with practitioners indicated that the subject of conflicts of interest is one of the most frequently faced in our profession. One of the biggest problems practitioners report is not recognizing when we have conflicted

4.2.4

**We make opportunities equally available to qualified candidates.**

Comment: One implication of these provisions is, in the case of a contracting arrangement, we provide equal access to information during the bidding process. Another implication of these provisions is in the hiring process—we give equal consideration to all qualified candidates and do not show a preference for, or discourage someone from, applying due to non-job-related factors.



## 4.3 Fairness: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

### Conflict-of-Interest Situations

4.3.1 We proactively and fully disclose any real or potential conflicts of interest to the appropriate stakeholders.

4.3.2 When we realize we have a real or potential conflict of interest, we refrain from engaging in the decision-making process or otherwise attempting to influence outcomes, unless or until we have made full disclosure to the appropriate stakeholders; we have an approved mitigation plan; and we have obtained the consent of the stakeholders to proceed.

— ◆ — Comment: A conflict of interest occurs when we are in a position to influence decisions or other outcomes on behalf of one party when such decisions or outcomes could affect one or more other parties with which we have competing loyalties.

For example, when we are acting as an employee, we have a duty of loyalty to our employer. When we are acting as a PMI volunteer, we have a duty of loyalty to the Project Management Institute.

We must recognize these divergent interests and refrain from influencing decisions when we have a conflict of interest.

Further, even if we believe that we can set aside our divided loyalties and make decisions impartially, we treat the appearance of a conflict of interest as a conflict of interest and follow the provisions described in the Code.



### Favoritism and Discrimination

4.3.3 We do not hire or fire, reward or punish, or award or deny contracting arrangements based on personal considerations, including but not limited to, favoritism, nepotism, or bribery.

4.3.4 We treat all individuals fairly and consistently, irrespective of, and not limited to, gender, race, age, religion, physical ability, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, identity, or social status.

4.3.5 We apply the rules of the organization (employer, Project Management Institute, or other group) without favoritism or prejudice.

# Chapter 5

## Honesty

### 5.1 Description of Honesty

Honesty is our duty to understand the truth and act in a truthful manner both in our communications and in our conduct. Condoning dishonest actions is a violation of the Code.



### Honesty: Aspirational Standards

As practitioners in the global project management

- 5.2.1 We earnestly seek to understand the truth.
- 5.2.2 We are truthful in our communications and in our conduct.
- 5.2.3 We provide accurate information in a timely manner.
- 5.2.4 We make commitments and promises, implied or explicit, in good faith.
- 5.2.5 We strive to create an environment in which others feel safe to tell the truth.



Comment: An implication of these provisions is that we take appropriate steps to ensure the information we are basing our decisions upon or providing to others is accurate, reliable, and timely. This includes having the courage to share bad news even when it may be poorly received.

Also, when outcomes are negative, we avoid burying information or shifting blame to others.

When outcomes are positive, we avoid taking credit for the achievements of others. These provisions reinforce our commitment to be both honest and responsible.

5.2.5

**We strive to create an environment in which others feel safe to tell the truth.**



# 5.3 Honesty: Mandatory Standards

As practitioners in the global project management community, we require the following of ourselves and our fellow practitioners:

- 4.2.2

We do not engage in behavior that is designed to deceive others, including but not limited to, making misleading or false statements, stating half-truths, providing information out of context, or withholding information that, if known, would render our statements as misleading or incomplete.
- 4.2.2

We do not engage in dishonest behavior with the intention of personal gain or at the expense of another.
- ◆—

Comment: Half-truths and non-disclosures intended to mislead stakeholders are as unprofessional as affirmatively making misrepresentations. We develop credibility by providing complete and accurate information.

# Glossary



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## **Abusive Manner:**

Conduct that results in physical harm or reasonably would be expected to create feelings of fear, humiliation, manipulation, or exploitation in another person.

## **Conflict of Interest:**

A situation that arises when a practitioner of project management is faced with making a decision or performing an action that will benefit the practitioner or another person or organization to which the practitioner owes a duty of loyalty and at the same time will harm another person or organization to which the practitioner owes a similar duty of loyalty. The only way practitioners can resolve conflicting duties is to disclose the conflict to those affected and allow them to make the decision about how the practitioner should proceed.

## **Duty of Loyalty.:**

A person's responsibility, legal or moral, to promote the best interest of an organization or other person with whom they are affiliated.

## **Project Management Institute (PMI):**

The totality of the Project Management Institute, including its committees, groups, and chartered components such as chapters.

## **PMI Certification:**

This term includes PMI certifications, a registry of which is available [here](#).

## **PMI Member**

A person who holds an active membership with the Project Management Institute.

## **Practitioner**

A person engaged in an activity that contributes to the management of a project, program, or portfolio, as part of the project management profession.

## **PMI Volunteer:**

A person who participates in PMI-sponsored activities, whether a member of the Project Management Institute or not.