

# Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology, and the Humanities

## Part 1: Preliminary Provisions

### 1.1 Introduction

1. The object of Royal Society of New Zealand (hereinafter Royal Society Te Apārangi) is “the advancement and promotion in Aotearoa New Zealand of science, technology, and the humanities”. For that purpose, the Society is required by the Royal Society of New Zealand Act 1997 to establish and administer for Members of the Society a Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology, and the Humanities (hereinafter the Code).
2. For the Society to support its Members to achieve the objectives of both exemplary ethical behaviour and world class research and scholarly practices, a robust code of practice is required. This Code applies across all fields of science, technology and the humanities, and across differing knowledge systems and research epistemologies, so as to address the complexity of ethical and practice concerns that may arise in Members’ work. This Code also functions to support public trust through transparent standards.
3. The Code is divided into parts. Part 2 sets out ethical values and principles that underpin relevant research epistemologies, and describes research and scholarly practice that is consistent with those values and principles within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand. Part 3 describes the responsibilities on Members and sets out the standards.
4. The Code gives effect to the Treaty of Waitangi through a foundation of bi-cultural ethical principles from which the standards of the Code have been developed.
5. It is in the public interest<sup>1</sup> that all scientists, technologists, and humanities scholars act ethically, professionally and seek to prevent harm<sup>2</sup>. Thus, Royal Society Te Apārangi makes this Code freely available to researchers and scholars, research institutions, research funding agencies and any other stakeholders in research or scholarly activities to adopt or use as a guide.

### 1.2 Legal status of the Code

1. This Code of Professional Standards and Ethics in Science, Technology, and the Humanities is made pursuant to section 34 of Royal Society of New Zealand Act 1997.
2. This Code replaces all previous codes of professional standards and ethics issued by the Council of Royal Society Te Apārangi, and commences on 1 January 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> The interests of people generally, including communities, whānau, hapū and iwi.

<sup>2</sup> Harm includes but is not limited to cultural harm, defined as conduct that results in, or contributes to, the breakdown of the spiritual, moral, physical and emotional wellbeing of indigenous peoples or members of other groups sharing an ethnicity or cultural identity, and includes racist conduct. (model: [caid.ca/ILD2002v5n17p4.pdf](https://caid.ca/ILD2002v5n17p4.pdf)). Harm can only be justified if the potential benefits sufficiently outweigh any residual harm remaining after all reasonable avoidance and mitigation actions have been taken.

### 1.3 Compliance with the Code

1. Members<sup>3</sup> of Royal Society Te Apārangi are obliged to comply with Part 3 of this Code when undertaking their research, scholarly or professional activities (hereinafter “activities”)<sup>4</sup>.
2. In order to comply with Part 3 it shall be sufficient for a Member to take the actions and to exercise the level of care that a reasonable, ethical, professional researcher or scholar would normally take in the same circumstances<sup>5</sup>.
3. Members are also required to meet their regulatory and legal obligations<sup>6</sup> in order to comply with this Code.
4. The Code does not otherwise limit Members’ rights to exercise freedom of expression and freedom of enquiry under the Bill of Rights Act 1990, or to exercise the role of critic and conscience of society under s162 of the Education Act 1989.

## Part 2: Values and Principles

Within the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, the ethical and professional values and principles relevant to, and responsibilities on, those who conduct research or scholarly activities are interpreted within a general framework that recognises human and civil rights, the principles of free enquiry and an open society, and the obligations arising from the Treaty of Waitangi. These principles and values represent the ethical sources of both the responsibilities as well as the detailed and specific standards that follow. They share a common ground: respectful and rights-based knowledge discovery between researchers, participants and communities to advance science, technology, and the humanities in Aotearoa New Zealand. The Code prioritises neither the established research ethics principles nor the Māori values, and encourages Members to regard them as working together to guide action appropriate to their specific research context.

Tika <sup>7</sup>	Mana	Whakapapa	Manaakitanga
Pūkenga	Kaitiakitanga	Justice	Duty of care
Beneficence	Non-maleficence	Respect	Integrity

<sup>3</sup> Members include Honorary Fellows, Fellows, Companions, Professional Members, Associate Members, Student Members, Honorary Members, Regional Constituent Organisations (Branches) and Constituent Organisations, but does not include Affiliate Organisations or Friends of the Society. Membership of a Regional Constituent Organisation or a Constituent Organisation of itself does not make a person a Member of the Society.

<sup>4</sup> Research, scholarly and professional activities include, but are not limited to, activities in employment, consulting, contracting and in voluntary roles.

<sup>5</sup> Circumstances includes consideration of the type of Membership held.

<sup>6</sup> Relevant legislation includes but is not limited to: the New Zealand Bill of Rights 1990; the New Zealand Public Health and Disability Act 2000; the Health and Disability Commissioner (Code of Health and Disability Consumers’ Rights) Regulations 1996 ([www.hdc.org.nz](http://www.hdc.org.nz)); the Privacy Act 1993; the Health Information Privacy Code 1994; the Injury Prevention, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 2001; the Resource Management Act 1991; the Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996; the Animal Welfare Act 1999; the Health Research Council Act 1990; and the Protection of Personal and Property Rights Act 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Māori words have meanings that are highly context-dependent. In this context **tika** means acting with integrity and respecting the interests of relevant communities; **mana** means balancing one's own authority and the rights held by others; **whakapapa** acknowledges the importance of relationships with relevant communities; **manaakitanga** means acting with care and respecting diverse values and communities; **pūkenga** means acting with rigour; and **kaitiakitanga** means acting with responsibility and ensuring resources are managed appropriately. In this context, **beneficence** means acting to benefit other people, contributing to broad concepts of wellbeing, and balancing benefits against risks and costs; non-maleficence means not causing harm intentionally, and ensuring that the risks of harm are outweighed by the expected benefits, **justice** requires that people are treated fairly and equitably, including fairly distributing the benefits and burdens of research to individuals and communities; **respect** for persons means respecting an individual’s right to make choices and hold views, and to take actions based on their own values and beliefs; **integrity** refers to the trustworthiness of research due to the soundness of its methods and the honesty

Research and scholarly practices that are consistent with these values and principles will:

1. Be conducted with professionalism, integrity, care and diligence by appropriately knowledgeable people;
2. Be undertaken in a manner consistent with accepted standards and codes of practice;
3. Be respectful to other people, including acting with cultural intelligence<sup>8</sup> and intellectual rigour (pūkenga), and respecting diverse values and communities (manaakitanga);
4. Recognise the potential impacts on communities, including their intergenerational interests;
5. Endeavour to identify and engage with affected communities (whakapapa), recognise their rights (mana) and respect their interests (tika);
6. Ensure that activities with partners and/or participants have potential benefits that outweigh the risks and that the risks and benefits are not distributed inequitably;
7. Take reasonable actions and precautions to protect vulnerable people and prevent harm to participants or others;
8. Make results and findings available as soon as it is appropriate to do so;
9. Support the public interest, including by averting or avoiding unacceptable levels of risk of adverse consequences;
10. Manage collected data responsibly;
11. Exemplify, require and support respectful and professional conduct amongst colleagues, and across the research community (manaakitanga);
12. Take reasonable precautions to prevent significant avoidable or unjustified degradation of the environment (kaitiakitanga); and
13. Where appropriate, contribute to improving conservation, protection and sustainability (kaitiakitanga).

## Part 3: Responsibilities and Standards

Members have responsibilities to behave with professionalism, integrity, care and diligence; responsibilities to the public interest, affected and participating communities, partners and participants in their activities and colleagues; and responsibilities for guardianship of the environment and improving sustainability. Accordingly, Members are obliged:

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and accuracy of its presentation; **duty of care** describes the obligations that a reasonable person owes to others who may be affected by their acts or omissions.

<sup>8</sup> Cultural intelligence means the capability to relate and work effectively across cultures.

1. To behave with honesty, integrity, and professionalism when undertaking their activities;
2. To only claim competence commensurate with their expertise, knowledge and skills, and ensure their practices are consistent with relevant national, Māori<sup>9</sup> and international standards and codes of practice in their discipline or field;
3. To undertake their activities diligently and carefully;
4. To support the public interest by making the results and findings of their activities available as soon as it is appropriate to do so, by presenting those results and findings in an honest, straightforward and unbiased manner, and by being prepared to contribute their knowledge or skills to avert or lessen public crises<sup>10</sup> when it is appropriate to do so;
5. In undertaking their activities, to endeavour, where practicable, to partner with those communities and mana whenua for whom there are reasonably foreseeable direct impacts, and to meet any obligations arising from the Treaty of Waitangi;
6. To safeguard the health, safety, wellbeing, rights and interests of people involved in or affected during the conduct of their activities;
7. To ensure that the three Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement) are considered at all stages of their activities involving animals, minimise the impacts on animals used in those activities, and in so doing, support the welfare and wellbeing of those animals;
8. To develop, and implement so far as they are reasonably able<sup>11</sup>, a management plan to ensure the integrity, retention, secure storage, appropriate and transparent use of data and samples gathered or developed during their activities;
9. To demonstrate and encourage ethical behaviour and high professional standards amongst their colleagues;
10. To not harass<sup>12</sup>, bully or knowingly act with malice towards individuals or groups of people; and
11. To take reasonable steps to prevent their activities leading to significant avoidable or unjustified degradation of the environment, and where appropriate, to contribute to improved conservation, protection and sustainability.

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<sup>9</sup> As set out, for example, in Te Ara Tika Guidelines for Maori Research Ethics.

<sup>10</sup> In this context, public crisis means a situation in which there is an unacceptable risk of significant harm to people, or of substantial and widespread damage to property or the environment.

<sup>11</sup> This obligation expires when the Member is no longer able, in practical terms, to influence the ongoing management of the information, data, samples, materials or derived results gathered or developed during their activities, when their employer assumes responsibility on their behalf, or when the data or samples are transferred to a recognised long term data or sample repository which assumes responsibility for their further management.

<sup>12</sup> Harassment is conduct that unjustifiably disturbs or upsets another. It is characteristically repetitive and may be physically or psychologically harmful to the victim. It is exacerbated when the consequences of not accepting the behaviour may be disadvantageous to the victim. Forms of harassment include but are not limited to: verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination (related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital and family status, disability, physical appearance, body size, culture, ethnicity, nationality, age, religion or lack thereof, beliefs or socioeconomic status etc.); sexual images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following; harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of talks or other events; inappropriate physical contact; unwelcome sexual attention; and advocating for or encouraging any of the above behaviour.