
Code of Conduct

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1. Introduction

This Code of Conduct sets out clear expectations for how members of the Royal College of Anaesthetists ('the College') and non-members who are in College appointed or elected roles (outlined in '[Glossary of terms](#)' in the appendices and from here on in specified as non-members) should conduct themselves when acting on behalf of the College, participating in College business, representing the College or in any situation where their actions could affect the College's reputation.

In addition to adhering to the Code of Conduct, members are required to follow relevant guidance from the General Medical Council (GMC), including [Good Medical Practice](#).

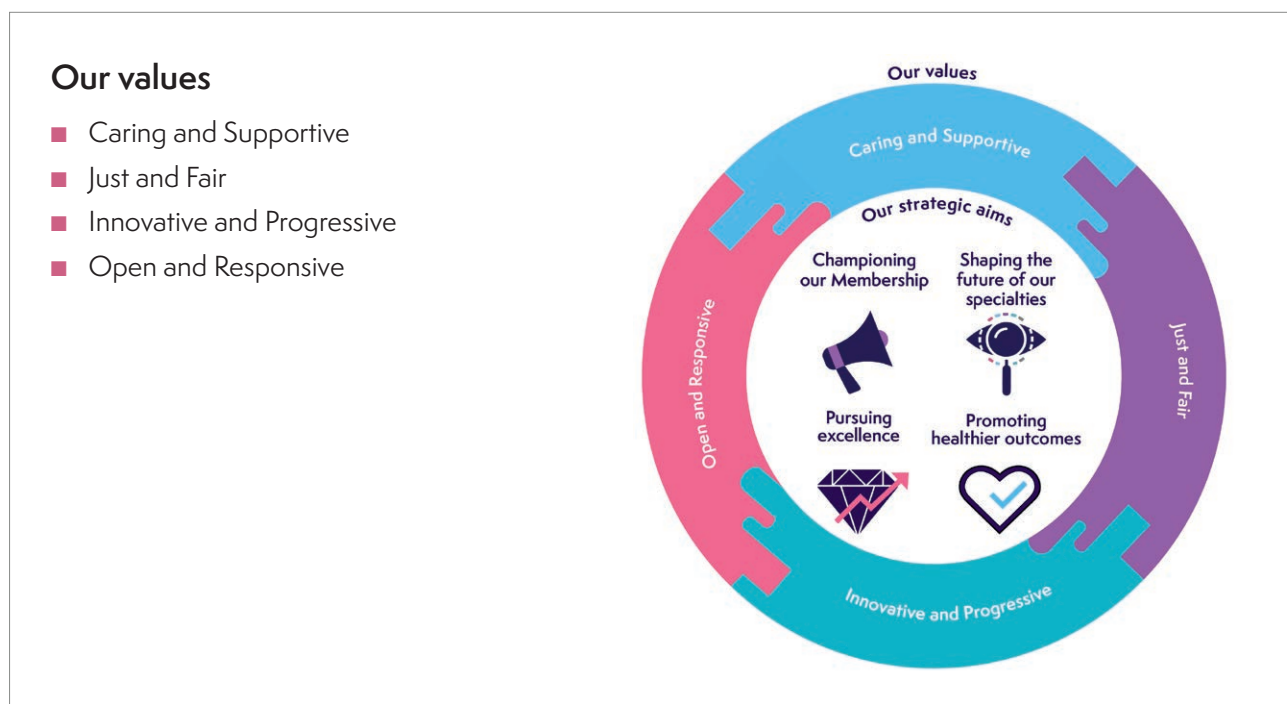
Non-members are required to adhere to the Code of Conduct as a condition of their role. It is acknowledged that some parts of the Code will not be applicable to some non-members, for instance volunteers who are not regulated medical professionals and are not required to comply with Good Medical Practice. If any non-member has uncertainty about which aspects of the Code apply to them, they should raise a query with the relevant director or board for their respective area of College work. Failure to do so may result in the removal of their College-appointed or -elected roles.

2. Scope

This Code of Conduct applies to members and non-members of the College and all persons acting in any capacity on behalf of the College.

3. College values

The expected standards set out in our Code of Conduct are aligned to the College's [values](#). We therefore strongly encourage all individuals to understand, uphold and actively embody the College values (see Appendix 9.2).



4. Standards of professional behaviour

4.1 General expectations

The following standards of professional behaviour are expected of all members of the College and non-members acting on behalf of the College:

- treat others with dignity and respect
- respect and value diversity and individual differences
- demonstrate integrity and honesty in all interactions
- Lead by example and uphold the highest standards of professional behaviour
- carry out College-related duties conscientiously and to the best of your ability
- encourage inclusive and supportive working relationships
- hold yourselves and others accountable for professional and personal behaviours
- comply with College policies relevant to your role.

4.2 Zero-tolerance approach

The College has a zero-tolerance policy on:

- unsafe, illegal or unethical working practices
- violence and aggression
- discrimination, racism, bullying and harassment
- sexual harassment
- bribery, corruption and dishonesty
- victimisation.

4.3 Professional standards

Where relevant/applicable, all members and non-members acting on behalf of the College must:

- remain in [good standing](#) with the appropriate regulatory bodies and associated professional organisations, as well as with the College itself;
- follow, and be familiar with, [Good Medical Practice](#), which provides clear and assessable standards for individual doctors and their practice;
- be aware of the specific jurisdictional requirements and legal responsibilities relevant to the country or territory in which they operate; where any provision of the Code conflicts with the law, the law will always take precedence;
- be familiar, and comply, with any relevant code(s) of conduct relevant to their practice, including those relating to specialty societies, associations and colleges (referred to hereinafter as 'associated professional organisations');
- where applicable, engage and comply with the requirements and processes of revalidation. Non-engagement in the requirements and processes for revalidation, except where a deferral has been formally agreed under the Responsible Officer mechanism, will be regarded as a breach of the Code of Conduct.

4.3.1 Good standing in College membership

The Royal College of Anaesthetists' (RCoA's) definition of being 'in good standing' applies to all individuals who have membership of the College, regardless of the membership category.

To be recognised and remain in good standing, all members are expected to:

- observe the RCoA's Charter, ordinances, regulations and code of conduct, and demonstrate a commitment to upholding the College's values and professional standards;
- demonstrate professional behaviour that safeguards their registration, licence or authority to practise medicine and disclose to the College any disciplinary actions or sanctions imposed by the GMC or organisation responsible for medical registration in other countries;
- ensure that, where an annual subscription fee is required for membership, payments are fully up to date and not in arrears by more than 3 months.

If there are any circumstances that could affect your good standing with the College, for example, being the subject of a GMC enquiry, or criminal investigation, you must inform the [Membership Engagement team](#). Any information that you share will be treated confidentially and considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.3.2 Reporting changes in circumstances

A member must immediately notify the [Membership Engagement Team](#) in writing if:

- they are no longer in good standing with a regulatory body and/or associated professional organisation for any reason;
- they are placed under investigation by the GMC/General Dental Council (GDC), any other regulatory body or associated professional organisation, or by an employer;
- they are facing disciplinary action of any kind from the GMC, any other regulatory body or affiliated professional organisation, or an employer;
- membership or fellowship of an associated professional organisation is withdrawn following a disciplinary hearing, ie a member or specified non-member is charged with a criminal offence.

4.4 Conduct

4.4.1 Equity, diversity and inclusion

At the College, equity, diversity and inclusion are an integral part of our culture. All members and non-members are expected to actively contribute to creating and maintaining an inclusive and respectful environment. This means embracing and promoting a culture that recognises, values and celebrates individual differences, including (but not limited to) age, race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, disability, marital status and parental responsibilities.

Everyone is expected to:

- demonstrate inclusive behaviours in all interactions;
- respect and support the diverse backgrounds and experiences of colleagues;
- challenge discrimination, bias and exclusionary practices when encountered;
- engage with training and development opportunities related to equality, diversity and inclusion;
- act as role models in fostering a safe, welcoming and representative College culture.

4.4.2 Conduct outside work

As a general principle, an individual's private activities outside their professional responsibilities are a personal matter. However, there are specific circumstances where the College has a legitimate interest in a member's or non-member's conduct beyond their workplace. For example, situations that have the potential to bring the College or the specialty into disrepute. Situations where the College expects adherence to professional standards and this Code of Conduct include (but are not limited to) the following:

- College-organised social events such as office parties and team gatherings
- conferences, training sessions and professional networking events
- College-organised events such as dinners, receptions or award ceremonies
- business travel or any off-site activity carried out on behalf of the College.

Any behaviour, whether verbal, physical or digital (including on social media), that is deemed inappropriate or unacceptable may lead to a further investigation and, where applicable, the implementation of appropriate sanctions as set out in Section 6 of this code.

4.4.3 Criminal offences or convictions

Members and individuals involved in College work are required to disclose any previous or ongoing professional misconduct proceedings unless the outcome was 'no action', as well as any current criminal charges or unspent convictions.

This requirement exists to ensure that the College upholds its duty of care, to safeguard members, employees and wider stakeholders and to protect the reputation and integrity of the College. Transparency in these matters is essential to maintain public trust and to ensure that the College's ability to fulfil its charitable objectives is not compromised.

Notifications should be made in writing to the [Membership Engagement Team](#) at the earliest opportunity, with all relevant details included.

4.5 Conflicts of interest

Members and non-members are expected to always act with impartiality and objectivity. They must take proactive steps to manage or avoid any actual or perceived conflicts of interest arising from their membership of, association with or connection to other organisations or individuals.

Members and non-members must not exploit their association with the College to promote personal, professional or commercial interests. They should avoid presenting the College as endorsing any activity, organisation or initiative without prior approval. All references to the College, or commitments made on its behalf, must be accurate and agreed in advance with the relevant College staff or committee to ensure alignment with organisational policies and objectives.

To support transparency and integrity, the College has adopted NHS England's [Managing Conflicts of Interest in the NHS](#) guidance.

Anyone holding an official College role or serving on a board or committee must update the register promptly if their circumstances change and will be asked to review their entry each spring.

4.6 Confidentiality

All individuals involved in College activities are expected to maintain confidentiality. Information acquired by members and non-members during College activities should be treated as confidential where it is marked as such or where it would be reasonable to expect that it should not be further disclosed. The following, although not an exhaustive list, are instances in which work and materials should be treated as strictly confidential:

- Assessments made during College activities such as examinations, interviews or committee work
- Committee work or discussions within committees or meetings
- Course or assessment materials.

Should any member or non-member be in any doubt as to whether information should be treated as confidential, they should seek the advice of the Chief Executive Officer of the College.

Members and non-members of the College must not share confidential information for personal purposes or with third parties. This applies both during and after the term of the role. Disclosure is permitted only with the prior written authorisation of the Chief Executive Officer of the College or where required by law.

Individuals must not make public statements, including on social media, about the affairs of the College without prior consultation with the RCoA Communications Team. The only exceptions to this are prearranged speaking opportunities or the promotion of College courses, events or information that is already publicly available.

5. Bullying, harassment and victimisation

The College has a zero-tolerance approach to [bullying](#), [harassment](#), [sexual harassment](#), [victimisation](#) and/or any other conduct that creates an intimidating working environment.

There is no justification for such conduct. A lack of intent does not excuse behaviour; what matters is its impact on the individual experiencing it.

The College will take appropriate action against any behaviour that shows a lack of respect for others or causes an individual to feel threatened. This includes unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that undermines dignity or contributes to an environment that is intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive.

5.1 Reporting concerns and seeking support

If you experience or witness [bullying](#), [harassment](#), [sexual harassment](#) or [victimisation](#), we strongly encourage you to speak up without delay and seek appropriate support.

If you feel safe, and comfortable doing so, you may choose to raise the issue directly with the individual(s) involved. Sometimes, the person may be unaware that their behaviour is inappropriate or offensive.

If direct communication is not feasible, or if you would prefer additional support, you are encouraged to speak with your supervisor, a trusted colleague or a member of the College's People and Culture Team.

6. Breaches of the Code of Conduct

The College actively promotes and enforces the standards set out in this Code of Conduct. Compliance with these standards is a condition of membership and of holding any appointed or elected role within the College. The College takes all concerns and allegations of breaches of this Code of Conduct seriously.

Any individual found to be in breach of this Code, through failure to meet its requirements, may be subject to appropriate sanctions, as outlined in this Code and/or in relevant College policies. Any breach of this Code may also be subject to further action under the College's Disciplinary Policy. The Disciplinary policy outlines the procedures for investigating and responding to serious misconduct.

6.1 Sanctions

Failure to comply with the standards set out in this Code of Conduct may result in the following sanctions:

- warnings
- suspension or removal of services
- suspension or removal from College membership
- suspension or removal from an appointed or elected role.

Any applicable sanctions will be determined through due process, as discussed in the disciplinary process outlined in Section 4 of the Ordinances and Section 11 of the Regulations. In cases where the situation or outcome would affect an individual's capacity or competence as a practising clinician, the outcome can be communicated to the individual's employer, the GMC/another regulator and/or any other associated professional organisation of which they are a member or specified non-member.

7. Complaints procedure

Anyone, including members of the public, are entitled to raise a complaint with the College. A complaint is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction relating to the College's work, conduct or actions or behaviour of all members, non-members and any persons acting in any official capacity on behalf of the College.

Complaints are handled in accordance with the College's [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#), which outlines how to submit a complaint and how the College will respond and manage the process.

8. Data protection

All members and specified non-members are required to protect any data shared with them while carrying out their appointed role. This must be done in accordance with the [General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) and the College's Data Protection and Retention policies and procedures.

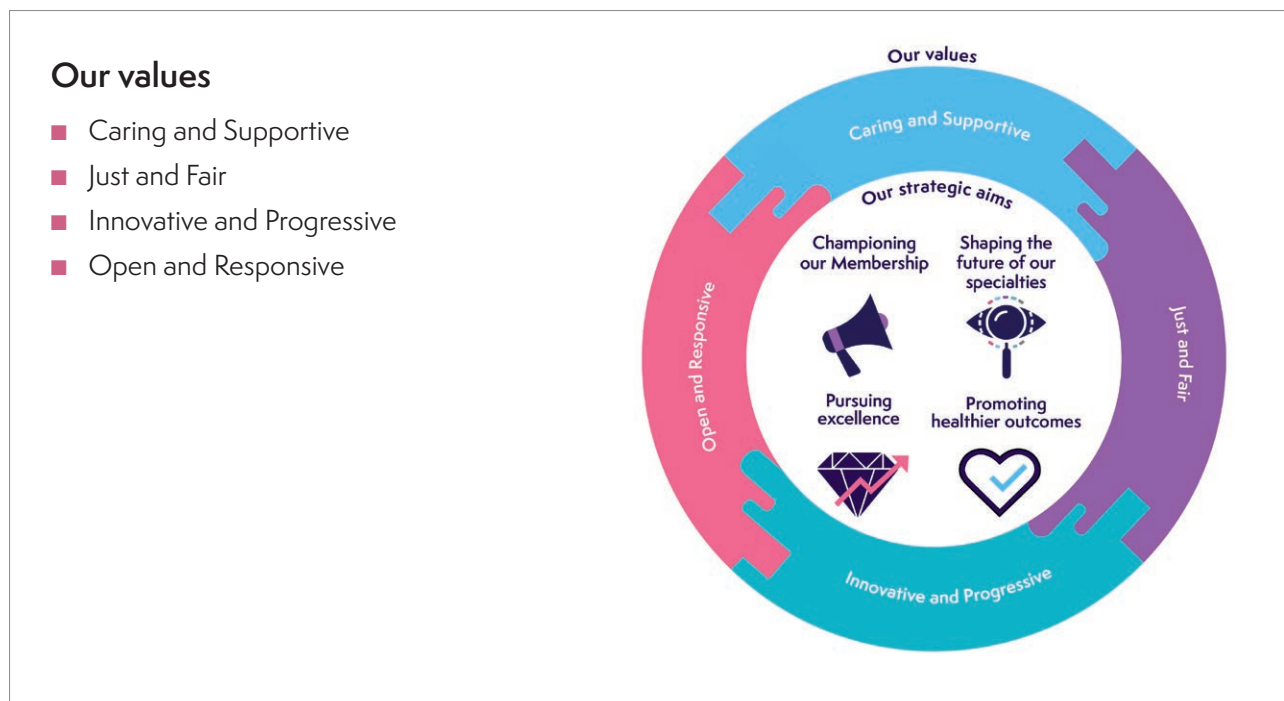
9. Appendices

9.1 Glossary of terms

Term	Definition
Bullying	Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which undermines, humiliates, denigrates or injures the recipient. Examples of bullying can be found on the ACAS website .
Conflict of interest	This is a situation in which a person's duties to the College could be compromised by their personal, financial or professional relationships or affiliations.
Harassment	Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a protected characteristic with the intentional, or unintentional, effect of violating that person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them. Harassment can occur by perception of an individual's protected characteristic , whether that perception is correct or not. It can also occur by association with someone who has a protected characteristic . Examples of harassment can be found on the ACAS website .
Member	A person who has been admitted to a category of membership of the College as specified in Ordinance 2.1.
Racism	Under the Equality Act 2010, the protected characteristic of race includes a person's colour, nationality and ethnic or national origins. A 'racial group' refers to a group of people defined by one or more of these characteristics, which can comprise several distinct racial groups.
Sexual harassment	Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature, which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person. It also covers treating someone less favourably because they have submitted to, or refused to submit to, unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or in relation to gender reassignment or sex. Examples of sexual harassment can be found on the ACAS website .
Non-member	A person who is a member of a committee or subcommittee of the College, invited College member, lay trustee, PatientVoices@RCOA member, ACSA Lay Reviewer, invigilator and/or any other College role or appointment, including, without limitation, any appointment to represent the College on an external body.
Victimisation	Victimisation is subjecting someone to detriment because they have done, are suspected of doing or intend to do an act that is protected under discrimination and harassment laws. These are outlined below. It is not necessary for the person to have done the protected act for detrimental treatment to be considered as victimisation. The following are protected acts: Making a claim or complaint under the Equality Act 2010 (eg for discrimination or harassment); Helping someone else make a claim by giving evidence or information in connection with proceedings under the Equality Act 2010 ; Making an allegation that someone has breached the Equality Act 2010 ; Doing anything else in connection with the Equality Act 2010 ; Examples of victimisation can be found on the ACAS website .

9.2 College values

The expected standards set out in our Code of Conduct are aligned to the College's [values](#). We therefore strongly encourage all individuals to understand, uphold and actively embody the College values.



Caring and supportive

We will support our members and employees according to their needs and the scope of our responsibilities, at all stages of their careers, and equip them to meet the high standards needed to ensure the best possible care for patients.

- We are thoughtful, respectful and responsive to the needs of our people and of our responsibilities to the environment.
- We believe that kindness and compassion are signs of strength and environmental stewardship and healthcare are inextricably linked, so that greater care for one will have a positive impact on the other.
- We will provide our members, volunteers and employees with healthy working environments and take care to set reasonable expectations of ourselves and each other.
- We will not tolerate bullying or intimidation or be rude or dismissive in our dealings with others.

Just and fair

We will act in an open and honest way in everything that we do, championing health equality and building trust through integrity.

- We are opposed to racism and discrimination of any kind and must be honest, trustworthy, transparent and fair in the way in which we both conduct ourselves and work.
- We believe that inclusivity and respect for all, and the value of transparency and openness, drive better, fairer outcomes.
- We will embrace an inclusive and representative culture that supports and celebrates our differences and maintains fair and consistent standards in everything that we do, so that we act honourably towards each other.
- We will not tolerate discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or dishonesty.

Innovative and progressive

- We are ambitious for our College and our specialties and will excel through expertise and innovation.
- We are committed to innovation and development to drive continuous quality improvement.
- We believe in being a learning organisation that strives for excellence and delivers our core responsibilities well.
- We will set the highest standards for clinical and professional practice, seek out excellence and disseminate learning.
- We will not be resistant to change or be deterred in the pursuit of better patient care.

Open and responsive

We seek opinions, listen with purpose to our stakeholders, evaluate evidence with care and act in collaboration with our membership, patients and the public.

- We are an agile organisation that is open to new ideas.
- We believe that listening to our membership and employees, evaluating their input and acting in their interests, will improve their experience and add value to the work that we do.
- We will work to understand the changing landscape of healthcare and act to promote the best outcomes for members, employees and the public.
- We will not make assumptions about the needs of those with whom or for whom we work without seeking their views.

Royal College of Anaesthetists

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