



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Code of Conduct for Council and Registration Board Members



CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

(In this document “members” refers to members of the Health and Social Care Professionals Council or members of Professional specific Registration Boards)

The objective of the Council is to ensure that the highest possible standards of integrity are maintained. This document sets out guidelines to be followed in this regard. Guidelines are formulated to reflect obligations falling on Council and Registration Boards’ members and employees in their deposition of public duties, and in a spirit of explicitly specifying CORU’s position for all concerned.

This code sets out the Council’s expectations of its Council and Registration Board members and employees. As a regulator, the Council sets standards for the conduct, performance and ethics of health and social care professionals on the Council’s registers. The Council therefore also feels that it is important that Council and Registration Board members and employees maintain high standards in their role, and that these standards are made public.

Some members of the Council’s statutory Committees or the Registration Board sub committees may not be members of the Council or Registration Boards but will have been appointed to those committees in order to meet specific statutory requirements or to provide particular expertise.

Those members are appointed on the basis of separate written agreements with the Council or Registration Boards, but are also expected to adhere to the provisions of the Code of Conduct to the extent that they apply to such members and do not conflict with their written terms of engagement.

This code of conduct particularly applies to Council and Registration Board members and employees whenever they take part in Council business, or whenever they represent the Council.

Council and Registration Board members should also bear in mind that due to the high profile manner of their role, even when they consider themselves to be working in a private capacity, or for another organisation, they may still be viewed as a representative of, or an ambassador for CORU. They should therefore still be mindful of this code.

In addition, a Council or Registration Board member or employees whose actions in another role or in private capacity were such that their role as a Council or Registration Board member or employee was undermined or public or registrant faith in CORU was compromised could have their actions judged against this Code of Conduct, and action taken accordingly.



1. General guidelines

Council and Registration Boards and employees should at all times:

- Act in good faith;
- Act in accordance with the Council and Registration Boards' objective of protecting the public;
- Take personal responsibility for ensuring that they keep to the code of conduct; and
- Treat others equally, fairly, and with respect.

2. Confidentiality

Most information to which Council or Registration Board members and employees have access as part of their role will be in the public domain. However, there will be times when they may have access to information that is confidential. This may include papers from private sections of Council, Registration Board or Committee meetings, information from panel hearings or information relating to Council employees.

Council and Registration Board members and employees should not disclose any confidential information which they have been given because of their role as a Council or Registration Board member or employee, other than for a proper purpose or if they are required to do so by law. Council members should take appropriate steps to ensure that confidential papers are stored securely. Members should contact the Chief Executive Officer if the status of any information is unclear.

If a Council or a Registration Board member or employee becomes aware of a breach in confidentiality, they must immediately notify the Chief Executive Officer or the Chairperson.

3. Attending meetings

Council members should endeavour to attend all Council meetings; Registration Board members should endeavour to attend all Registration Board meetings and any meetings of committee of which they are a member.

There may be circumstances in which members are unable to attend a meeting, in which case they should send their apologies as soon as possible to the Secretary of the Council or Registration Board or the relevant Committee.

Where a member is unable to fulfil their role over a prolonged period, they will be asked to discuss their position with the Chairperson.

Members' attendance will form part of the members' annual performance review and particular consideration will be given to meetings where a member has not attended and has not given notice of their absence.



4. Council, Registration Board and employees' annual performance review

All members and employees must participate in the annual performance review system, and follow the agreed procedure.

5. Register of members' interests

All members must complete a declaration of members' conflicting interests and thereafter take professional responsibility for ensuring that it is kept up to date.

All members of Council, Registration Boards and employees must avoid accepting gifts, hospitality or benefits which could be construed as an attempt to gain influence or favour. Where Gifts, hospitality or benefits are offered as a consequence of Council business and do not contravene the above, these must be registered with the Chief Executive Officer within a reasonable period of time, usually within 1 month.

6. Conflicts of interest

Specific requirements for the disclosure of interests of members of Council, Registration Boards or Committees are set out in section 15 of the Act.

The procedure is as follows (underlined terms defined below):

Any **member** present at a **meeting** where a **specified matter** arises who has a **material interest** in that matter shall—

- at the meeting disclose to the Council, Registration Boards or Committee the nature of that interest,
- withdraw from the meeting for as long as the matter is being discussed or considered,
- take no part in any deliberation of the members relating to the matter, and
- refrain from voting on any decision relating to the matter.

If a member discloses a material interest under this section the disclosure shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned and for as long as the matter to which the disclosure relates is being dealt with by the meeting, the member shall not be counted in the quorum for the meeting.

A procedure is also set out in Section 15 in relation to how to determine whether a conflict exists.

“material interest” is to be construed in accordance with section 2(3) of the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995;

“meeting” means a meeting of the Council, Registration Board or of sub-committees

“member” means a member of the Council, Registration Board or of sub-committees

“specified matter” means:

- An arrangement to which the Council and/or the Registration Board is a party or a proposed such arrangement, or
- A contract or other agreement with the Council and/or the Registration Board or a proposed such contract or other agreement.



7. Health and Social Care Professionals Council employees

The Council employees carry out the functions of the Council, under the strategic direction of the Council. Council members may be asked to sit on selection panels for certain posts, or to consider papers that are presented to meetings on employment issues, but will not take any other part of employment matters.

All employees are responsible to the Chief Executive Officer. The Chief Executive Officer is appointed by the Council and managed by the Chairperson of Council.

Council or Registration Board members may wish to comment positively on the work done by employees. This can be done formally, for example by asking a Committee to make a note of their thanks to a particular person or group, or by speaking to the employee's manager or to the Chief Executive Officer, or more informally, directly to the employee.

However, any Council or Registration Board member with concerns about the behaviour or performance of an employee should always raise these concerns with the Chief Executive Officer, who will deal with the issue in accordance with HR policies.

If a Council or Registration Board member or employee has concerns about the Chief Executive Officer, these should be raised with the Chairperson.

8. Breach of the Code

Any minor breach of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with in the first instance informally, for example by the chairman of a Committee or another Council member drawing the breach to the Council member's attention during a meeting or similar.

If a Council member is concerned that another Council member may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, they should raise their concerns with the Chairperson.

However, where there is evidence of a deliberate, serious or continued breach of this code of conduct, this will be taken up by the Chairperson, in a special convened meeting if appropriate.

Any minor breach of this Code of Conduct will be dealt with in the first instance informally, for example by the chairman of a Committee or another Registration Board member drawing the breach to the member's attention during a meeting or similar.

If a Registration Board member is concerned that another Registration Board member may be in breach of this Code of Conduct, they should raise their concerns with the Chairperson.

However, where there is evidence of a deliberate, serious or continued breach of this code of conduct, this will be taken up by the Chairperson, in a special convened meeting if appropriate.

If an employee breaches the Code of Conduct, this will be dealt with in the first instance informally by the Chief Executive Officer. If an employee is concerned that another employee may be in breach of this code, they should raise their concerns with the Chief Executive Officer.

However where there is evidence of deliberate, serious or continued breach of this Code of Conduct, this will be taken up by the Chief Executive Officer in an appropriate manner and in accordance with HR policies.



9. Removal of a Council Member from office

A Council member may be removed from office as provided in Section 24 and/or Schedule 1 Section 5 of the Act.

10. Removal of a Registration Board Member from office

A Registration Board member may be removed from office as provided in Section 34 and/or Schedule 2 Section 5 of the Act.