



code of professional practice

The REC Code of Professional Practice creates a clear framework of values and principles that support and underpin the meaning of REC Membership.

Adherence to the Code actively demonstrates your commitment to professional and ethical recruitment. The Code focuses on outcomes and the impact of agencies' conduct on others whilst conducting their day-to-day activities. For advice and support on how to continually meet the standards expected from an REC Member please refer to the Guide to Compliance on the REC website at www.rec.uk.com/code

General Principles

Members will observe the highest principles of ethics, equity, integrity, professional conduct and fair practice in dealing with others and will conduct their business in a manner designed to enhance the operation, image and reputation of the recruitment industry and REC Members. The REC will offer guidance, legal advice and training to members to help achieve these standards.

Ethical conduct is not simply compliance with legal requirements but extends to honesty, respect for and equitable treatment of others, integrity and social responsibility. It is conduct that holds up to disclosure and to public scrutiny. Members and their staff will act towards other members and non-members, candidates, clients and others at all times in good faith. Members should actively seek to support and uphold the mission and values of the REC.

The REC has an important role to play in continuously improving standards within the recruitment industry. This Code is binding on all Corporate Members of the REC and their subsidiary/associate companies. Where a Member operates in a sector or sectors covered by one or more of the REC's industry sector codes of practice, the requirements of the applicable code or codes are also binding. Complaints against REC Members from candidates, clients or others, can be investigated under the REC Complaints & Disciplinary Procedure.

Principle 1 - Respect for Laws

Members and their staff must comply with all relevant legislation, statutory and non-statutory requirements and official guidance and any future amendments to such requirements during the course of providing their services to others.

Principle 2 - Respect for honesty and transparency

- a) Members will act honestly in all dealings with work seekers, clients, members, non-members and others.
- b) In the course of representing a work seeker or client a member shall not knowingly make a false or inaccurate statement, fail to disclose a material fact, or make a representation as to future matters without having reasonable grounds for making it.
- c) Members must adhere to principles of truth in advertising and will only advertise positions, through any medium, for which they have documented permission to recruit.
- d) All fees, charges and services provided must be explicitly and fully disclosed to clients prior to the acceptance of an assignment or prior to any work being undertaken for a client.
- e) Members should document all key stages of the recruitment process in line with relevant legislation and good practice guidance.

Principle 3 - Respect for work relationships

- a) Members will not undertake actions that may unfairly or unlawfully jeopardise a work seeker's employment.
- b) Members will not undertake actions that may unfairly or unlawfully interfere in work relationships established by others.
- c) Members will not attempt unfairly or unlawfully to prevent a work seeker from seeking work from other sources.
- d) Members will in their dealings with all other REC Members and non-members treat them with respect and aim to work in a fair and open competitive environment.

Principle 4 - Respect for diversity

- a) Members should adhere to the spirit of all applicable human rights, employment laws and regulations and will treat work seekers, clients and others without prejudice or unjustified discrimination. Members should not act on an instruction from a client that is discriminatory and should, wherever possible, provide guidance to clients in respect of good diversity practice.
- b) Members and their staff will treat all work seekers and clients with dignity and respect and aim to provide equity of employment opportunities based on objective business related criteria.
- c) Members should establish working practices that safeguard against unlawful or unethical discrimination in the operation of their business.

Principle 5 - Respect for diversity

- a) Members will act diligently in assessing risks to work seekers and clients and will not knowingly put at risk candidates, clients or others.
- b) Members will inform work seekers whenever they have reason to believe that an engagement may cause a risk to health and safety.

Principle 6 - Respect for professional knowledge

- a) Members will work diligently to develop and maintain a satisfactory level of relevant and current professional knowledge.
- b) Members will ensure that their staff are adequately trained and skilled to undertake their responsibilities in recruitment practice.

Principle 7 - Respect for certainty of engagement

- a) Members must supply work seekers with full details of the work, conditions of employment, the nature of the work to be undertaken, rates of pay, method and frequency of payment and pay arrangements in accordance with requirements of current legislation.
- b) Members will ensure that any variation to the engagement can only occur with prior notification and agreement of the worker.

Principle 8 - Respect for prompt and accurate payment

- a) Members will pay promptly and accurately any wages and benefits due in accordance with any agreed terms and legal requirements.
- b) Members should not penalise temporary/contract workers, for example for having been late or failed to attend part or all of an assignment or for poor performance, by making deductions from pay due for time that they have actually worked.
- c) Members will not take on assignments that could result in their inability to pay temporary/contract workers.

Principle 9 - Respect for ethical international recruitment

- a) Members must supply all overseas work seekers with the same level of information as set out and implied in Principle 7. In addition, information provided should include details of the likely cost of living in the area the prospective hirer is situated, the likely length of the job in question and the state of the employment market in the field they are being recruited into. All information must be provided at no cost to the work seeker.
- b) Members must ensure that in relation to overseas recruitment, they abide by all relevant legislation and Home Office guidelines and provide all relevant and applicable information to work seekers, clients and others.
- c) Members recruiting from outside the UK must not use overseas agents who charge for their services, unless that is the legal and normal custom and practice sanctioned by the government of the country of origin. In addition, members must make all reasonable efforts to ascertain such information about any agents used and should be able to demonstrate that they have done so.
- d) Members should observe the highest principles of social responsibility, integrity, professionalism, equity and fair practice in their dealings with all overseas work seekers.

Principle 10 - Respect for confidentiality and privacy

- a) Members must observe the highest principles of integrity, professionalism, equity and fair practice to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of candidate and client information and should respect the confidentiality of records in accordance with law and good business practice.
- b) Members and their staff must ensure that permission has been obtained and documented before disclosing, displaying, submitting or seeking confidential or personal information.