

"The need for special ethical principles in a scientific society is the same as the need for ethical principles in society as a whole. They are mutually beneficial. They help make our relationships mutually pleasant and productive. A professional society is a voluntary, cooperative organization, and those who must conform to its rules are also those who benefit from the conformity of others. Each has a stake in maintaining general compliance." (Stuart Altmann, Chair, Ethics Committee, Animal Behavior Society.)

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Webster's New World Dictionary defines the term "ethics" as a system or code of morals of a particular person, group, or profession.

Professional Ethics concerns one's conduct of behavior and practice when carrying out professional work. Such work may include **consulting**, **researching**, **teaching** and **writing**.

(<http://www.is.cityu.edu.hk/research/resources/isworld/ethics/>)

# Why have a Code of Ethics?

- to define accepted/acceptable behaviors;
- to promote high standards of practice;
- to provide a benchmark for members to use for self evaluation;
- to establish a framework for professional behaviors and responsibilities;
- as a vehicle for occupational identity;
- as a mark of occupational maturity;"

(from website of Life Skills Coaches Association of BC)

# Issues

Codes of Ethics are concerned with a range of issues, including:

- honesty
- adherence to confidentiality agreements
- data/contract privacy, plagiarism
- handling of human and animal subjects
- impartiality in data analysis and professional consulting
- professional accountability
- resolution of conflicts of interest

(modified from <http://www.is.cityu.edu.hk/research/resources/isworld/ethics/>)

# The Advantages and Disadvantages of a Code of Ethics

A Code of Ethics enables us to:

- »Set out the ideals and responsibilities of the profession
- »Exert a *de facto* regulatory effect, protecting both clients and professionals
- »Improve the profile of the profession
- »Motivate and inspire practitioners, by attempting to define their *raison d'être*
- »Provide guidance on acceptable conduct
- »Raise awareness and consciousness of issues
- »Improve quality and consistency

(modified from <http://www.is.cityu.edu.hk/research/resources/isworld/ethics/>)

On the other hand, we must also consider:

- whether the so-called standards are obligatory, or are merely an aspiration
- whether such a code is desirable or feasible
- whether ethical values are universal or culturally relativistic
- the difficulty of providing universal guidance given the heterogeneous nature of the profession

(modified from <http://www.is.cityu.edu.hk/research/resources/isworld/ethics/>)

## How the PCP Ethics Committee works:

### SECTION 27. ETHICS COMPLAINT FILING AND REVIEW PROCESS

Any individual or professional organization, that believes that a certified Professional Wetland Scientist (PWS) or Wetland Professional in Training (WPIT) has knowingly breached the SWSPCP Code of Ethics, may file a written, signed complaint.

The complainant must provide all pertinent evidence (photos, letters, affidavits, etc.) and attach them to the Ethics Complaint Form.

Any form that is not signed or does not have attached evidence will be returned to the complainant and no action will be taken on that complaint. **Please note that anonymous complaints can NOT be considered.**

- 1) Legal
- 2) Practicality



## Forwarded to the Chair of the Ethics Committee

The Chair, with advice from the other members of the committee, will make a preliminary determination within 14 days of receiving the complete form and evidence from the business office as to whether the complaint is viable or not.

Copy of the complaint sent by certified mail to the person charged (defendant).

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Defendant asked to prepare a response/rebuttal (within 30 days of the date that the complaint was sent to the defendant).

Closed hearing is scheduled for either the SWSPCP Board mid-year or annual meeting, whichever is most convenient for the defendant to attend, should he/she decide to attend (their attendance is not required).

Hearsay evidence will not be considered! Any evidence of possible criminal wrongdoing will not be considered by the Committee, but will be referred to the proper authorities.

1) If there is insufficient evidence to prove that a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred, the ethics committee shall overrule the complaint.

2) If the ethics committee finds that a violation of the Code of Ethics has occurred, the committee may take one of three actions:

1. The Committee may decertify the defendant as a PWS or WPIT for a five-year period. Any member who is decertified twice within ten (10) years will not be eligible for reinstatement of their certification;

2. If the Committee finds that violation is considered minor, the ethics committee has two options:

- a. place the accused on probation for a period of 2 years from the date of the Ethics Committee's decision, or
- b. issue a Letter of Reprimand.