

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document sets out the principles with which members of the STEP's Council and members of other committees of the STEP (together known as "the Members") are required to comply.
- 1.2 No exposition can be all encompassing and so Members are expected to show judgement, professionalism, maturity, courtesy and wisdom in their dealings with STEP and its members and in the application of these principles. They are expected to set an example and justify the confidence of members of the Society in the governance of the Society.

2 Core Principles

Selflessness

- 2.1 Members must act in the best interests of STEP whilst having regard to the wider public interest.
- 2.2 Members must not improperly make decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their families or friends or persons with whom they have a business connection.

Integrity

- 2.3 Members must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations which influence them or might reasonably be perceived to influence them in their performance as Members.
- 2.4 Members must not misuse information gained in the course of their role as a Member for personal gain or political purposes.
- 2.5 Members must act in good faith in the stewardship of funds.

Objectivity

- 2.6 Members must act in good faith and observe the highest standard of objectivity in carrying out their role.
- 2.7 All decisions must be made on merit.
- 2.8 In carrying out their role, Members must put STEP's interest first and must not act as representative of any other organisation to which they may belong.

Accountability

- 2.9 Members are accountable for their conduct and should be prepared to justify their conduct and submit to appropriate scrutiny.

Openness

- 2.10 Members must be as open as possible about the decisions and actions they take. They should give reasons for their decisions. They should restrict information only where the interests of STEP or the law require it.

Honesty

- 2.11 Members must be honest and disclose relevant financial and other interests where those interests affect or may be reasonably perceived as affecting their duties as Members.

Leadership

- 2.12 Members should promote these principles and lead by example.

Respect, Equality and Diversity

- 2.13 Members should lead by example in demonstrating respect and dignity for others to include valuing diversity and conducting themselves in a non-discriminatory matter at all times.

3 Duties

- 3.1 Members have a duty to ensure compliance with STEP's Articles of Association and Standing Orders, with the Code of Professional Conduct, all other regulations issued by STEP from time to time, and with all relevant legislation.
- 3.2 Members who sit on Branch Committees additionally have a duty to ensure compliance with the Prescribed Branch Regulations.
- 3.3 Members who sit on the Board additionally have a duty to ensure that the Society does not exceed its powers or functions.
- 3.4 Members who have control over the use of funds have a duty to ensure that those funds are properly used and are safeguarded and that there is compliance with any restrictions on the level of expenditure.
- 3.5 Members must properly account for their expenses incurred or fees paid to them.

4 Representation of Constituents

- 4.1 Members are representatives of their branch members but not delegates. Members should seek to represent the views of their constituents but should also have regard to the interests of the Society as a whole and the wider public interest. Members should keep their constituents informed.

5 Collective Responsibility

- 5.1 The expression of individual views by Members is an important source of counsel. However, Members should recognise that decisions may be made by a majority of the Council/committee with which they disagree. Once a majority decision has been reached all Members are bound by that decision and must not seek to undermine or frustrate its implementation.
- 5.2 At the meeting at which the decision is taken, a dissenting Member may request that their dissent is minuted in the minutes.
- 5.3 A dissenting Member must communicate the decision to his constituents and adopt a constructive approach in doing so.

6 Attendance at Meetings

- 6.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that Members are volunteers, Members should be prepared to commit sufficient time and energy to carry out their functions effectively. In particular Members must attend meetings of the Council and of any committee or sub-committee to which they belong unless prevented by compelling personal or professional reasons.

7 Standards of Debate

- 7.1 Whilst it is acknowledged that Members are volunteers, Members should be prepared to commit sufficient time and energy to carry out their functions effectively. In particular Members must attend meetings of the Council and of any committee or sub-committee to which they belong unless prevented by compelling personal or professional reasons.

8 Core Principles

- 8.1 Members must not communicate information which is explicitly given to them in confidence or which comes into their possession in circumstances where a duty of confidentiality arises.

9 Dealing with Public and Media

- 9.1 When speaking in public about the work of the Society or its policies (whether to the press or in any public forum including the use of the social media) Members must ensure that they reflect the current policies and views of the Society. Members should ensure that their comments are well informed, well considered and that none of their comments bring the Society into disrepute.
- 9.2 If a Member is expressing a personal opinion it must be made clear that those views do not necessarily represent those of the Society.
- 9.3 Before speaking to the media the Member should where possible notify the Chief Executive or Deputy Chief Executive. If that is not possible he must report the contact to the Chief Executive as soon as possible thereafter.
- 9.4 Guidelines may be published from time to time in this area and Members must comply with any such guidelines.

10 Relationships with STEP Staff

- 10.1 Members must recognise that staff are part of a line management structure. Members should respect the role of the staff which is to implement the decisions of the Society.
- 10.2 A Member who is concerned about the capability or performance of a member of staff should raise the matter in accordance with the Society's line management structure. Members should not seek to discipline a member of staff themselves nor seek to criticise them in open session meetings.
- 10.3 Members must not engage in any behaviour towards members of staff which might reasonably be interpreted as discrimination, bullying or harassment.

11 Criminal Convictions and Professional Sanctions

- 11.1 Members undertake to inform the Society of any past conviction or current investigation for criminal offences and of any sanctions imposed on them by regulatory bodies, in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct.
- 11.2 Where a Member is being investigated by his or her professional regulatory body or by the Police or is subject to professional regulatory or criminal proceedings and his or her continued membership of the Council or Committee, as the case may be, is detrimental to the interests of the Society the Member should relinquish his or her position. This provision applies equally to candidates for such positions.

12 Conflicts of Interest and the Register of Interests

- 12.1 Members are required on taking up office to declare their interests for registration in the Register of Members' Interests held by the Council or Committee on which they sit and to ensure that the information is updated as soon as it changes.
- 12.2 Members must declare all relevant interests including (but not limited to):
 - 12.2.1 Membership of a body (including a Trade Union, professional organisation or political party) whose purposes include influencing public opinion or policy in areas relevant to the society's work
 - 12.2.2 Any appointments or contracts which could lead to a commercial conflict of interest
 - 12.2.3 Sponsorship
 - 12.2.4 Potential conflicts arising from the possession of confidential information
- 12.3 Members must also declare any relevant interests of a spouse, partner or dependent where (a) the Member is aware of the interest; and (b) a fair-minded observer might reasonably perceive a conflict of interest.
- 12.4 Members have a duty to declare any personal or pecuniary interest in proposed transactions or arrangements or any other interest that they think may relate to any decision being taken. Where their conflict of interests makes it appropriate to do so, Members must limit their participation in debate and or decision-making.
- 12.5 Members must ensure that they declare any potential conflicts of interests in advance if they wish to speak in debate where the subject of the debate could potentially lead to such conflicts.
- 12.6 Members must also declare if they have been lobbied by any body, organisation or individual in relation to the debate.
- 12.7 When Members are representing the Society in other forums they must do so exclusively and must not at that forum represent any other body, organisation or individual.

13 Self-promotion

- 13.1 Members must not use their position to market themselves or their business although they may refer to their position in their curriculum vitae.

14 Gifts and Hospitality

- 14.1 Members must not accept gifts or hospitality where this might cause their integrity or independence to be questioned. Gifts and hospitality over the value of £200 (or equivalent value in local currency) must be reported to the Chief Executive within 28 days of receipt.

15 Complaints against Members in respect of their obligations under this statement

- 15.1 Any complaint against a Member will be dealt with in line with our 'Handling Complaints against Elected Members' policy and process which can be found as Appendix A of this document.

16 Interpretation

- 16.1 Questions about the interpretation of this statement should be referred initially to the Chief Executive.

Appendix A

Handling complaints against Elected Members

This policy and complaints process is applicable to all Members, whether on Board, Council, STEP Committees, Panels and Sub-Committees or Branch Committees.

In this document, 'Members' refers to elected members of Board, Council, STEP Committees, Panels and Sub-Committees and those on Branch Committees.

'Committees' refers to Board, Council, all STEP Committees, Panels, Sub-Committees and Branch Committees.

STEP's expectations of behaviour for those elected to represent STEP members worldwide is set out in two guidance documents; Code of Best Practice, and Elected members – Acting in STEP's interests.

Member Complaints Process

This complaints process will be used for Members where a complaint is raised which suggests that they may have behaved contrary to our expectations set out above, or where behaviour is perceived to be excessively rude, disruptive, and obstructive or considered to be extraordinary.

- A. Complaints must be in writing or received by email. Verbal and anonymous complaints will not be considered.
- B. Complaints are considered by the Chair of the Committee on which the Member sits.
- C. The Complaint will be dismissed if trivial or vexatious.
- D. The Member will receive a copy of the Complaint and be given 14 days to submit a written response.
- E. Where possible, local resolution/mediation will be attempted. We will aim to complete this part of the process within 28 days.
- F. If unresolved, the formal process will resume.
- G. The Chair of the Committee will appoint an Investigation Panel comprising three Members. The members will be drawn from across all STEP committees.
- H. The investigation Panel will seek to obtain written or verbal evidence from Members/Staff as required.
- I. The Investigation Panel will provide a written report summarising the evidence received, the conclusion(s) reached and provide sufficient reasons for the decision to be understood. A copy of the report will be supplied to the Member.

- J. The Member will have five days to submit factual corrections, which will be considered by the Investigation Panel.
- K. The panel's recommendations will be considered by the Chair of the Committee who can then dismiss the complaint, issue a warning or advice to either party or refer the matter for consideration by the Disciplinary Panel.
- L. If referred to the Disciplinary Panel, the matter will follow the usual process.
- M. If the Disciplinary Panel decides to impose a sanction the matter will be brought to the attention of the Board. Unless the Disciplinary Panel have decided to terminate membership, the Board will consider whether it is appropriate for the Member to remain on the Committee.
- N. Each case will be considered on its own merit. Board will take into account whether the behaviour which led to the complaint has undermined confidence in the Society or its governance.
- O. Any material considered by the Board will be provided to the Member with the Member given the opportunity to address the Board verbally or in writing.
- P. The Board will reach its decision having taken consideration of all relevant facts, impact on working relationships and reputation and confidence in the Society.
- Q. Where the Complaint is received against the Chair of the Committee, the matter will be considered by the Deputy Chair or Chair of an alternative Committee if not appropriate. In rare cases, it may be necessary to have a matter investigated externally.

Knowledge of complaints will remain restricted, dealt with confidentially by those involved in the investigation. The Chief Executive and Chair of Board will be informed of all complaints. Committee Members and the Executive will be notified on a case by case basis depending on whether the individual is to provide specific advice on a situation, assistance with process or the issue is directly relevant to their work.

Should the Member decided to seek legal representation, they will be responsible for any costs incurred and not STEP.

A flowchart providing an overview of the complaints process appears below.

Version	1.0	Approval	STEP Board 2016
Author	Governance and Professional Standards Team	Changes from last version	Introduction of Complaints Process
Date	July 2016	Next Review	July 2020