

**cabe**

chartered  
association  
of building  
engineers

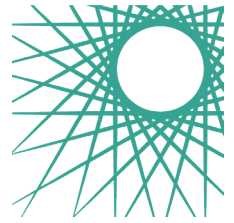
# Guide to Ethical Professionalism

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[cbuilde.com](https://cbuilde.com)

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## About this guidance



1. The following guidance provides an ethical framework to help CABE members meet the professional standards of behaviour required by the CABE Code of Professional Conduct (otherwise referred to as 'the Code').
2. The guidance provided are not rules and are not intended to cover every circumstance or instance but provide a framework which will help Building Engineers make good choices and ethically sound decisions to inform their day to day work and conduct.
3. A failure to follow the guidance is not a disciplinary matter in its own right but may be taken into consideration in any disciplinary proceedings brought by CABE.
4. The following is based on guidance provided by the Engineering Council ([www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/statement-of-ethical-principles/](http://www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/statement-of-ethical-principles/)), but has been restructured to support the four key tenets of the Code – acting professionally at all times, managing risk responsibly, ensuring competency, and acting in a way which promotes sustainability.

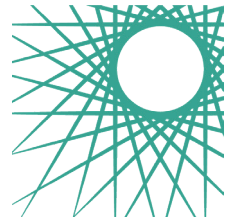
## Acting professionally at all times

5. Professional behaviour is founded in being professionally competent, civil and polite regardless of circumstances; ensuring that you act fairly to all parties setting aside your own interests; and ensuring that you provide professional advice and services that reflect your duty of care to clients, co-workers and the wider public. Building Engineers have a duty to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, openness, fairness, honesty and integrity. This includes:

### Acting with due skill, care and diligence and with proper regard for professional standards

6. Building Engineers have a duty to acquire and use wisely the understanding, knowledge and skills needed to perform their role. This may include:
  - Using reasonable skill and care in undertaking design or when making decisions about the performance of specification of building work
  - Ensuring that the work you are responsible for supervising, or undertaking, is fit for its intended purpose.
7. CABE members are expected to ensure that at all times they are acting in a reliable and trustworthy manner. This includes:
  - being timely in all aspects of their professional life
  - being objective and truthful in the advice and guidance that they offer
  - being alert to the ways in which their work and behaviour might affect others and respecting the privacy, rights and reputations of other parties and individuals
  - presenting and reviewing theory, evidence and interpreting information honestly, accurately, objectively and without bias, while respecting reasoned alternative views
  - challenging statements or policies that cause professional concern
  - at all times prioritising the interests of their clients and others they professionally represent above their own interests
  - being transparent in all their dealings
  - save where to do so would be wholly inconsistent with any of the above, acting in a manner that is not prejudicial to the interests of CABE and its other members.

## Accepting appropriate responsibility for work carried out under your supervision



8. Building Engineers have a duty to comply with all applicable laws and regulations and give due weight to facts, published standards, official codes of practice, guidance and the wider public interest including:
  - ensuring work carried out by or work undertaken under the supervision of a Building Engineer is lawful and justified (even where the contract is between a client/customer and an institutional member, the senior member of CABE representing the institutional member should be expected to answer for any professional failings on the part of the institutional member)
  - holding paramount, the health and safety of others and drawing attention to significant hazards
  - setting your terms and conditions of appointment clearly, in writing and agreeing these before commencing work
  - keeping clients and others informed of payments and costs due in a timely manner and seeking appropriate instructions as necessary where terms of engagement or costs may vary
  - ensuring that a suitable complaints handling processes is in place, that these are referenced in conditions of appointment and that the processes are honoured when a complaint is submitted
  - accepting responsibility with respect to any acts or omissions for any organisation in which they are held out as a director, partner or where such titles are used in connection with that organisation.

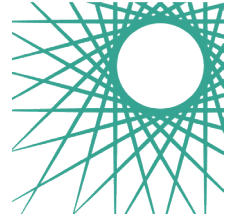
## Treating all persons fairly and with respect and acting in a way that does not bring the Chartered Association of Building Engineers into disrepute

9. At all times in the delivery of their professional services, Building Engineers have a duty to treat other people fairly and to abide by and promote high standards of leadership and communication. This includes:
  - being polite, courteous and understanding, even in the most difficult of circumstances
  - promoting equality, diversity and inclusion
  - upholding the reputation and standing of the profession.

Avoiding where possible real, or perceived conflicts of interest, and advising affected parties when such conflicts arise

10. A conflict of interest may arise where a Building Engineer is advising on matters where they have a personal interest (i.e. may stand to profit from the advice being given); where they are making decisions that favour another person or business in which they have an interest (e.g. by nominating or awarding contracts to people with whom they have a personal connection) or in diverse other circumstances where the interests of the Building Engineer or their business may be seen to be clouding or influencing their professional judgement. These are examples and not intended as an exhaustive list. Building Engineers should:
  - be aware of when and how conflicts of interest can arise so that they may be avoided
  - declare conflicts of interest in a transparent and open manner as soon as they become apparent
  - work fairly and in the public interest to resolve any conflicts that cannot be avoided
  - refuse to act and/or stand down from a matter altogether rather than act, or risk acting, where a conflict exists or where there is a significant risk of one arising, even if to do so may result in loss or disadvantage.

## Observing the proper duties of confidentiality owed to appropriate parties



11. Building Engineers will regularly hold data, information or become aware of facts which are or may be considered confidential. Building Engineers should ensure that information is suitably protected, and only disclose information where it is professionally appropriate to do so, having obtained express consent (in writing save in the case of an emergency in which case the instruction should be confirmed in writing) or when disclosure is required by an officer or inspector of a regulatory or enforcing authority lawfully exercising his or her statutory powers. Building Engineers should:
- recognise and respect the importance of physical and cyber security
  - understand the relevant legislation and appropriate processes to ensure data protection
  - respect and protect personal information and intellectual property.

## Reject bribery and all forms of corrupt behaviour and make positive efforts to ensure others do likewise

12. Wherever financial, contractual or statutory transactions take place there is potential for illegal or corrupt behaviour. This may include over or under valuation of work undertaken, accepting cash payments to avoid tax, or payment for the award of contracts and services (for example). Building Engineers should:
- be aware of the ways in which bribery and corruption can operate
  - avoid deception and take steps to prevent or report corrupt practices or professional misconduct
  - reject bribery and improper influence
  - comply at all times with all applicable bribery and anti-corruption legislation
  - not induce any client or person to pay sums of money which are not justified for the work which has been carried out or has been instructed to be carried out
  - make full disclosure of any fee, commission, discount or inducement (of any kind and irrespective whether it has any obvious financial value) to be received for the introduction of a client to any third party prior to entering into any contractual arrangement.

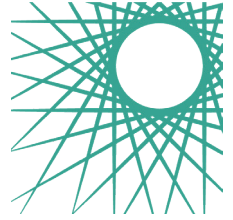
## Managing risk responsibly

13. Risk is inherent in the activities undertaken by Building Engineers, meaning that members of the profession have a significant role to play in managing and limiting it. Further detail of how to manage risk can be found on the Engineering Council's website ([www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/guidance-on-risk/](http://www.engc.org.uk/standards-guidance/guidance/guidance-on-risk/)), but the following risk management principles should be part of a professional Building Engineer's day to day work:

## Assessing and managing relevant risks and communicate these appropriately (Risk Management Principle 1)

14. Building Engineers should apply professional and responsible judgement and communicate these judgements appropriately. Building Engineers should:
- demonstrate by example a commitment to safety, reliability and ethical conduct through the professional management of risk, from the inception of any project
  - clearly demonstrate the standards by which they expect risks to be managed, thus setting an example to others
  - be mindful that some risks are capable of persisting beyond the life of the project in respect of which their services are delivered.

## **Preventing avoidable danger to health or safety (Risk Management Principle 2)**



15. Building Engineers should adopt a systematic and holistic approach to risk identification, assessment and management. The factors that give rise to risk are interdependent and cannot be examined in isolation. It is vital in managing risk to be aware of this interdependency, and rather than dealing with risks one-by-one as they arise, use approaches that deal with whole systems.

## **Building Engineers should comply with legislation and codes and be prepared to seek further improvements (Risk Management Principle 3)**

16. Regulations and codes of practice are generic. They are based on reasonably anticipated events and cannot predict every possible situation. Building Engineers should take a measured, yet challenging approach to potential risks, whether or not regulations apply.

## **Ensure good communication with others involved (Risk Management Principle 4)**

17. Building Engineers should ensure good communication with the others involved in their work as shortcomings in communication are present in nearly all failures in the management of risk. Communicating effectively with customers, clients, suppliers, subcontractors and colleagues is important to ensure that risks and their implications are understood properly. Within an organisation, risk management should be communicated as a core value.

## **Building Engineers should ensure that lasting systems for oversight and scrutiny are in place (Risk Management Principle 5)**

18. Effective oversight and scrutiny processes are important safeguards in controlling risks. They should be challenging and carried out with independence from those creating the risk or attempting to control it.

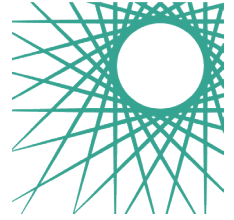
## **Building Engineers should contribute to public awareness of risk (Risk Management Principle 6)**

19. The perception of risk amongst the public is influenced by a range of factors, including emotional ones. Building Engineers have an important role in raising awareness and understanding about the real levels of risk and benefit and helping to prevent misconceptions.

## **Building Engineers should actively seek to identify risk; report and discuss risk in a responsible manner and raise a concern about a danger, risk, malpractice or wrongdoing which affects others ('blow the whistle'), or support a colleague or any other person to whom you have a duty of care who in good faith raises any such concern**

20. This includes:
- actively communicating concerns and ensuring that all reasonably necessary remedial measures are taken and mitigating actions are put in place
  - putting in place procedures within business to enable confidential reporting
  - being aware of confidential reporting mechanisms and how they can be used
  - escalating concerns if you believe they have not been adequately addressed
  - reporting to CABE where you are aware of another member of CABE who is in breach of the Code of Professional Conduct.

## **Building Engineers should assess relevant liability and shall hold, or be subject to employers, professional indemnity or other suitable insurance**



21. Holding the right insurance and the right level of cover helps to protect individuals, their clients and the wider public in the event that something goes wrong. Building Engineers should:

- regularly review their potential liabilities and seek advice on the type and extent of insurance policies and cover available
- ensure they have suitable insurances in place at all times to cover all their professional activities
- understand any limitations of the cover they hold and advise clients at the time of appointment
- work with insurers and underwriters in a transparent manner with full disclosure in obtaining insurance and in enabling insurers to properly handle claims.

## **Ensuring competency in your role as a Building Engineer**

### **Maintaining and enhancing competency**

22. It is vital that Building Engineering ensure they are aware of current good practice and maintain their awareness of changes to regulation, law and standards and have the necessary skills to deliver a professional service. Ideally this will include:

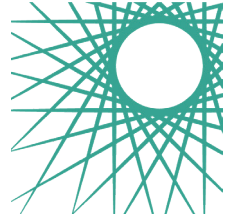
- undertaking CPD in line with CABE requirements at any point in time to keep their knowledge and skills up-to-date
- self-assessing competency, putting in place and following a personal development plan
- seeking feedback on performance through mechanisms such as periodic 360 degree or peer reviews
- identifying qualifications, or courses, that can enhance competency, including identifying refresher or follow-up training needs
- being aware of the issues that engineering and technology raise for society, and listening to the aspirations, reasonable expectations and concerns of others.

### **Encouraging others to advance their learning and competence**

23. Building Engineers should share your learning with others and encourage them to maintain their own competency. This might include:

- acting as a mentor for junior or less experienced staff
- offering to provide constructive feedback on the performance of fellow professionals
- ensuring that time and resource is allocated to support those you manage to undertake learning activities.

## Undertaking only professional tasks for which they are competent



24. Building Engineers should always act with care and perform services only in areas in which they are currently competent or under competent supervision. To do this they should:
- regularly self-assess their competency in relation to the type and scale of work they offer to undertake
  - disclose relevant limitations of competence to those it may affect
  - decline work unless they are sure that they are wholly competent to undertake it or can undertake it competently under the direct supervision of another person or organisation who is wholly competent to undertake it.

## Act in a way which promotes sustainability

25. Building Engineers should act in accordance with the principles of sustainability and prevent avoidable adverse impact on the environment and society. Further guidance and details on the principles of sustainability can be found on the Engineering Councils website ([www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/Guidance%20on%20Sustainability.pdf](http://www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/Guidance%20on%20Sustainability.pdf)) and Royal Academy of Engineering website ([www.raeng.org.uk/news/news-releases/2005/September/the-engineers-guide-to-sustainable-development](http://www.raeng.org.uk/news/news-releases/2005/September/the-engineers-guide-to-sustainable-development)). The following principles of sustainability should be part of a professional Building Engineer's day-to-day work:

## Protecting, and where possible improving, the quality of built and natural environments

26. Building Engineers have a responsibility to maximise the value of their activity toward building a sustainable world. This requires an understanding of what society demands and what is achievable, and a recognition that these change over time. (Principle of Sustainability 1<sup>3</sup>).
27. Understanding that Building Engineering is a profession with a strong ethical dimension, with Building Engineers having an important role in providing solutions for issues such as poverty, under-development and environmental degradation (Principle of Sustainability 2).
28. Building Engineers should seek multiple informed views to solve sustainability challenges recognising that the increasing complexity of sustainability challenges means that building engineers working alone cannot solve all the challenges faced by society. (Principle of Sustainability 5).

## Maximising the public good and minimising both actual and potential adverse effects for your own and succeeding generations

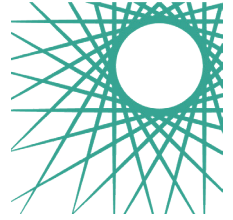
29. Where appropriate Building Engineers should do more than just comply with existing legislation or codes of practice. In seeking sustainable solutions, complying with current legislation, codes and environmental protection regulations may not be sufficient and Building Engineers should strive to go beyond the minimum wherever possible, anticipating future legislation which may be stronger (Principle of Sustainability 3).
30. Building Engineers should manage risk to minimise adverse impact to people and the environment particularly in planning and managing projects (Principle of Sustainability 6).

## Take due account of the limited availability of natural resources

31. Building Engineers should use resources efficiently and effectively. Engineers have a stewardship role with respect to planetary resources, and a responsibility to society to create more useful products and services with the lowest possible consumption of raw materials, water and energy. (Principle of Sustainability 4).



## Using this guidance to promote ethical behaviour



32. As well as underpinning the Code, this ethical guidance should be seen as a starting point for members of CABE to promote ethical behaviour and considerations in their workplace and in their day-to-day work.
33. Ethics need to be regularly reinforced, and Building Engineers, particularly those in leadership positions, need consistently to demonstrate and work in accordance with the values set out in this guidance. This is vital if they are to ensure a positive culture amongst their professional members and in the wider construction and built environment industry.
34. CABE would encourage all members to think about how they can support ethical behaviour including by:
  - ensuring that personal development plans include time to review various aspects of ethical professionalism
  - undertaking specific training on ethical professionalism
  - promoting discussion of ethical issues in the work place
  - arranging for speakers or seminars in the work place covering ethical issues.

**Details on training and support offered by CABE can be found on [cbuilds.com](https://cbuilds.com)**



## We're here to help

If you have any queries about the Guide to Ethical Professionalism, please contact us. You can also find out further information at [cbuilde.com](http://cbuilde.com).

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