

International Federation for Information Processing

Code of Conduct for IFIP Officials

Introduction

The International Federation for Information Processing (IFIP) has adopted this Code of Conduct for IFIP Officials to promote and maintain high standards of behaviour by its Officials whenever they conduct the business of the Federation, including the business of the office to which they were elected or appointed, or when they claim to act or give the impression of acting as a representative of the Federation.

This Code of Conduct is based on the principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Definitions

For the purposes of this Code, an 'Official' of IFIP will be taken to mean the holder of any of the following posts: President, President-elect, Vice-President, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Secretary-elect, Honorary Treasurer, Honorary Treasurer-elect, Councillor, together with Chairs and other officers of the Federation's Technical Committees, Working Groups, Technical Assembly, Member Societies Assembly, Standing Committees and Domain Committees. All those elected or appointed to these posts shall be deemed to be bound by the Code including those in post when the Code is adopted. The Code does not apply to employees of the Federation, as their conduct is governed by their Contracts of Employment.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'meeting' is a meeting of the Federation's General Assembly, Board, Executive Committee, Technical Committees, Standing Committees, Domain Committees and Assemblies.

Obligations

All Officials should ensure that they are familiar with the mission, aims and objectives of the Federation and those Statutes, Bylaws and Standing Orders that are relevant to their areas of responsibility.

When an official of the Federation acts, claims to act or gives the impression of acting as a representative of the Federation, he/she has the following obligations.

1. He/she shall act fairly and without prejudice and insofar as he/she has responsibility for staff shall fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
2. He/she shall behave in such a way that a reasonable person would regard as respectful.
3. He/she shall not act in a way which a reasonable person would regard as bullying, intimidatory or discriminatory.
4. He/she shall not seek to improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person.
5. He/she shall use the resources of the Federation efficiently and in accordance with budgetary constraints.
6. He/she shall not disclose information which is confidential or where disclosure is prohibited by law.

Declaration of interests in meetings

(i) In any meeting where the granting of an award, including a travel award, a prize or a contract, including a contract of employment, is under consideration, the Official shall declare any prior relationship (of any kind) with the individual or organisation concerned and the nature of that relationship. In the event of a close relationship, the Official shall not take any part in the discussion and shall not vote.

(ii) Officials must also declare an interest in any matter in which they have a personal financial involvement and, in such cases, must not take part in the discussion and shall not vote.

(iii) Where a matter arises at a meeting which relates to a financial interest of a friend, relative or close associate, the Official shall disclose the nature of the interest and not speak or vote on the matter.

Gifts

An Official must declare to the General Secretary any gifts or hospitality worth more than an estimated value of 75 euros which the Official has received by virtue of his or her office. The General Secretary shall maintain a record of such declarations.

Expenses including costs of travel and accommodation paid or reimbursed by host organisations when travelling on IFIP business do not need to be declared. The General Secretary needs to be made aware of all such visits.

Procedure for Dealing with Complaints

Principles

Neutrality. As far as possible all complaints should be dealt with by individuals who are not only neutral between the parties involved but are widely trusted to be so.

Confidentiality. To protect the reputations of the parties involved and in the interest of the credibility of the Federation, no announcement of any kind should be made to indicate that a complaint has been received, except as described in the following sections. Unless and until a complaint is upheld, only those individuals who reasonably need to know about it should be informed of its existence and no assumptions should be made either about the validity of the complaint or the culpability of the accused.

Speed. A lengthy process is unavoidably stressful for all concerned and should be avoided. As far as possible all complaints should be dealt with within two calendar months excluding any appeal against a penalty.

Making a Complaint

All complaints under the Code of Conduct shall be made in writing, setting out the evidence for the complaint and shall be delivered to the President, who by default shall act as the *Complaint Officer* for all complaints.

Complaint Officer

The Complaint Officer for a complaint will normally be the President. However, should the complaint be made by or against the President or should the President be directly involved in the complaint, he/she shall be deemed ineligible to deal with it and the Honorary Secretary will then normally act as Complaint Officer instead. Should the Honorary Secretary be ineligible in the same way, the longest serving member of the Executive Committee who is not ineligible will take on the role of Complaint Officer.

Informal Stage

As soon as possible after a complaint is received, the Complaint Officer will meet the parties concerned, 'the complainant(s)' and 'the accused', either together or separately and shall endeavour to settle the complaint by informal mediation. It is hoped that in the great majority of cases this will prove sufficient, in which case no report will be made to the Executive Committee, General Assembly or any other body about what has occurred. If it does not, the Complaint Officer will move on to the formal stage.

Formal Stage

The formal stage begins with the Complaint Officer setting up a panel of three General Assembly members, who will choose the panel's own chair. The panel members must not be members of the Executive Committee. In choosing them, the Complaint Officer must be careful to avoid selecting not only anyone involved in the complaint but also anyone who might reasonably be considered as being biased either in favour of or against any of the parties concerned. Avoiding any impression of bias, as well as any actual bias, is most important for the credibility of the complaint system so erring on the side of caution is strongly advised when choosing panel members.

The panel will interview the parties and any witnesses the panel wishes to call, bearing in mind at all times the need for confidentiality.

After a period of no more than two months after the receipt of a complaint the panel shall provide the Complaint Officer with a written report giving its decision and justifying it. No other recommendations shall be made.

The panel shall make one of three possible decisions:

1. The complaint is not upheld or is deemed trivial or vexatious. In this case the Complaint Officer shall notify the parties concerned. No wider announcement will be made.
2. The complaint is upheld. In this case, the accused will be censured and warned about their future conduct. The Complaint Officer will notify the complainant(s) and the accused to that effect. The Complaint Officer will also notify the General Assembly that a complaint has been made against [the accused] and upheld. The identity of the complainant(s) and the nature of the complaint will not be disclosed.
3. The complaint is upheld and is considered so serious that it justifies removing the accused from one or more official positions either for a specified period or permanently. The panel shall specify the positions concerned and the length of the period of removal. In this case the accused shall be given 21 days to decide whether to accept the panel's decision or to make an appeal. Should no appeal be made or should an appeal be unsuccessful, the General Assembly shall be notified in the same way as for type 2 and shall be told of the post(s) from which the accused has been removed.

In the case of a 'type 2' decision made against an individual who was the subject of such a decision in the previous two calendar years the panel may choose to enact a 'type 3' penalty instead. In this case, the accused shall have the right of appeal, with the same procedure as for a 'type 3' decision.

Appeals

Any appeal shall be made to the Executive Committee excluding any members ruled out for direct involvement in the complaint and any others who in the Complaint Officer's judgement may reasonably be considered not to be impartial. The Complaint Officer shall give a copy of the report to this subset of the Executive Committee, who will interview the chair of the panel and the accused and will consider whether the correct procedure was applied by the panel and whether the action proposed is reasonable given the evidence considered by the panel. The Executive Committee will then make a decision on whether or not to uphold the appeal by a simple majority vote. The Complaint Officer shall be entitled to vote. The panel chair, who must not be a member of the Executive Committee, shall not be entitled to vote.

In all cases, the Executive Committee's decision on an appeal shall be final.

Unethical Conduct

Complaints under this Code replace complaints under the 'IFIP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct' for IFIP officials acting in their official capacities, as opposed to as IT professionals. Unethical conduct by an official shall be considered as grounds for making a complaint under this Code.

Amended at the GA 2025