

July 2015

Code of professional conduct

Introduction

This Code of Conduct applies to, and is binding on, all members and honorary members of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (CIOL) and Chartered Linguists who are members of other qualifying organisations. Members and Chartered Linguists have a duty of integrity and professional responsibility to clients/employers, to colleagues, to their professional body and its staff/officers, and to society at large. The Code is based on a series of General Principles of Professional Conduct, which serve as benchmarks for the conduct that the above groups are entitled to expect of a professional linguist. The Code also underpins implementation of the CIOL Disciplinary Procedures, which may be found on the CIOL website (www.ciol.org.uk).

The Code of Conduct is approved by Council, and the current version enters into force on 1 September 2015. The current version of the Code of Conduct is always available on the CIOL website.

This Code of Conduct:

1. defines standards for best practice by language professionals;
2. provides members/Chartered Linguists with a framework for making decisions on ethical professional and business conduct;
3. fosters good professional relationships between members/Chartered Linguists, between members/Chartered Linguists and their clients/employers, and between members/Chartered Linguists and other professionals;
4. protects members/Chartered Linguists against undue pressure from clients/employers or fellow professionals in relation to professional conduct;
5. in conjunction with the CIOL's Disciplinary Procedures, upholds the integrity and reputation of the language professions.

Definitions

The following definitions apply in this Code of Conduct:

'Chartered Linguist': a person designated with this title and listed on the register of Chartered Linguists maintained by the Chartered Institute of Linguists

'CIOL': the abbreviated form for the Chartered Institute of Linguists

'Council': the governing body of the Chartered Institute of Linguists

'Disciplinary Procedures': the Disciplinary Procedures of the Chartered Institute of Linguists, applicable to members of CIOL and to Chartered Linguists

'Language professionals': translators; interpreters; providers of specialist language services in related areas; language teachers, lecturers and instructors; and linguists working in business, the professions and government

'Member': an Associate, Member, Fellow, Honorary Member or Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists (designated as ACIL, MCIL, FCIL, HonMCIL or HonFCIL)

'Qualifying organisation': a professional body or similar organisation whose members may be registered as Chartered Linguists under the rules for admission as Chartered Linguists

General Principles of Professional Conduct

The framework for ethical professional conduct by language professionals is underpinned by the following eight General Principles of Professional Conduct:

1. Professional judgement
2. Linguistic competence
3. Subject competence
4. Professional competence
5. Continuing Professional Development
6. Responsibilities to clients/employers
7. Responsibilities to fellow language professionals and to the Chartered Institute of Linguists
8. Responsibilities to other agencies, public bodies and society

1. Professional judgement

- 1.1 The Code of Conduct represents a framework for professional judgement by members/Chartered Linguists. In particular, it offers members/Chartered Linguists protection against requests by clients/employers to carry out work that places them in breach of the Code. Members/Chartered Linguists will apply the provisions of the Code to the judgements they make concerning their competence to carry out work they are offered and the compatibility of that work with the General Principles of Professional Conduct.
- 1.2 A member/Chartered Linguist who judges that it is professionally justifiable to carry out a piece of work in breach of one or more aspects of the Code of Conduct must take all necessary professional steps to protect himself/herself, the client/employer, the CIOL and the profession.

2. Linguistic competence

- 2.1 Members/Chartered Linguists will offer professional language services only in languages and/or language pairs in which they are registered with CIOL.
- 2.2 Members/Chartered Linguists will work only within their linguistic competence. 'Linguistic competence' means their spoken and/or written command of the language(s) concerned, their awareness of dialects and other language variants, and their knowledge of the cultural, social and political features of the country or countries concerned.

3. Subject competence

- 3.1 Members/Chartered Linguists will work only within their subject competence. 'Subject competence' means their familiarity with the specialist field(s) involved in the work, whether gained through formal qualifications or through experience.

4. Professional competence

- 4.1 Members will work only in areas of professional practice for which they have the necessary practical and theoretical knowledge and skills.

4.2 In offering their services, members/Chartered Linguists will reflect current professional practice and the relevant professional environment.

5. Continuing Professional Development

5.1 CIOL endorses Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as good professional practice. It strongly recommends practising members to engage in CPD to maintain, update and develop their skills.

5.2 For Chartered Linguists, CPD is a condition of initial and continuing registration.

6. Responsibilities to clients/employers

6.1 Members/Chartered Linguists will take responsibility for their work and for its quality, even where part or all of the work is sub-contracted.

6.2 CIOL recommends that members/Chartered Linguists make every effort to secure a briefing from clients/employers regarding the requirements for each job and to keep a record of this information. Members/Chartered Linguists will inform their client/employer promptly of any delays or problems arising in connection with the work.

6.3 Members/Chartered Linguists will carry out all work impartially.

6.4 Members/Chartered Linguists will disclose to their client/employer any actual or potential conflict of interest or other factor that might make it inappropriate for them to carry out a specific piece of work or any other circumstances that might affect the standard of the work.

6.5 Members/Chartered Linguists will take all reasonable precautions to keep information and material provided by clients/employers confidential and secure (except where disclosure is required by law). This requirement will also apply to fellow language professionals to whom part or all of a job is sub-contracted.

6.6 Members/Chartered Linguists will not use information acquired in the course of their work to gain unfair advantage.

6.7 Members/Chartered Linguists will meet all relevant legal obligations to the agency/employer to which they have been contracted. They will not solicit work directly from end-clients for whom they have worked through an agency/another employer to the disadvantage of that agency/employer. Any member who is approached by such an

end-user with a view to working directly for him/her will inform the agency/employer immediately.

- 6.8 Members/Chartered Linguists will comply with any other Code of Conduct by which they are bound as Members of other professional bodies or by any such Code imposed by their employer.

7. Responsibilities to fellow language professionals and to the Chartered Institute of Linguists

- 7.1 Members/Chartered Linguists will not act in any way that might bring individual professional colleagues, CIOL, and/or the language professions as a whole into disrepute.
- 7.2 Members/Chartered Linguists will show courtesy, honesty and integrity in their dealings with fellow language professionals, with staff/officers of CIOL, and with professionals with whom they have dealings in the course of their work.
- 7.3 In particular, members/Chartered Linguists will ensure that statements made in a public arena, including through social media, are professional in tone and content.
- 7.4 Members/Chartered Linguists will endeavour to the best of their ability and capacity to contribute to a professional community of practice.

8. Responsibilities to other agencies, public bodies and society

- 8.1 Members/Chartered Linguists will comply with all statutory requirements and keep all records required by official agencies.
- 8.2 CIOL recommends practising professional linguists to have Professional Indemnity Insurance cover.
- 8.3 Members/Chartered Linguists will not carry out work that they are aware might expose them to criminal prosecution or civil liability or in relation to which they have a duty of disclosure to an official agency.
- 8.4 Members/Chartered Linguists will not accept or carry out work that may result in discrimination of any kind against another individual/group except where the obligation to provide professional language services (and in particular, to translate or interpret accurately) requires them to do so.