

CODE OF ETHICAL STATISTICAL PRACTICE

Introduction

The mission of the Statistical Society of Canada (SSC) encourages the development and use of statistics and probability. To promote high standards in statistical practice in Canada, practitioners must demonstrate ability and professional integrity. Hence, the SSC has adopted this Code of Ethical Statistical Practice to guide its accredited members in their everyday professional life. All accredited members must agree to abide by this Code of Ethical Statistical Practice as a necessary condition of their accreditation.

Authority

The authority for the SSC Code of Ethical Statistical Practice derives from its formal adoption by the SSC on March 20, 2004. The Society is thus committed to uphold these principles with respect to the conduct of its accredited members.

Elements of Ethical Statistical Practice

The elements have been grouped into four major areas of responsibility that define ethical statistical practice.

A. Responsibility to Society

1. Conform to procedures that protect human rights and dignity. In particular, ensure that the collection and storage of information and the publication of results adhere to relevant privacy laws or privacy standards set out by the SSC or other relevant bodies.
2. Strive to advance public knowledge and understanding of information by the application of appropriate statistical methods and interpretation of results, and by providing assistance in discrediting false or misleading information.
3. Maintain objectivity and strive to avoid procedural or personal bias. The creation of valid data-based information is vital to informed public opinion and policy.
4. Acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, regulations and standards in the practitioner's field of application and comply with these requirements.



B. Responsibility to Employers and Clients

1. Carry out and document work with due care and diligence in accordance with the requirements of the employer or client.
2. Avoid disclosure or authorization to disclose, for personal gain or benefit to a third party, confidential information acquired in the course of professional practice without the prior written permission of the employer or client, or as directed by a court of law.
3. Declare any interest, financial or otherwise, that could be perceived as influencing the outcome of work undertaken for a client or employer.
4. Advise clients or employers of any potential or actual conflict between the ethical standards of statistical practice and the interests of the client or employer.
5. Exercise care to prevent the use of any misleading summary of the data. Strive to ensure that all assumptions and limitations relevant to the data, the analysis and the results are fully disclosed.

**For more information,
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C. Responsibility to Other Statistical Practitioners

1. Uphold the reputation of statistical practice and seek to improve professional standards by participating in their development, use and enforcement. Avoid any action that will adversely affect the good standing of Statistics and Statisticians.
2. Refrain from speaking in the name of the Society without the authorization by the Executive of the Society.
3. Encourage and support fellow statisticians in their professional development and, wherever possible, encourage recruitment and provide opportunities for new entrants to the profession.
4. Act with integrity toward fellow statisticians and other professionals, avoiding any activity that is incompatible with professional standards. Ensure that due credit is ascribed to fellow professionals. While question and debate are encouraged, criticism should be directed toward procedures rather than persons. Avoid publicly casting doubt on the professional competence of others.



Statistical Society of Canada

D. Professionalism

1. Adhere to the Guidelines for Professional Development, seeking to upgrade professional knowledge and skills and to be informed of technological developments, procedures and standards relevant to the field of application.
2. Seek to exercise recognized good practice, upholding quality standards and encouraging fellow-practitioners to do likewise.
3. Only undertake work and provide services that are within the limits of professional competence; and do not lay claim to any level of competence not possessed.
4. Accept responsibility for work and give objective and reliable information on procedures in any professional review or assessment.
5. Refuse to enter into, or comply with, any arrangement where financial or other rewards are contingent upon the outcome of a proposed statistical inquiry.

Summary

This code establishes basic principles to help practitioners maintain the highest standards of professional conduct and describes the behaviour that peers may expect from their statistical colleagues. An accredited member's behaviour is expected to conform always with the expectations of informed, respected and experienced peers. In response to a complaint, the procedures set out in the documentation of the SSC Accreditation Committee will apply.