

Coffee House: Code of Conduct

Introducing the
working draft
document



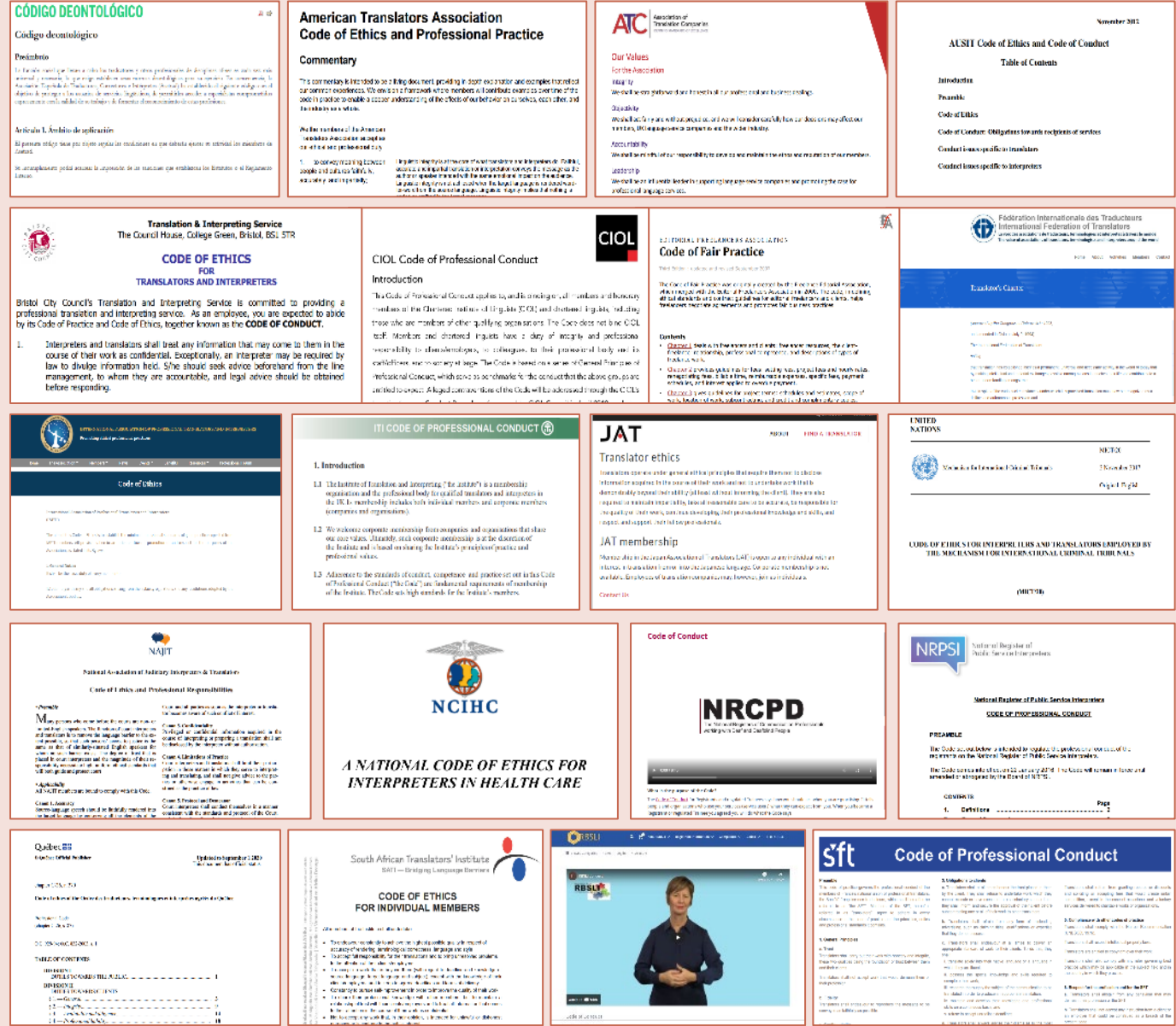
CODES OF ETHICS VS CODES OF CONDUCT

ITI currently employs a Code of Professional Conduct, rather than a Code of Ethics and, in the translation world, it is common to use the two titles interchangeably, despite them fulfilling quite different purposes.

- A **code of ethics** is designed to convey a bigger picture, vision or overall philosophy of an institution or industry as a whole, and should help guide members' or employees' decision-making.
- A **code of conduct**, meanwhile, outlines the concrete, small-scale behaviours expected of an employee or member, which should be enforceable rules with obvious applications.

CODES OF CONDUCT / ETHICS

Well-established, institutionally-embedded documents providing principles of practice for translators and a symbolic badge of honour resulting in elevated status to and trust in the profession (Baixauli-Olmos 2021:311)



KEY THEMES IN CODES OF CONDUCT/ETHICS (1/2)

Eight common principles:

Accuracy

Competence

Confidentiality

Conflicts of interest

CPD

Impartiality/neutral

Integrity and professionalism

Role boundaries

CODE OF ETHICS	Accuracy	Competence	Confidentiality	Conflicts of interest	CPD	Impartiality
ASETRAD	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red
ATA	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green
ATC	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
AUSIT	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
BCCTI	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green
CIOL	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
EFA	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red	Red
FIT	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red
IAPTI	Red	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
ITI	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
JAT	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Green
MICT	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
NAJIT	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
NCIHC	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
NRCPD	Red	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green
NRPSI	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
OTTIAQ	Red	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green
RBSLI	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Red
SATI	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
SFT	Green	Green	Green	Red	Green	Red
Total /20	14	20	20	13	13	13

Lambert 2023, on the prominence of ethical buzzwords in a corpus of 20 codes of ethics.

OTHER THEMES IN CODES OF CONDUCT/ETHICS (2/2)

- Personal vs professional ethics
- Agency
- Neutrality
- Fidelity
- Loyalty
- Conflicts of interest
- Representation
- Confidentiality
- Finances
- Technology
- Copyright and intellectual property
- Ethical stress
- Self-care
- Ecological sustainability

Code of Conduct – a brief history

The current Code of Conduct was approved by ITI members at the AGM on 8 September 2013 and is available on the ITI website: [Professional standards](#).

Subsequent amendments:

- 3.1.4, Principle 3 - approved at the AGM on 29 October 2016
- 2.3.1, Principle 2 - approved at the AGM on 13 October 2018
- Minor word amendments - 5.1/2.8.1(a)/2.8.1(b) approved at the AGM on 08 October 2022
- 2.5.2, Principle 2 - approved at the AGM on 08 October 2022
- 3.1.4, Principle 3 - approved at the AGM on 08 October 2022

It appears that the process for dealing with an alleged breach of the CoC was carried out in 2017, but the recommendations were not implemented.

Critique – areas for improvement

- 1. Length and complexity:** The document is lengthy and detailed, which may make it challenging for members to fully absorb and remember, and difficult for clients to understand.
- 2. Overlap and repetition:** Some sections contain overlapping information. For example, confidentiality is mentioned in multiple places. Streamlining could improve clarity.
- 3. Accessibility:** The format and presentation of the document is not user-friendly. A searchable version with hyperlinks between related sections could improve usability.
- 4. Examples and case studies:** Including practical examples or case studies could help members and clients better understand how to apply the code in real-world situations.
- 5. Enforcement practicality:** The disciplinary procedures are quite elaborate.

Faced with an incident involving unprofessional behaviour that had no remedy in the Code of Conduct the Board agreed that a review was needed.

The Board reviewed the initial draft and concluded that there was a need to look at the concept more strategically and to seek wider perspectives.

The group worked on the new Code and supporting documents over the winter.

Wider consultation with members using an online deliberation platform is planned.

Winter 2023–2024

September 2024

April 2025

October 2025

Summer 2023

June 2024

Winter 2024 - 2025

June – July 2025

The Professional Conduct Committee was reinstated and was given the task of reviewing the CoC and producing an updated version.

A task and finish group was set up to advise on the drafting of a new Code of Conduct.

A working draft of the CoC is presented for initial discussion at a Coffee House session.

Members will vote on the final version of the revised CoC at the AGM.

Code of Conduct – review timeline

Our ambition

The revised Code of Conduct should:

- be more accessible and user-friendly for ITI members and their clients
- maintain rigorous standards while being less prescriptive in its approach
- recognise the evolving nature of the translation and interpreting profession
- place greater emphasis on professional judgement
- include updated provisions that reflect current industry challenges e.g. use of technology

A few challenges...

- ITI members may be individuals or companies; they may be translators or interpreters or project managers or academics, or some other type of language specialist or related profession. So... one Code of Conduct or many?
- It's impossible to make absolute statements about what is OK and what is not OK due to different approaches used across the breadth of translation and interpreting practices.
- The boundary between conduct and ethics could be drawn in many places.

Key changes

Restructuring and consolidation

The original Code's four principles (honesty and integrity, professional competence, client confidentiality and trust, relationships with other members) have been reorganised into three elements:

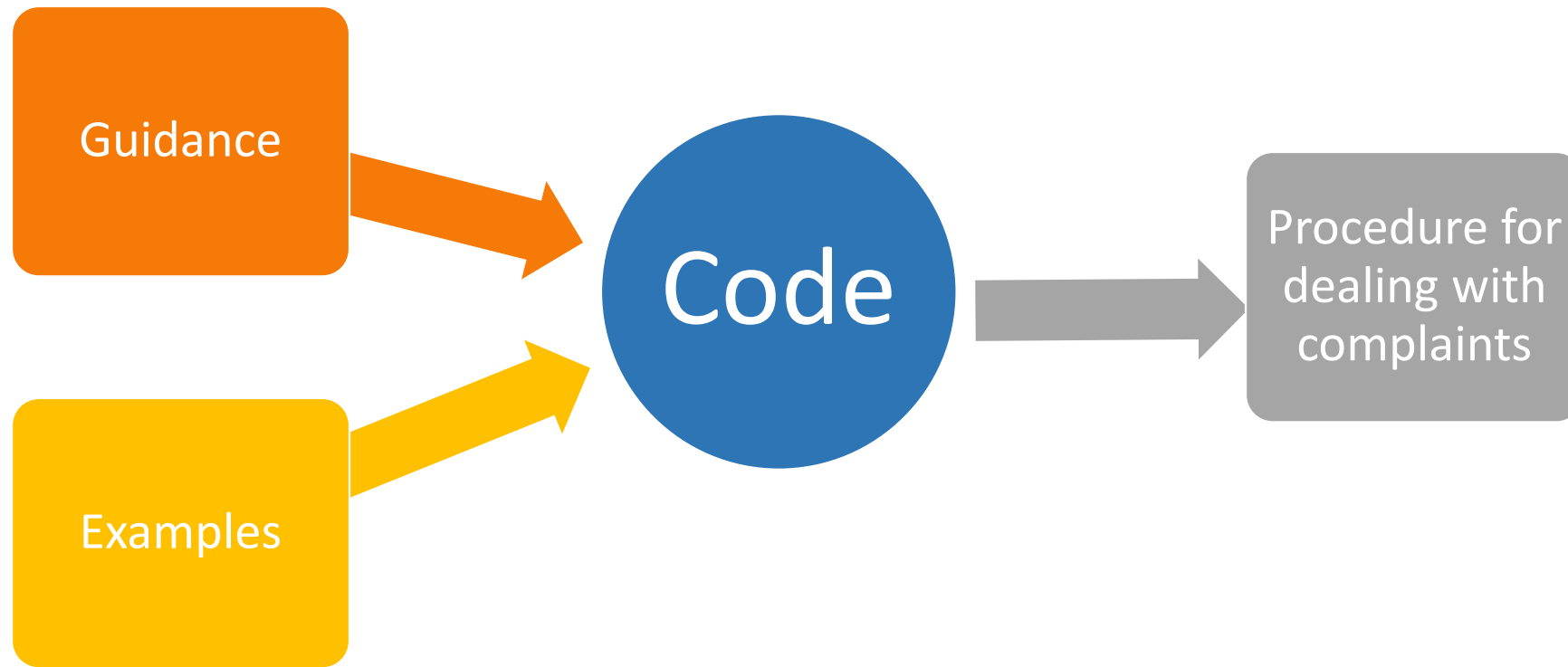
- Professional values
- Professional competence
- Professional business practices

New elements

New Element	Description
Purpose statement	Clear articulation of members' role as professionals acting with integrity to deliver a good service to clients
Self-care	Recognition of wellbeing as a professional responsibility
Professional judgement	Explicit acknowledgement of the importance of exercising professional judgement
Technology use	With the increase in MT and the evolution of genAI a new section on appropriate use of technology and associated risks is needed

Removed or reduced elements

Removed/reduced element	Notes
Detailed advertising rules	Simplified to core principles
Media statements section	Removed (as not necessary in the Code)
Specific translation direction requirements	Not proscribed in the Code but will be discussed in new guidance
Competition compliance details	Removed – but the principle of acting fairly and ethically remains
Detailed subcontracting requirements	Condensed but core responsibility maintained



Work still to be done – supporting resources