



# **Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics**

**Sri Lanka Library Association  
2015 (Rev)**

## Foreword

For any professional or professional organization, adherence to the highest standards of honesty, integrity and ethical practices, is imperative. This should be an essential component of all professional development programmes.

Therefore setting out LIS professional ethics (PE) for the LIS profession will too necessitates the laying of emphasis on ethics and ethical conduct to enhance the quality of the discipline, and management practices and services of management of Libraries and Information Centres and their services. Consequently it is necessary to develop a realistic framework of ethical principles that can be embraced by a wide stratum of individuals within that profession and to help society and the community at large. Many aspects of the profession that need to be taken into consideration amongst them are – the work place, work culture, job performance, accessing, procuring and delivering information among others. .

The Sri Lanka Library Association has been involved with the formulation of a Code of Ethics from earlier years, but one was not published until 1998. It is now revised and I believe will serve as a helpful guide to our Members in fulfilling their professional roles with diligence and with dedication to duty.

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the Ethics Committee of the SLLA for its members' involvement in, and their contribution to, the development of this revision of the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics. I must also thank all the senior colleagues who assisted the Ethics Committee in their successful completion of it. I take this opportunity to appreciate and thank Prof. Lankage for initiating discussions on this important subject and the initial preparation of a Code of Ethics for the Association. I acknowledge and thank the efforts made by Mr. Harrison Perera and his team to introduce the 1998 Code as a publication.

This Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics will be referred to as “the Code” in this document.

It will be mandatory for the SLLA members to adhere to this Code, and I am certain that the Code will serve as an invaluable document that will provide the SLLA members and the LIS professionals in general with guidance to be able to uphold their professionalism in society.

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2015

## **1.0 Introduction**

The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for the Library & Information Management profession establishes the key commitments and obligations of practicing librarians and information managers towards individual and corporate users, to communities of users, and to society in general as well as for those within the profession. These relate to members' standards of practice in the delivery of professional services and in responding to opportunities to provide effective services of excellence.

### **1.1.Application of the Code**

The role of information institutions and professionals, including libraries and librarians, in modern society is to provide access and professional guidance relevant to the information required by intended users for their diverse purposes. Consequently Librarians and Information Managers have social responsibilities.

The Code thus provides guidance for LIS professionals for their self-regulation when addressing the interests of users and parent institutions to;

- render professional services for the benefit of the community and provide opportunities to supply effective and excellent quality services;
- encourage reflection on the principles with which  
Members can form policies and handle issues relating to all aspects of the profession;
- improve self-awareness of professionalism among members;
- ensure transparency in relationships to users and society in general whilst practicing the profession;
- highlight a set of principles to be applied by Members.

1.2. The Code is not a legislation but an agreement between Librarians and Information Managers and the Library and Information Management profession.

1.3 In some respects the Code provides a space to address situations not covered by the law such as ethical dilemmas, prejudices and grey areas that are encountered in everyday operations but it goes further than the law in establishing rights and obligations and responsibilities of Members.

## **2.0 Objectives of the Code**

The purpose of the Code is to make clear, both to professionals and the public alike, the standards of professional conduct required of Members of the Sri Lanka Library Association and indicate what matters may be regarded as being contrary to the aims, objectives and interests of the Association.

2.1. The Code shall be obligatory for Members of the SLLA.

They will;

- observe the highest standards of conduct and integrity;
- act honestly in providing professional services;
- carry out professional services in accordance with professional standards;
- refrain from any conduct which might bring discredit to the profession.

## **3.0 Definitions**

- Association** – Refers to the Sri Lanka Library Association.
- Code of ethics** – A set of standards that guide the conduct of the members of a profession.
- Members** – Members of the Sri Lanka Library Association
- User** – Persons who Use a Library or an Information Service.
- Information Service** – A service provided to a client or a user/ or assist a client or user in finding information

## **4.0. Core areas addressed in the Code**

- 4.1. Responsibility to Society
- 4.2. Responsibility to the Profession
- 4.3. Responsibility to the Professional Association

### **4.1 Responsibility to society**

#### **4.1.1 Rights of the User to access information;**

The core mission of the members of the Association is to ensure best possible access to information required by users.

Librarians and Information Managers should employ the most effective and efficient ways to make materials and information accessible to all requiring it.

#### **4.1.2 Promotion of resources and services**

Librarians and Information Managers should regard the information resources in their collections as representing the wealth and value of the Library and promote their usage to the maximum by introducing awareness strategies appropriate to the user community of a particular library service and by ensuring minimum barriers to access information.

4.1.2.1 Members shall have an obligation towards facilitating the free-flow of information and ideas and protecting and promoting the rights of every individual to have unfettered and equal access to the information that they require.

4.1.2.2. Members shall provide protection against the unlawful withholding of information and the imposition of censorship.

4.1.2.3 Librarians and Information Managers should ensure accessibility with regard to the medium and the format by the user community with special attention to the information needs of differently-abled users.

#### **4.1.3 Responsibilities towards the users and society**

4.1.3.1 In order to promote social inclusion and to eradicate discrimination, Librarians and Information Managers, should uphold the principle of access to information as a citizen's right.

4.1.3.2 The promotion of Information Literacy skills of users should be one of the prime responsibilities of librarians. Information literacy skills include reading, IT, research skills etc.

4.1.3.3 Members must promote ethical and fair use of information and observe the legal frameworks established in terms of information usage, security etc. within organizational practices.

4.1.3.4 Privacy is a core principle of librarianship and information work. Members must accord the highest priority in respecting users' privacy.

4.1.3.4 a) The relationship between the library and the user is a bond founded on confidentiality.

4.1.3.4 b) In digital environments Librarians and Information Managers should t take adequate steps to maintain privacy and security.

4.1.3.4 c) Members shall respect the interests of diverse groups, their cultures and special needs in providing services and refrain from any conduct that damages ethnic and social cohesion.

4.1.3.4. d) Members engaged in research and related activities should adhere to relevant practices related to ethics associated with research.

## **4.2 Responsibility to the profession**

### **4.2.1 Intellectual Property Law and Open Access**

Members shall adhere to the Intellectual Property laws effective in the country.

4.2.1.1. Librarians and other information workers shall provide the best possible knowledge about the existence of Open Access licenses related to resources and their restrictions.

### **4.2.2 Neutrality of personal views, personal integrity and professional skills**

4.2.2.1 Librarians must be able to distinguish between their personal convictions and their professional duties and not permit their private interests or personal beliefs to endanger neutrality.

4.2.2.2 Members, in the interest of providing high quality services, shall be dedicated to maintaining, enhancing and keeping up-to-date with the latest professional knowledge and skills.

4.2.2.3 Librarians shall strive to enhance the profession's reputation and the status of Libraries and Information Services through their professionalism and ethical behaviour.

### **4.2.3 Colleagues and professional relationships**

Cordial Personal and professional relationships within the operation of Libraries and Information Services are extremely important for the furtherance of the profession and in order to provide better services to the users:

Members shall;

4.2.3.1 treat each other with fairness and respect and always be courteous in their professional relationships with other professionals and organizations;

- 4.2.3.2 maintain unbiased attitudes with regard to their personal, social, and political views in terms of employment and practices;
- 4.2.3.3 share their professional experiences with colleagues and assist and guide new entrants to the profession to develop necessary skills and attitudes;
- 4.2.3.4 give just credit for professional work to those to whom credit is due and acknowledge the contributions of others.

### **4.3 Responsibility to the Professional Association:**

Librarians and Information Managers shall understand the necessity, and significance of, being a member of the Association and consider the Code as being binding for members.

- 4.3.1. Members who hold office in the association must strive to be impartial and fair to all members and perform their obligations and duties based upon the policies and the principles enumerated in this Code. They must adhere to the principle of collective responsibility.
- 4.3.2. Officers of the Association shall act upon, and engage in, the functions of the Association without the expectation of personal, financial or other rewards.
- 4.3.3. Members shall expect the Association to safeguard their professional rights, obligations and responsibilities. They shall be free to seek assistance from the Association in resolving professional disputes that run counter to the spirit and contents of the Code.
- 4.3.4. Members shall be free to engage in constructive criticism and in presenting ideas and suggestions, when and where necessary, within the Association, whilst remaining aware of the necessity to safeguard and protect the image and reputation of the Association and the profession. .
- 4.3.5. No member or group of members shall use the Name and Logo of the Sri Lanka Library Association for personal benefits.

### **4.4 Conformity to the Code**

The Code shall apply to all individual members of the SLLA.

- 4.4.1. Legal and proven convictions for offences which could bring the profession into disrepute must be notified to the Association by the parties involved.
- 4.4.2. In all professional considerations the interests of the users, with their prescribed or legitimate requirements, take precedence over all other interests of the Library and Information Service e.g. parent organizations.
- 4.4.3 Failure to comply with the requirements set out in this Code, if regarded to be serious professional misconduct, shall render the Member concerned liable to be expelled or suspended (either unconditionally or subject to conditions), to be ordered to repay or forego fees and expenses as appropriate, or to be reprimanded and / or to be ordered to reimburse costs.
- 4.4.4. Failure to comply with the requirements set out in the Code, which in the opinion of the Council, fall short of serious professional misconduct may, if proven, render the Member liable to be admonished or to be given appropriate guidance as to his or her future conduct.
- 4.4.5. In cases of doubt, regarding professional conduct, clarification and directions may be obtained from the Council of the Sri Lanka Library Association.