

Code of Ethics

The Code of Ethics of ATEE (Association for teacher Education in Europe) is a set of principles to guide the association's decision-making and activities, as well as the behaviour of its employees, members and AC members.

The purpose of adopting such a statement formally is to provide employees, members, and AC (Administrative Council) members with guidelines for making ethical choices and to ensure that there is accountability for those choices. This code of ethics provides a starting point for organisations to use in developing their own codes and their own constitution.

Any code of ethics is built on a foundation of widely shared values. The values of the independent sector include:

- Commitment to the public good
- Accountability to the public
- Commitment beyond the law
- Respect for the worth and dignity of individuals
- Inclusiveness and social justice
- Respect for pluralism and diversity
- Transparency, integrity and honesty
- Responsible stewardship of resources
- Commitment to excellence and to maintaining the public trust

These values lead directly to the Code of Ethics for ATEE that follows. The values inform and guide the actions that organizations should take in developing their policies and informing their practices.

Some of the main outcomes and benefits of having an ethical code to follow are:

- Guiding employees, members and AC members in situations where the ethical course of action is not immediately obvious
- Helping the association reinforce existing members' commitment to – and acquaint new members with – its culture and values. Creating a climate of integrity and excellence.
- Improving the communication between the association and members. Helping the association communicate what is expected from the members, as well as its duties. Also, by soliciting feedback and questions, the association may use the code to encourage frequent, open and honest communication among members.
- Helping the association remain in compliance with the Belgian Laws on Associations.
- Build public trust and enhance association's reputation
- Enhancing morale, members pride, loyalty and the recruiting of outstanding employees
- Helping promote constructive social change by raising awareness of the association's needs and encouraging members to help.

1. Points covered by an Ethical Code; rules to follow for an ethical behaviour within ATEE

I. Personal and Professional Integrity

All staff, AC members and members of the association act with honesty, integrity and openness in all their dealings as representatives of the organisation. ATEE promotes a working environment that values respect, fairness and integrity.

II. Mission

ATEE has a clearly stated mission and purpose. Activities and projects support that mission and all who collaborate for or on behalf of the association understand and are loyal to that mission and purpose.

III. Commitment

All the members who decide to collaborate voluntarily with the Association have duties to fulfill and a responsibility to carry out their work honestly and when it is due with the association, and according to its ethical code.

IV. Administrative Council

ATEE has an active Administrative Council that is responsible for setting the mission and strategic direction of the administrative and oversight of the finances, operations, and policies of the organisation.

- Ensures that its AC members have the requisite skills and experience to carry out their duties and that all members understand and fulfil their governance duties acting for the benefit of the organization and its public purpose.
- Ensures that the association conducts all transactions and dealings with integrity and honesty.
- Ensures that the association promotes working relationships with board members, members and employees that are based on mutual respect, fairness and openness.
- Ensures that the association is fair and inclusive in its hiring and promotion policies and practices for all board, members and employees.
- Ensures that the resources of the organisation are responsibly and prudently managed.
- Ensures that the association has the capacity to carry out its programs and projects effectively.

V. Legal Compliance

ATEE is knowledgeable of and complies with all laws, regulations and applicable international conventions.

VI. Responsible Stewardship

The association Board manages their funds responsibly and prudently. This should include the following considerations:

- It spends a reasonable percentage of its annual budget on programs and projects in pursuance of its mission.
- It spends an adequate amount on administrative expenses to ensure effective accounting systems, internal controls, competent staff, and other expenditures critical to professional management.
- Ensuring that all spending practices and policies are fair, reasonable and appropriate to fulfil the mission of the organization.
- All financial reports are factually accurate and complete in all material respects.

VII. Openness and Disclosure

ATEE provides comprehensive and timely information to the public, the media, and all stakeholders and is responsive in a timely manner to reasonable requests for information. All information about the organization will fully and honestly reflect the policies and practices of the organization.

VIII. Inclusiveness and Diversity

ATEE has a policy of promoting inclusiveness and its staff, AC and members reflect diversity in order to enrich its programmatic effectiveness. The organization takes meaningful steps to promote inclusiveness in its hiring, retention, promotion, board recruitment and constituencies served.

IX. Responsible Conduct of Academic Research:

The 18 Research & Development Communities are the heart of ATEE, so it is very important to have an ethical guideline for them to follow in order to know how to behave and clarify what are their duties inside a group of research. The main ethical principles and behaviour to follow when engaging in a research work are:

- Research members must be honest about their qualifications and experience
- Researchers must be competent and responsible on maintaining continuous and professional development standards.
- Researchers shall attend the mandatory meetings for the following-up of the research and be able to prepare a report after the Annual Conference.
- Researchers must aim to keep all private data of their participants confidential; including the destruction of any material that could prove to be a potential security breach. Personal data shall not be released to the public without consent in accordance with the privacy policy of the Association.
- The final outcome of the academic research must be objective and authentic. Plagiarism is a severe breach of the ethical code of conduct and an act of infringement upon intellectual property legislation. Authorship and credit for work undertaken should be attributed fairly and objectively.
- Discrimination is an offence and must never be applied when either collaborating with other research members or selecting students for a trial.

- Researchers must be aware and familiar with the institutional guidelines and laws.

X. Responsible Conduct for Journal Editors

The strength of a journal is often directly related to the strength of its ethics. Ethical guidelines lead to a better academic community, where everyone is valued and everyone is responsible for the work they do.

· General duties

1. Editors should be accountable for everything published in the European Journal of Teacher Education (EJTE)
2. Strive to meet the needs of readers and authors
3. Strive to constantly improve EJTE
4. Assure the quality of the material they publish
5. Maintain the integrity of the academic record
6. Ensure that articles, news reports, and opinions published within the pages of EJTE they supervise are informative in nature, well balanced, and fair.
7. Always be willing to explain corrections, clarifications, retractions and apologies when needed
8. Editors should not reverse decisions to accept submissions unless serious problems are identified with the submission.

· Conflict of interest

1. Editors' decisions to accept or reject a paper for publication should be based on the paper's importance, originality and clarity, and the study's validity and its relevance to the remit of the journal.
2. Editors should never make any editorial decision based on financial, political, ideological, or other such pressure from an outside agent. Decisions must be made predominantly on the basis that content within their publications is accurate, honest, and free from conflicting influence.
3. Editors are not allowed to publish their own articles in EJTE.

· Responsibility and ethical conduct

1. Ensuring that all the editors comply with an ethical behavior in order to foster an environment of integrity, honesty and objectivity. Cases of gross misconduct must be dealt with accordingly.
2. Editors must ensure that the publication under their jurisdiction is constantly aiming to improve, and providing new, valuable contributions to specific areas or field of study, in this case to the field of Education. All published material should be high quality, informative in nature, balanced, and grammatically and politically correct.
3. As long as relevant data and information are not misrepresented or suppressed, publications are free to advocate their own views and opinions. Readers, however, must be aware of what is presented as fact, what is presented as opinion, and what is purely fictional. It must be also be clearly highlighted where there have been any data manipulations, as well as limitations, inconsistencies, and/or incongruities.
4. Editors have to act immediately if they are aware of misconduct and other ethical problems relating to the publishing sector as a whole.

XI. Responsible conduct for peer review

Peer reviewers play a role in ensuring the integrity of the scholarly record. The peer review process depends to a large extent on the trust and willing participation of the scholarly community and requires that everyone involved behaves responsibly and ethically.

Responsibilities of a peer reviewer

1. Professional responsibility: bearing in mind the formal process of appointment to the review panel of the journal and the journal guidelines on peer review to follow any requirements posted.
2. Competing interests: ensure all the peer reviewers declare all potential competing, or conflicting, interests. It is important for peer reviewers to remain unbiased by considerations related to the nationality, religious or political beliefs, gender or other characteristics of the authors, origins of a manuscript or by commercial considerations.
3. Timeliness: reviewers should agree to review a document only if they are able to return a review within the proposed or mutually agreed time-frame.
4. Confidentiality: respect the confidentiality of the peer review process and refrain from using information obtained during the peer review process for your own or another's advantage, or to disadvantage or discredit others
5. Suspicion of ethics violations: if reviewers come across any irregularities with respect to research and publication ethics, they must let the journal know. If noticed by reviewers, breaches of the ethical code such as misconduct occurring during either the research or the writing and submission of the document must be reported
6. Preparing a report and providing an appropriate feedback: reviewers must follow EJTE's guidelines for writing and posting the review, they have to use the tools supplied by the EJTE.

Peer review must be objective and constructive, providing feedback that will help the authors to improve their documents, that means, being specific in the critique, and providing supporting evidence with appropriate references to substantiate general statements. Reviewers must be professional and refrain from being hostile or inflammatory and from making libellous or derogatory personal comments or unfounded accusations.

2. Misconduct and penalties

2.1 Misconduct or breaches of the Ethical Code

Causes of misconduct can arise at all levels inside the Association and involve a complex relationship between individual character and cultural influences of the association.

People vary in their capacity for moral judgment—in their ability to recognise and analyze moral issues, and in the priority that they place on moral values. They also differ in their capacity for moral behaviour—in their ability to make good on their commitments.

There are some areas in particular where ethical misconduct can arise in the nonprofit sector: conflicts of interest; compensation and investment policies; transparency and honesty; and privacy.

2.1.1 Conflict of interest

A conflict of interest could arise from multiple aspects inside the organisation; it could involve finances or the personal interests of members of the Administrative Council. It might be tempting to award power to AC members, but doing this sets the association up to act in the best interest of said members, not the nonprofit or its mission. Another form of conflict of interest involves accepting donations from sources that directly work against the nonprofit's mission.

2.1.2 Compensation and investment policies

The motivation for fundraisers is to help further the mission, not to make more money. The purpose of ATEE is to do good by carrying out its mission – not to bestow privileges and perks upon its members and board members.

In the same way, as a nonprofit organization, ATEE should be ensured that their financial portfolio is consistent with their values. This strategy calls for investing in ventures that further an organization's mission.

2.1.3 Transparency and honesty

Concerns about public trust entail total candor and accuracy in ATEE reports. There is a special need to pay particular attention to transparency and honesty in issues such as, the work of all the members, fundraising and expenses.

2.1.4 Privacy

It is important to collect data to ensure success and effectiveness, and sometimes this information can be very sensitive. It is an ethical duty to safeguard the data ATEE has collected. There should be a special attention to online privacy.

ATEE has a privacy policy published in its website where employees, members and AC members can find a guideline about the right use and collation of data. This privacy policy covered issues such as the management of personal data according with the law, access to the website, users of the website, marketing, security and confidentiality.

2.2 Penalties

The penalty component of an ATEE's code of conduct lets employees, members and AC members know in advance what to expect if they violate the code. These penalties must be carried out for all the members equally if there is any breach the ethical code. Penalty systems typically address two categories of misconduct: minor and major.

Common penalties for minor code infractions include a series of oral and written warnings and reduced members' privileges and responsibilities. Following these steps and documenting repeated warnings will help the organisation add stricter penalties for repeat offenders.

Some breaches of codes are so severe that they require harsher penalties, even on a first offense. It is an extreme case, but if a severe infraction of the ethical code is committed this shall result in an immediate expulsion from the Association e.g. submitting a project proposal without any approval by the Administrative Council, applying for funding schemes without said approval, using the ATEE logo and/or data for any reason without approval by the AC, negotiate and sign onerous contracts on behalf of the ATEE without prior approval by the AC, negotiate and sign any kind of agreement involving the ATEE without prior approval by the AC, any other personal initiative involving ATEE

Ethical Committee

An appropriate constitution for an Ethics Committee (EC) is crucial to ensure moral high quality practice and procedures inside the association whose consistency, fairness and even-handedness can be relied upon by all ATEE Members and the public.

ATEE has constituted this ethics committee (EC) to oversee compliance with the rules of conduct, standards and policies that guide the Association. An Ethics Committee can serve a number of roles consisting of a range of responsibilities, but most follow a basic premise. Its main objective is to ensure that all the members of ATEE take action according to the Ethical Guidelines, previously discussed and implemented.

Regarding academic research, EC has an important role to play in ensuring the ethical standards and scientific merit of an academic research. Their main responsibility is to make sure that researchers fulfill their duties, and its findings are based on an honest, objective and non-discriminative research. EC has the authority to approve, reject, modify, or stop a research, which do not conform to the accepted standards.

Part of the success of an EC can be attributed to how well it is supported by the association. This includes administrative and financial support and cooperation and active involvement between the ethical committee and the administrative council in the association.

Composition of the Committee

Establishing an organisational ethics committee involves careful reflection on the needs of the ATEE and on the people who will serve on the committee and collaborate with the association.

Volunteer members of the EC are typically chosen according to a set of characteristics that include their knowledge and experience, ability to take on this added responsibility, familiarity with the Ethical Directives, such as personal and professional integrity, diversity, openness and inclusiveness, and with the mission of ATEE. EC should be constituted by a heterogeneous group of three volunteers.

EC should be run by a chair or a chair and co-chair. The Committee Chair, who shall be selected by the Administrative Council, is responsible for the leadership of the

Committee, including preparation of meeting agendas. The Chair of EC has an important role to play in ensuring that ethical issues are identified, addressed and reviewed and that the core elements of the Ethical Code of the association are met.

Meetings of the Committee.

All actions of the Committee shall be taken by a majority vote of the members of the Committee present at a meeting duly convened by unanimous consent.

The Committee shall meet once a year during the ATEE Annual Conference in order to perform its responsibilities. If necessary, the Committee Chair may call special meetings of the Committee. The Committee shall keep such records of its meetings as it deems appropriate and the Committee Chair shall report regularly to the Administrative Council on its activities.

Travel and accommodation costs shall be borne by the Association.

Tasks and Responsibilities

- Ensuring there is an effective training of the ethics code at all levels.
- Ensuring there is an effective communication reinforcing ethical values and good practice in the organization and censuring unacceptable practice.
- Setting up monitoring, reporting and accountability processes.
- Assessing reports and overseeing subsequent actions following breaches of the Ethical code or allegations of misconduct.
- Making use of the penalties established in the Ethical Code for those people who for those who have breached the ethical code.
- Developing and reviewing the effectiveness of an updated ethical code..