

Code of Ethics

From its earliest designs, the Financial Planning Association included a mandate that members will adhere to a code of ethics that reflects their commitment to help clients achieve their life goals. One of the first acts of the FPA Board was to develop and institute that code.

In accord with founding documents created by the FPA's first board of directors, including the Memo of Intent and Bylaws, all FPA members will be asked to commit to this code of ethics. The guidelines you see below capture the essence of the Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards code but makes it applicable to all FPA members - CFP® certificants and non-CFP certificants alike.

[FPA's Ethics Committee](#) is charged by the Board of Directors with reviewing alleged violations of the FPA Code of Ethics and advising staff on ways to enhance awareness by FPA members of their obligations under the Code.

Introduction

This Code of Ethics is an expression of the financial planning profession's recognition of its responsibilities to the public, to clients, to colleagues, and to employers. These principles apply to all Financial Planning Association (FPA) members and provide guidance to them in the performance of their professional services.

Principle 1 - Integrity

An FPA member shall offer and provide professional services with integrity.

FPA members may be placed by clients in positions of trust and confidence. The ultimate source of such public trust is the FPA member's personal integrity. In deciding what is right and just, an FPA member should rely on his or her integrity as the appropriate touchstone. Integrity demands honesty and candor, which must not be subordinated to personal gain and advantage. Within the characteristic of integrity, allowance can be made for innocent error and legitimate difference of opinion; but integrity cannot co-exist with deceit or subordination of one's principles. Integrity requires an FPA member to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of this Code.

Principle 2 - Objectivity

An FPA member shall be objective in providing professional services to clients.

Objectivity requires intellectual honesty and impartiality. It is an essential quality for any professional. Regardless of the particular service rendered or the capacity in which an FPA member functions, an FPA member should protect the integrity of his or her work, maintain objectivity, and avoid subordination of his or her judgment that would be in violation of this Code.

Principle 3 - Competence

An FPA member shall provide services to clients competently and maintain the necessary knowledge and skill to continue to do so in those areas in which the designee is engaged.

One is competent only when he or she has attained and maintained an adequate level of knowledge and skill, and applies that knowledge effectively in providing services to clients. Competence also includes the wisdom to recognize the limitations of that knowledge and when consultation or client referral is appropriate. In addition to assimilating the common body of knowledge required and acquiring the necessary experience, an FPA member shall make a continuing commitment to learning and professional improvement.

Principle 4 - Fairness

An FPA member shall perform professional services in a manner that is fair and reasonable to clients, principals, partners, and employers and shall disclose conflict(s) of interest(s) in providing such services.

Fairness requires impartiality, intellectual honesty, and disclosure of conflict(s) of interest(s). It involves a subordination of one's own feelings, prejudices, and desires so as to achieve a proper balance of conflicting interests. Fairness is treating others in the same fashion that you would want to be treated and is an essential trait of any professional.

Principle 5 - Confidentiality

An FPA member shall not disclose any confidential client information without the specific consent of the client unless in response to proper legal process, to defend against charges of wrongdoing by the FPA member or in connection with a civil dispute between the FPA member and client.

A client, by seeking the services of an FPA member, may be interested in creating a relationship of personal trust and confidence with the FPA member. This type of relationship can only be built upon the understanding that information supplied to the FPA member or other information will be confidential. In order to provide the contemplated services effectively and to protect the client's privacy, the FPA member shall safeguard the confidentiality of such information.

Principle 6 - Professionalism

An FPA member's conduct in all matters shall reflect credit upon the profession.

Because of the importance of the professional services rendered by FPA members, there are attendant responsibilities to behave with dignity and courtesy to all those who use those services, fellow professionals, and those in related professions. An FPA member also has an obligation to cooperate with fellow FPA members to enhance and maintain the profession's public image and to work jointly with other FPA members to improve the quality of services. It is only through the combined efforts of all FPA members in cooperation with other professionals, that this vision can be realized.

Principle 7 - Diligence

An FPA member shall act diligently in providing professional services.

Diligence is the provision of services in a reasonably prompt and thorough manner. Diligence also includes proper planning for and supervision of the rendering of professional services.

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