SFTI Code of Professional Conduct

Society of Freelance Translators and Interpreters. In force from 1 January 2025. Approved by the Council on 14 November 2024.

1. Scope

1.1 This Code applies to every member of the Society, including Students and Retired members, in all their work as translators or interpreters, whether paid or unpaid.

1.2 A breach of this Code may lead to disciplinary action under the Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.

1.3 Where this Code and the law differ, members must follow the law and may ask the Professional Practice helpline for advice.

2. Integrity

2.1 Members must act honestly and must not bring the profession or the Society into disrepute.

2.2 Members must not offer or accept any payment or favour intended to influence a client, an agency or a colleague.

2.3 Gifts or hospitality from a client worth more than £50 must be declared to the client's organisation, or politely refused.

3. Competence

3.1 Members must only accept work they are competent to do, in both language and subject.

3.2 Members should normally translate into their native language or a language in which they have equivalent fluency.

3.3 Members must not claim qualifications, memberships or experience they do not have, and must use only the designatory letters of their current grade.

4. Confidentiality

4.1 Members must keep confidential all information they learn through their work.

4.2 Members may share information only with the client's consent or where the law requires it.

4.3 Members must not keep client files for longer than 6 years after the end of a job unless the client has agreed in writing.

4.4 Members must take reasonable steps to keep files secure, including encrypting laptops and phones that hold client material.

5. Impartiality and conflicts of interest

5.1 Interpreters must remain impartial and must not give advice or express opinions during an assignment.

5.2 Members must declare any conflict of interest before accepting work and must withdraw if it cannot be managed.

5.3 Interpreters must not interpret for a close relative, a partner or a close friend, except in an emergency where no other interpreter is available.

6. Relations with clients and colleagues

6.1 Members must agree the terms of each job before starting, preferably in writing.

6.2 Members who subcontract work remain responsible for it unless the client has agreed otherwise.

6.3 Members must pay subcontractors within 30 days of receiving their invoice, unless they have agreed a different period in writing.

6.4 Members must not make public statements that unfairly damage the reputation of a colleague.

7. Professional development

7.1 Members must keep their skills and knowledge up to date and meet the CPD requirement for their grade.

8. Compliance

8.1 Members must co-operate with any investigation by the Society and reply to correspondence from the Professional Conduct Committee within 14 days.

8.2 Members must tell the Society within 28 days if they are convicted of a criminal offence connected with their professional work.

Review

The Council reviews this Code every three years. The next review is due in 2027. Comments are welcome at any time by email to standards@sfti.example.