

Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

Adopted by the Council of Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) December 6 1997

Foreword

The Code of Conduct and Ethics was adopted by Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) a few years back but 1997/98 SLAA Council felt that it has not been properly publicized, promoted and officially implemented. Hence a Committee was appointed to study the Code and if necessary recommend relevant changes. On 6 December 1997 after lengthy discussion the revised Code was adopted and we proudly present it as a document which clearly and concisely portrays SLLA's professional Code of Conduct.

I record my appreciation to the Committee members who contributed their professional input and time to finalise the revised Code to be presented to the members by June 1998. I am also indebted to Sri Lanka Library Services Board for generously funding the major part of the printing costs.

I hope the Code will promote the standing of our profession, provide a clear message to the public about the work we are involved with and help to raise an awareness of what it means to be a library and information professional. Please read it carefully, adhere to it and keep it for reference.

Harrison Perera
President
SLLA
June 1998

Introduction

The Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics has been approved by the Council of the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA).

Librarians including Information Scientists are professionals (Librarians include Information Scientists wherever the word occurs). As members of a profession, librarians have a duty to :

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

Members of the Sri Lanka Library Association are required to observe the principles laid down in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics as a condition of membership and also to retain the membership. To do otherwise is for members to lay themselves open to complaints and consideration of the complaints under the relevant rules and regulations of the Disciplinary Committee established by the Council under the Rules and Regulations.

Members must report the facts to the Secretary of the Sri Lanka Library Association if convicted of any offence involving dishonesty or one which brings the profession into disrepute.

Members of the Association must conduct themselves in such a way that their conduct would not be reasonably regarded by their professional colleagues within the field of librarianship as serious professional misconduct. It is by this overall test that their conduct will be judged.

The principles of conduct towards which Librarians should strive have been embodied in the following broad categories:

- Responsibility to the employing organization, community and users
- Responsibility to the profession and practices
- Responsibility to the professional body (SLLA)

Responsibility to the Community and Users

1. Shall give highest priority to users when acting in the capacity of a Librarian.
2. Shall render professional services for the benefit of the community and shall seek opportunities to be of constructive service.
3. Shall have an obligation towards facilitating the free flow of information and ideas and to protect and promote the rights of every individual to have free and equal access to sources of information, without discrimination, and within the limits of the law.
4. Shall encourage the free flow of information and protect against the unlawful withholding of information and the imposition of censorship.
5. Shall provide best possible service to all persons without discrimination.
6. Shall endeavour to keep abreast of the latest developments in Library and Information Science in order to provide the best possible service.
7. Shall always be courteous in one's relationships with others and be careful in the choice of words and action so that one may not be interpreted as being derogatory or offensive to others.
8. Shall preserve one's objectivity and judgement and shall not be influenced by one's self-interest or other factors, always maintaining the highest standards of personal integrity.

Responsibilities to the Profession and Practices

Members shall:

9. respect fellow members of the profession.
10. guide and assist junior members and students of the profession to develop themselves.
11. encourage younger professionals by exemplary service and conduct.
12. not seek undue publicity to show that one is superior to fellow professionals or attempt to injure, maliciously or falsely, the professional reputation, practice or employment of other professionals.
13. refrain from undertaking services which fall outside the areas of one's competence and shall refer the persons seeking such services to another competent professional.
14. endeavour to keep abreast of the advancement of knowledge and skills, and participate in all activities which contribute to the ongoing development of professionalism and then to national development.
15. build his reputation on merit and shall not compete unfairly.
16. take every opportunity to enhance the image, status and reputation of the profession with the clients and the general public.
17. not attempt to supplant another professional by unfair means and shall not use the advantage of a privileged position to compete unfairly with other professionals.
18. give proper credit for professional work to those to whom credit is due and acknowledge the contributions of others.

Responsibilities to the Professional Body - Sri Lanka Library Association

19. be bound by the rules and regulations of the Sri Lanka Library Association.
20. cooperate in extending, developing and encouraging the effectiveness of the Association by interchanging information and experiences with other professionals.
21. interact with and encourage one's fellow members for the advancement and success of the

Association.

22. (a) respond to any requirements from the Disciplinary Committee for comments or information on a complaint.

(b) attend the Committee proceedings when required to do so, with such representations as is provided for in the Rules and Regulations.

(c) attend upon a nominated person for the purposes of receiving guidance as to future conduct if required to do so.

23. In all cases where Members of the Association are in doubt as to the proper interpretation of the Code, they are requested to seek advice from the General Secretary of the Association.

Guidelines

1. The purpose of this Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics 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/or indicate what matters may be regarded (by the Disciplinary Committee) as being contrary to aims, objectives and interest of the Association and/or contrary to the profession of librarianship. This Code shall apply to all individual members of the Sri Lanka Library Association.
2. Conviction for any offence which could bring the profession into disrepute is to be notified to the Association. This would particularly apply to offences which directly relate to the Librarian's discharge of his or her duties. Although minor offences are not normally notifiable, theft, fraud and offences involving deceit certainly are.
3. In all professional considerations the interests of the users with their prescribed or legitimate requirements take precedence over all other interests. However, circumstances may arise when the public interests or the reputation of the profession itself may be at variance with the narrow interests of an employer. If it is found to be impossible to reconcile such differences then the public interests and the maintenance of professional standards must be the primary consideration.
4. SLLA recognises that different considerations will apply in particular circumstances such as when members are working in an environment where the public is excluded and when an element of confidentiality will apply.
5. Failure to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics including the requirements relating to competence may, if proved before the Disciplinary Committee, be regarded by it as serious professional misconduct and, if so, 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 pay the costs of the hearing.
6. Failure to comply with the requirements set out in the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics which in the opinion of the Disciplinary Committee falls short of serious professional misconduct may, if proved, render the member liable to be admonished or to be given appropriate guidance as to his or her future conduct.
7. In cases of doubt regarding professional conduct, clarification and directions may be obtained from the Disciplinary Committee of the Council of the Sri Lanka Library Association.

Sri Lanka Library Association