



**ICSESP Principles of Professional and Ethical Practice
with Exemplar Standards**

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PREFACE

About the International Confederation of Sport and Exercise Science Practice (ICSESP)

The International Confederation of Sport and Exercise Science Practice (ICSESP) was established in 2020 as a not-for-profit company with the vision to positively impact individuals, communities, and countries by advancing the international practice of the sport and exercise sciences. Founding member organisations of the ICSESP included American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), Chartered Association of Sport and Exercise Science (CASES; formerly known as the British Association of Sport and Exercise Sciences), Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP), Exercise & Sports Science Australia (ESSA), and Sport and Exercise Science New Zealand (SESNZ).

Development of the ICSESP Code of Professional and Ethical Practice

ICSESP put forward several strategic priorities in 2020 - one of which was to establish and promote the adoption of an international code of conduct and ethical practice for national sport and exercise science regulating agencies. The first step of this project was a systematic audit of code of ethical and professional conduct documentation from each member organisation. The audit identified over 41 unique standards of ethical practice organised into three thematic areas: accountability, ethical conduct, and standards of practice. These formed the first draft of the ICSESP code of professional and ethical practice. Next, experts in professional and ethical practice from each of the founding member organisations reviewed the draft documentation. The experts provided their level of agreement on each statement's inclusion in a global code of professional and ethical practice following a three-step modified Delphi process. They also commented on potential areas of omission and redundancy. The result of this collaborative process was the *ICSESP Principles of Professional and Ethical Practice* and a corresponding *Exemplar of Professional and Ethical Practice*. Both will be revisited in three years by an expanded group of representatives reflecting ICSESP membership.

Use of the ICSESP Code of Professional and Ethical Practice for Evaluating Membership

ICSESP membership requires new national/regional industry and regulatory bodies to provide documentation demonstrating that the organisation has a Code of Professional and Ethical Practice that encompasses the six principles as stated in the *ICSESP Principles of Professional and Ethical Practice*. However, it is not required that new ICSESP applicants adopt all 38 statements as listed in the *Exemplar*. ICSESP understands that national/regional industry and regulatory bodies may have a detailed Code of Professional and Ethical Practice particular to the professional context in their country/region. Thus, the *ICSESP Principles of Professional and Ethical Practice*, along with the corresponding Exemplar, should be read in conjunction with other relevant standards, policies, and guidelines in use by the respective ICSESP member organization. Member organisations that do not have an existing Code of Professional and Ethical Practice, or that wish to update elements of an existing Code, are encouraged to consider the *Exemplar* statements.

ICSESP PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

ICSESP has set out six fundamental principles to guide the professional and ethical behaviour of practitioners and researchers who work in the fields of sport and exercise science. These six principles apply to all conditions of applicable professional activity, including research, and should be read in the context of the expectations of the specific ICSESP member organization, as well as relevant national and international societal norms. The six core principles also form the basis for the *ICSESP Exemplar of Professional and Ethical Practice*.

Practitioners and researchers in the field of sport and exercise science around the world will hold themselves accountable to the profession, their clients or research participants, and the public. In doing so, they will:

- 1. comply with all relevant laws and regulations,***
- 2. respect an individual's autonomy, welfare, and dignity,***
- 3. respect privacy and ensure the confidentiality of all professionally acquired information,***
- 4. ensure all forms of communication are transparent, honest, and respectful,***
- 5. uphold the values, standards, and reputation of the profession, and***
- 6. commit to ongoing professional development of evidence and principle-based practice.***

ICSESP EXEMPLAR OF PROFESSIONAL AND ETHICAL PRACTICE

The 38 statements included in this *Exemplar* are not exhaustive but rather provide common areas of ethical concern experienced by sport and exercise science practitioners and researchers.

1. Comply with All Relevant Laws and Regulations.

- 1.1. Ensure that professional practice complies with all applicable legal requirements and workplace regulations (e.g., human rights and child protection legislation; privacy, advertising, and employment laws; infection control requirements, occupational health and safety regulations).
- 1.2. Maintain all requirements for the professional designation (e.g., continuing education and accreditation; appropriate indemnity insurance).
- 1.3. Ensure when conducting research that it complies with relevant legislation (e.g., human rights, privacy, occupational health and safety) and institutional approval processes (e.g., human research ethics committee).

2. Respect an Individual's Autonomy, Welfare, and Dignity.

- 2.1. Prioritize the health and wellbeing of the individual.
- 2.2. Treat all clients equally unless their particular needs (e.g., age, gender, literacy, impairment, cultural tradition) merits tailored treatment.
- 2.3. Recognise and redress power dynamics and biases (e.g., based on age, gender, gender identity, race, religion, disability, socioeconomic status) that can lead to discriminatory and/or unethical practices.
- 2.4. Act in a way that is above reproach and avoid behaviour that would bring into disrepute to the organization or profession.
- 2.5. Consider the individual's capacity for decision-making and consent, and where capacity is impaired or limited, seek consent from a legally appropriate substitute decision-maker.
- 2.6. Obtain informed consent from the individual (or substitute decision-maker), using plain language to describe the aim, procedures, benefits, risks, safeguards, and right to withdraw consent.
- 2.7. Gain the individual's (or substitute decision-maker) consent to having other people (e.g., colleagues, other healthcare professionals, family, students, etc.) involved in their care.
- 2.8. Establish and maintain professional boundaries with clients, research participants, colleagues, and students.
- 2.9. Avoid actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interests.
- 2.10. Manage complaints in a professional, sensitive, and timely manner.
- 2.11. Ensure that practitioners and clients are aware of the process for making a complaint.

3. Respect the Privacy and Ensure the Confidentiality of All Professionally Acquired Information.

- 3.1. Ensure the privacy and protect the confidentiality of all professionally acquired information about a client; and disclose only necessary information when appropriately authorized to do so or when legally obligated.
- 3.2. Collect and maintain accurate, current, and pertinent records.

4. Ensure All Forms of Communication are Transparent, Honest, and Respectful.

- 4.1. Communicate with clients, colleagues, organizations, and the public in an inclusive, honest, and respectful manner.
- 4.2. Explain clearly and accurately the services to be provided, likely benefits or outcomes, fees, and alternative service options (if applicable).
- 4.3. Develop professional reputation on merit and ensure that claims about qualifications, competencies, and scope of practice are advertised accurately.
- 4.4. Respect the expertise of, and work collaboratively with, colleagues, especially in inter-professional settings.
- 4.5. Comply with relevant best practice conventions and policies when attributing authorship to oneself or others for any works (e.g., case notes, public reports, professional presentations, and articles).
- 4.6. Uphold the values, principles, and reputation of the profession when making public statements.
- 4.7. Obtain, present, and publish research findings in an accurate and responsible manner.
- 4.8. Guarantee that research is original and contributes to the body of knowledge (e.g., new knowledge, refinement of existing knowledge, innovative application).
- 4.9. Maximize the accessibility of research findings and, wherever appropriate, publish them in the interest of science, sport and exercise, and community.

5. Uphold the Values, Standards, and Reputation of the Profession.

- 5.1. Promote active and collaborative person-centred care.
- 5.2. Work within the scope of practice and level of expertise; otherwise, seek support or refer the individual to a practitioner with appropriate knowledge and skills.
- 5.3. Provide services only when there is a reasonable expectation of benefit to the recipient and any benefit clearly outweighs the risks.
- 5.4. Ensure that procedures and safeguards are in place to minimize and manage risks to the client.
- 5.5. Screen or assess the individual's suitability for available services or participating in the research intervention (e.g., thorough collection of medical history, previous physical activity, and other relevant psychosocial factors).
- 5.6. Evaluate, prepare, and maintain the physical environment and equipment in which services or research is being conducted.
- 5.7. Take appropriate and timely action should an adverse event occur including implementing emergency procedure, when necessary, and documenting the event.
- 5.8. Ensure that others involved with the services to be provided to the individual are supervised, practice within their level of competence, and follow any regulatory rules.
- 5.9. Practice self-care and take responsibility to manage personal situations (e.g., illness, drug/alcohol use, relationship difficulties) that might compromise care of others.
- 5.10. Seek support or report the conduct of professionals who are working in an unsafe or unethical manner.

6. *Commit to ongoing professional development of evidence- and principled-based practice.*

- 6.1. Implement and share evidence-informed best practices with clients, students, colleagues, and the public, when available and appropriate.
- 6.2. Undertake formal and informal learning as appropriate to remain current on changes in evidence and principles that inform practice.
- 6.3. Practice in a reflective manner that learns from the experiences of oneself and others.