



New Zealand
Institute of Intelligence
Professionals

The Intelligence Professional Code of Ethics

Forming part of an intelligence tikanga

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The purpose of ethical behaviour

Professional ethics refer to the moral principles that guide conduct and behaviour in a particular field. They are a set of standards that govern actions and decisions and help to ensure that members act in a manner consistent with their profession's values and norms. Ethics, along with other professional standards such as training and education, are the foundation of a professional tikanga.

Members of the New Zealand intelligence profession are trained and vetted to work on sensitive matters and in areas of high trust. The public and decision makers expect these privileges to be exercised in an ethical manner. As the operating environment for the New Zealand intelligence community continues to evolve, the public deserve sustained high levels of safety and adherence to the principles of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, alongside greater transparency and assurances of privacy.

A code of ethics guides practitioners in situations of moral ambiguity, or where there is an absence of a legal requirement, set of rules, or protocol. In these circumstances, ethics promote responsible and trustworthy behaviour, protect stakeholders, and enhance public confidence.

While organisational values will overlap with professional ethical behaviours, they differ in purpose. Organisation values seeks to align multiple professions and functions to its own vision and outcomes. Intelligence professional ethics guide common behaviour to maintain public trust in the intelligence community, and apply throughout an individual's career, regardless of the organisational context. Intelligence practitioners have a responsibility to uphold the values and outcomes of the organisation they support, as well as the professional body they represent.

At an individual level, ethical behaviour compliments other wellbeing initiatives. Intelligence professionals often face challenging situations in the conduct of their work. Maintaining professional integrity and upholding ethical behaviours can promote personal satisfaction, reduce stress and anxiety, and foster positive relationships. With practitioners of varied backgrounds and experiences, a shared code helps to unite professionals across the intelligence community.

Ethical dilemmas are not black and white. Laws can answer the question "can we?" whereas ethics help to answer the question "should we?" and to identify where "the line" may be before it is crossed. By understanding who they have a responsibility to, the nature of that responsibility, and through application of ethical behaviour, intelligence practitioners are enabled to make professional and ethically sound decisions in diverse and difficult situations.

Responsibilities to stakeholders

Intelligence professionals have a responsibility to three key stakeholders: the public, decision makers, and the profession itself. The nature of the relationship is different for each stakeholder, but each place their trust in the intelligence practitioner to carry out their work in an ethical manner.

The Public. In both government and the private sector, intelligence activities are ultimately carried out in the public's interest. The public place a high degree of trust in the professionals who work in this sector, expecting their activities to be lawful and to contribute to public safety and wellbeing. There is an expectation that intelligence activities will be conducted only when necessary, with effective use of resources, respect for privacy, proportionality, and accountability for mistakes and failures.



Decision Makers. Decision makers provide resources, authority, and direction to intelligence professionals. In return, decision makers expect timely, accurate, and actionable intelligence that is relevant to their decisions. This intelligence assists them to achieve organisational goals, while also highlighting gaps in confidence and risks to those goals, resources, and personnel. Decision makers can include chief executives, operational staff, leaders outside an organisation, and sometimes individual members of the public. Intelligence professionals must be truthful and impartial to decision makers, regardless of the outcome of the decision, and have a responsibility to explain legal or ethical considerations relevant to an intelligence activity.

The Profession. Intelligence professionals perform a number of specialised and generalist roles that span many different organisations. Cooperation is required to carry out intelligence work, especially in New Zealand due to our small size. Furthermore, intelligence professionals rely on their peers to uphold ethical standards and maintain the credibility and trust granted them by the public and decision makers. This highlights the importance of trust and integrity within the intelligence profession.

Kotahitanga. The concept of togetherness, kotahitanga is identifying as one.

Manawanui. As applied to the intelligence profession, emphasises the ideas of determination, thoroughness, persistence, curiosity, and resilience.

Manaakitanga. The process of showing respect, humility, generosity, and care for others through propriety and a sense of responsibility.

Whakawā. The quality of being impartial and unbiased, providing assessments based on facts and evidence rather than personal opinions or beliefs.

Tapatahi. This encompasses the ideas of integrity, reliability, and diligence.

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Ethical behaviours

Kotahitanga

The concept of togetherness, kotahitanga is identifying as one. In an intelligence context, this means unifying as an intelligence team of many components and specialities and working with decision makers toward a task or organisational outcomes. Furthermore, practitioners should consider the need to share, where information or intelligence gained can assist another organisation or team. Kotahitanga also means participating in a community of practice, sharing skills, innovating, and providing support to other intelligence practitioners to advance the profession as a whole.

Manawanui

Intelligence problems can often be complex and more ambiguous than in other professions. Manawanui, as applied to the intelligence profession, emphasises the ideas of determination, thoroughness, persistence, curiosity, and resilience. It depicts the ability to work through internal and external uncertainty to continually provide high quality intelligence to support decision making.

Manaakitanga

The process of showing respect, humility, generosity, and care for others through propriety and a sense of responsibility. Respect for the public and individuals is exercised during collection and investigations by ensuring proportionality, necessity, and the prevention of unnecessary harm. Manaakitanga also closely supports kotahitanga. Respectful relationships, cooperation, and open mindedness encourage teamwork and pursuit of higher standards. In each individual's pursuit of greater mana through learning and proper process, they enhance the mana of the profession overall.



Whakawā

The quality of being impartial and unbiased, providing assessments based on facts and evidence rather than personal opinions or beliefs. Intelligence professionals must speak honestly and openly to decision makers in positions of authority. Whakawā requires courage to challenge assumptions and beliefs – including self-awareness of one’s own biases – and to present evidence that may contradict popular views. It supports the concept of ‘speaking truth to power’.

Tapatahi

This encompasses the ideas of integrity, reliability, and diligence. In practical terms, tapatahi in the workplace means being honest in all interactions, maintaining confidentiality when required, respecting the authorising environment, avoiding conflicts of interest, fulfilling commitments, and taking responsibility for one’s actions.



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