

New Zealand Law Librarians' Association Principles of Professional Conduct

Preamble

Legal information professionals have an obligation to do their utmost to meet the information needs and to respect the values of their clients, while maintaining the highest standards of professional conduct. This document sets out 15 principles of professional conduct of law librarians and other professionals providing legal information services. It is not a regulatory document, and does not claim to include all issues which may arise in the delivery of legal information services, but is intended as a tool to assist in professional practice. Many of the Principles listed below are illustrated by examples and explanations, with the intention of showing how they may be applied in everyday practice. This is intended as a living document, and will be updated from time to time.

Service

1. We promote open and effective access to legal and related information.
2. We acknowledge the limits on service imposed by the law, our institutions, resources or skills.
3. We uphold a duty to our clients and employers to respect confidentiality and privacy.
4. We provide the best possible service using the most appropriate resources.
5. We assist our clients to acquire the skills to use the information resources they need, through formal or informal instruction.
6. We facilitate access to legal information, but do not interpret the law or provide legal advice.

Business Relationships

7. We promote fair and ethical business practices.

8. We have a duty to avoid situations in which personal interests might be served or significant benefits gained at the expense of library users, colleagues, or our employing institutions.

9. We strive to obtain the best possible value for our institutions' fiscal resources, while at the same time making judicious, analytical and rational use of our institutions' information resources.

Professional Responsibilities

10. We relate to our colleagues with respect and in a spirit of cooperation.

11. We recognise that we have a duty to raise awareness of legal issues relating to information creation, storage, access and use.

12. We distinguish between our personal convictions or interests and our professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs or interests to interfere with the service we provide.

13. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession.

14. We promote the preservation and maintenance of legal information in its many different formats, and recognise the need to facilitate its retrieval.

Legal Responsibilities

15. We recognise that we are governed by legal duties and responsibilities, including but not limited to statutory obligations, contractual duties and common law duty of care. Areas of obligation may vary according to information sector and circumstance.