



# Code of **Ethics**

& Professional Conduct for  
Career & College Counseling



**IC<sup>3</sup> INSTITUTE®**

The Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct (CEPC) represents IC3's commitment to a human-centric and non-transactional approach to counseling, with the aim of bringing purpose and direction to the life of each student in their transition from high school to post-secondary education.

The code of ethics covers the following functional areas of responsibility for high school and postsecondary/higher education institution stakeholders:

High Schools	Post Secondary and Higher Education Institutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• School-led self-development initiatives for students</li><li>• Psychometric testing and student profile development</li><li>• Career awareness initiatives through virtual/physical resources or sessions led by individuals from industry</li><li>• Career pathway mapping for students</li><li>• Student-parent engagements for exploration and decision-making</li><li>• University application requirements [scholarship applications, letters of recommendation, transcripts, school profile, etc.]</li><li>• Alumni engagement and management</li><li>• Monitoring and impact assessment for counseling initiatives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Outreach for student engagement and enrollment</li><li>• Application processes and post-acceptance student support</li><li>• Admissions policies and practices</li><li>• School partnerships and engagements</li><li>• Collaboration for knowledge or technology partnerships</li><li>• Partnerships with government and peak bodies for student aid</li><li>• Alumni engagement</li><li>• Agent partnerships</li></ul>

## Common values

**Integrity:** Counselors and university professionals take pride in their role as facilitators for a student's life and career decisions. All stakeholders should act with honesty, resolute attention to detail, and a positive attitude to guide students as they select their career and educational pathways to best support their goals and reach their full potential.

**Compassion:** Compassion and mindful engagement are at the core of career and college counseling. Using an empathetic approach in every stage of the counseling process will ensure the student has a safe and secure environment to open up with the counselor. This enables counselors and university professionals to holistically assess the student's needs, and guide them toward a path that will contribute to their happiness and success.

**Commitment:** Unwavering dedication is key to managing and navigating the lifecycle of the choices involved in career and college counseling, ensuring diligent, time-sensitive, quality support to all stakeholders. As career and college counseling is a dynamic practice, counselors and university representatives must remain committed to continued learning and upskilling to adapt to new developments and stay current with best practices.

**Open-mindedness:** A non-judgemental approach is critical to a successful counseling practice. Having an open mind about the student's identity, interests, potential, experiences, developments in the labor market, and higher education requirements will ensure a holistic, mindful, and impactful practice.

**Counselors and universities** work with the cardinal belief that each student has the potential to meet their aspirations, and the right to good quality higher education:

1. **Student-centric approach:** Professional career and college advising must always be done in the best interest of the student [based on student needs, awareness, identity, aspirations], and must never prioritize personal/institutional benefit, professional advancement, monetary gain, etc. over a student's needs, interests and well-being.
2. **Professional training and development:** Counselors must develop and continually curate/compile resources to draw insights on universities and industry, as well as stay apprised of prevailing and emerging future trends in economic, social, technological, and labor markets, and occupational scenarios. Be aware of evolving techniques of best practices in career and college counseling to best serve the student's needs, seeking relevant professional development and mentorship to build a nuanced understanding of the role and its scope while maintaining ethical best practices.

Leadership should prioritize and create opportunities for the training, mentorship, and professional development of their teams.

3. **Trust, inclusion and respect:** Safeguard the sanctity of the counselor-student relationship by building a safe space of trust and mutual respect for uninhibited communication, suggestions, thoughts, and feelings in the process of career and college decision-making. Respectfully acknowledge individual differences by honoring religious, cultural, socio-economic, and other categories of diversity to ensure a personalized experience in the counseling process. This extends to engagement with students, parents, subject teachers, university representatives, and all stakeholders. Discussing students with cynicism or skepticism with peers [or any other stakeholder] is contrary to the spirit and role of counselor.

Schools should have a no-tolerance policy toward any form of student discrimination on the above-mentioned grounds that may compromise equity and access in the counseling process.

University representatives should respectfully acknowledge religious, cultural, socio-economic, and other categories of diversity when addressing student groups during outreach efforts.

4. **Confidentiality:** School and university representatives should maintain utmost privacy to not share information from discussions with students/parents and any types of recorded information [including but not limited to the personal identifiable information, student's qualities/attributes, areas of development, learning needs, exploration of aspirations, mental/physical well-being, being differently abled, personal or familial situations/challenges, financial condition, etc.] in all forms [including but not limited to written, audio or video recordings or calls/meetings, computerized or electronically stored] with any other stakeholder at any stage of the process or indefinitely thereafter without prior consent.

Extra precaution should be given with the data of minors, and exercised as per government regulations.

Data and information should not be disclosed/exchanged for promotion of services without student or parent knowledge — specifically for products or services that incur a cost.

- a. **Safeguard recorded student and school data:** Specific safeguard measures must be ensured for third party collaborations such as technology companies, agents, and other external knowledge partners to protect data of the school and students.
- b. **Data disclosure:** Strict adherence of data being accessible and limited only to parties that have prior consent, with no right to manipulate or reshare the data with other organizations or entities [including but not limited to subsidiaries and partner organizations of the parent organization which has received consent].

- c. **Anonymizing reference material:** All high school and university representatives are required to anonymize any information or materials being used as examples/references/templates in the counseling or outreach function to conceal personal details of the author of the reference material, unless prior consent has been provided.
  - d. **Educating all stakeholders on confidentiality and data protection:** School authorities should educate and empower students, parents, teachers and other relevant stakeholders to protect personal information, especially that of minors, in all mediums of written and verbal communication for all processes associated with career and college counseling.
5. **Honesty:** All school representatives must ensure fair representations of one's school with honesty (in letters of recommendations, predicted scores, school profiles, interaction with universities and other stakeholders), and guide students to represent themselves with this same honesty and integrity, whilst reporting violations appropriately and in a timely manner.

Universities must ensure accurate representation of their institution with honesty and integrity, without sharing misleading information about the program offerings, facilities, fees, scholarships, activities, and other relevant information that could influence a student's decision-making process. University representatives must always provide factually accurate, unbiased, and objective information that is not promotional or deliberately influencing perception when interacting with counselors and schools for professional development or outreach.

All stakeholders should do an honest assessment of self work to ensure no damage or impact on a student's career and college based on negligence.

6. **Non-judgemental bias:** Actively be mindful of any personal preferences/biases toward specific career and college pathways, or toward students from specific cultural backgrounds, ethnicities, socio-economic statuses, etc. Refrain from influencing or coercing a student's choices of career and college decisions based on the counselor's personal experiences, beliefs, or biases. Build a culture of data-driven and self-reflective decision-making, wherein students are encouraged to make independent and informed decisions.

University representatives should actively identify and eliminate any personal biases, opinions, or negative information being shared during discussions about other universities and requirements. It is imperative to have sensitive and contextualized content for each region.

## 7. **Engagement with stakeholders:**

- a. Promote meaningful and valuable engagements and interactions that allow for thorough exploration of opportunities, choices, and options available, and further the goal of counseling students to identify their purpose and direction. Avoid events or activities that encourage sales/selling or commoditization of higher education.
- b. Understand the needs (problems, areas of assistance) that can be addressed by service providers through technology and/or other interventions in a timely and informed manner, without compromising student data or any school information/records. Acceptance of monetary benefit(s) by the counselor or school is strictly prohibited from any stakeholder within the school or external agencies.
- c. Schools must thoroughly research service providers to ensure that no affiliations have unethical/non-compliant practices in dealing with student data. Guard against the promotion of specific institutions, organizations, products, and services.
- d. Universities must emphasize due diligence before entering partnerships with agents and consultants, along with the terms and conditions of engagement.
- e. High schools and universities should clearly name and indicate all partnerships and collaborations (including but not limited to authorized agents, service providers, in-country representatives) in the public domain, accessible to all stakeholders.

- f. Schools and universities should not engage in any monetary exchange for activities and initiatives meant for students' awareness/skillbuilding with the exception of declared administrative costs.
- g. Universities must never offer monetary reward(s) to a school-based counselor, teacher, or other employee to influence student enrollment decisions.
- h. School management must not promote universities or organizations in lieu of benefits that their school or personnel receive in the form of special favors, donations, discounts/waivers, or in kind.
- i. All partnerships and third party relationships should be recorded in the form of a written agreement that explicitly states no conflict of interest for schools and universities.

This Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct is established to treat the counseling process as an equalizer to optimize student success. It serves as a governing framework to build an ecosystem that brings schools and universities in collaboration with industry, to fulfill our collective responsibilities in supporting the youth to identify their career pathways with purpose and joy.

## Share your thoughts about the Code of Ethics

Feedback form

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*This will be subject to an annual review.*

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