



Royal Academy  
of Engineering



# Statement of ethical principles

for the engineering profession

February 2026

## Statement of ethical principles for engineering and technology

Engineering and technology have the power to improve lives and address the critical challenges that the world faces. Engineers, technologists and technicians (collectively 'engineering professionals') place the safety and wellbeing of people and planet at the forefront of their decisions, actively pursuing beneficial outcomes and challenging unethical behaviour. Engineering professionals work to identify risks and prevent harms in the systems they design, build, maintain, and through to disposal. They manage technology safely, responsibly, and ethically throughout its entire lifecycle, ensuring that its development, deployment, and use contribute positively and equitably to society and the environment. Engineering professionals must meet not only today's needs but enable safe, sustainable, and thriving futures.

All aspiring and practising engineering professionals – including students, apprentices, educators, trades, and managers – are part of a community defined by problem solving, integrity, creativity and responsibility. Our ethos is expressed in the commitments below: the standards we hold ourselves and our teams to, the values we put into practice, reflecting the trust society places in us. The Engineering Council and Royal Academy of Engineering will promote these principles, provide engineering professionals with resources to implement them and navigate tensions between them, and carry out thought leadership to develop them further.

## 1. Honesty and integrity

Engineering professionals have a duty to uphold the highest standards of professional conduct at all times, including openness, fairness, honesty and integrity. They:

- act reliably and in trustworthy ways and are accountable for their actions
- respect confidentiality, intellectual property and personal or sensitive information, and respect the privacy of individuals and communities
- identify, declare and address conflicts of interest
- avoid knowingly misleading others and take steps to prevent corrupt practices, including plagiarism, misinformation and false representation
- reject bribery and improper influence

## 2. Responsibility to society

Engineering professionals have a duty to protect people, respect rights, uphold the trust placed in them by society nationally and globally, and obey all applicable laws and regulations. They give due weight to facts, published standards and guidance, and act to assess and manage risks. They:

- make the health and safety of others a leading priority and draw attention to hazards
- report malpractice and irresponsible or unsafe practice, whether within the workplace or outside
- are aware of how their work and behaviour might affect others, and respect rights of individuals and communities

- ensure their work is lawful, justified, evidence-based and in the public interest
- recognise the importance of physical and cyber security and data protection
- work to deliver inclusive outcomes, meeting diverse needs across society

### **3. Accuracy and rigour**

Engineering professionals have a duty to acquire, maintain and use wisely the understanding, knowledge and skills needed in their role, and apply this to their work so that it meets the highest standards. They:

- act with care and diligence in all professional work, recognising that public trust depends on its accuracy, integrity and quality
- undertake work only within their current competence or under competent supervision, applying sound judgment and critical thinking
- ensure that they have the right knowledge and expertise to tackle a project, applying sound judgment and critical thinking especially in novel or emerging areas
- actively maintain knowledge, skills and competence, and support others to do the same
- test evidence objectively and without bias, respecting the views of others and with awareness of assumptions, uncertainty and limits of understanding

### **4. Leadership and communication**

Engineering professionals have a duty to uphold and promote high standards of leadership and communication. They:

- engage with communities and wider society, and communicate responsibly about how engineering should meet people's needs
- foster a culture where concerns can be raised without fear of reprisal, and act on well-founded concerns
- communicate clearly, accessibly and proportionately about benefits, risks, uncertainties and trade-offs in engineering works
- promote equity, equality, diversity, fairness and inclusion, creating inclusive cultures to support everyone in the profession
- acknowledge and communicate uncertainty, limits of evidence, and unknowns
- maintain public trust and uphold the reputation and standing of the profession

## 5. Responsibility for the future of technology, society and the environment

Engineering professionals have a duty to act as stewards of technology, developing technology responsibly, with an awareness of the lasting consequences of their work for society and the environment and taking account of the long-term, systemic, intergenerational and environmental impacts. As far as is reasonably practicable, they:

- consider fully the risks and ethical implications of emerging and fast-moving technologies, such as artificial intelligence and technologies with autonomous or semi-autonomous capabilities
- anticipate wider and emergent consequences and potential for misuse of technologies, and apply precaution proportionately where potential harms are serious or irreversible
- account for immediate, cumulative and systemic risks – including climate change, biodiversity loss, inequality and resource depletion
- manage technology responsibly across its lifecycle, including decommissioning
- protect and, where possible, restore natural and built environments
- consider future impacts of engineering and avoid shifting risks or burdens to future generations, distant geographical locations or supply chains, whether local or global


These are not rules or simple measures for decision making. They are principles to help navigate the complex decisions and trade-offs that engineering professionals will face, supported by the institutions across the profession that provide training, systems for confidential reporting and detailed codes of conduct to guide ethical practice. Some ethical issues cannot be addressed by individual engineers but need open dialogue across disciplines and society, guided by these principles. They represent the commitments that engineering professionals make to ethical culture and practice.



## Engineering Council

Operating under a Royal Charter, the Engineering Council is the UK regulatory body for the engineering profession. It sets and maintains the internationally recognised standards of professional competence and commitment, which are detailed in the UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence (UK-SPEC). The Engineering Council also holds the national register of professional Engineering Technicians (EngTech), Incorporated Engineers (IEng), Chartered Engineers (CEng) and ICT Technicians (ICTTech). Holders of these titles must be members of a professional engineering institution licensed by the Engineering Council or in some cases a Professional Affiliate. In order to achieve registered status individuals will have demonstrated to their institution that they possess a range of technical and personal competences and are committed to keeping these up to date, and to acting with integrity in the public interest. The award and retention of these titles ensures that employers, Government and wider society - both in the UK and overseas - can have confidence in the knowledge, experience and commitment of engineers and technicians on the register. The Engineering Council publishes more detailed Guidance on Sustainability, Risk, Security and Whistleblowing.



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