

# Code of Conduct

Group Training Association of Victoria trading as  
“Apprenticeship Employment Network (AEN)”

[www.aen.org.au](http://www.aen.org.au)

March 2016

## The intent of the Code

The intent of the Code of Conduct is to engender professional unity and pride in the work of the Association and its members by having some common agreed standards of professionalism. It is a statement of the high standards of behaviour, which apply to all staff and members of the Association, which are rightly demanded of companies by the wider community.

The Code reflects the AEN Statement of Purpose and its Members:

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*To support the vocational training and employment network to achieve skilled and sustainable employment for the community.*

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It acts as an effective demonstration of the values of the Association and its members which are embodied in the Principals of the Code.

All standards contained in this Code are in addition to the general obligations imposed on members including implied duties such as the duty to act with honesty, integrity and in good faith.

## Principles

### 1. Respecting others

When working with others, members are expected to treat students, other staff and members of the wider community with respect for their rights and obligations by:

- being courteous, honest and fair when dealing with others and when making decisions
- treating all people justly, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, marital status, age, political conviction or other attributes
- acting in ways that support the reputation of staff, students, clients or partners.
- protecting the privacy of others and maintaining appropriate confidentiality regarding personal and commercial matters
- respecting cultural backgrounds of staff, students, clients and partners and conducting activities sensitive to the cultural context
- avoiding behaviour which might reasonably be perceived as harassment, discrimination, bullying or intimidation

### 2. Behaving professionally

Members are expected to carry out their work duties in a professional and conscientious manner at all times by:

- behaving in accordance with the associations values:
- behaving in accordance with relevant group training organisations policies, contractual obligations/ agreements and government legislation
- maintaining confidentiality of information
- seeking to attain the highest possible standards of performance and providing accurate, timely and useful information to all stakeholders
- ensuring any public comments made in the association's name are authorised by AEN
- reporting fraud or corrupt conduct to appropriate internal or external authorities
- conducting activities in a manner that supports health, safety and wellbeing for all affected members of the community

### 3. Avoiding any conflict of interest

Members must take reasonable steps to avoid any actual or potential conflict of interest and act appropriately by:

- disclosing actual or potential conflict of interest and withdrawing themselves immediately from the situation giving rise to the conflict
- not misusing the influence of their position to pursue personal, sexual or financial relationships with other staff, students or members of the community
- not accepting gifts which go beyond common courtesies consistent with ethical and accepted business practices
- declaring private paid outside work, including directorships and board memberships

### 4. Recognising and respecting intellectual property

Intellectual property (IP) can be an invention, trademark, original design or the practical application or expression of a good idea that has commercial value. All members must work to safeguard the IP of the group training industry.

### 5. Equality in employment and training

AEN and our members are committed to developing and maintaining a diverse workforce and to providing a work environment in which every employee is treated fairly and with respect, and has the opportunity to contribute to business success and to realise their potential.

### 6. Information and privacy

AEN and our members will only collect and retain personal information that is necessary to meet business / government requirements, and as permitted by law by:

- Only collecting personal information in a lawful and fair manner, and in a way which is not unreasonably intrusive.
- It will not use or disclose such information for any purpose other than the purpose for which it is collected.

## 7. Workplace Health and Safety (WHS)

Health and safety, social responsibility and environmental sustainability are crucial to business. Our members will support WHS by ensuring:

- safe operations are followed not only on technically sound plant and equipment, but also on every person working within the industry taking responsibility for preventing workplace-related injuries and illnesses and using the tools and procedures in place.
- health and safety practices governed by mandatory policies, standards and procedures are applied to all employees/ students.
- managers are accountable for the implementation and review of these standards and procedures and for supporting WHS systems that are in place.

### *Alcohol and drug use*

In line with our commitment to providing a safe and healthy work environment, while at work or when conducting Company business, members/ employees/ students must be able to function at an acceptable level of performance and not be impaired by illegal or legal drugs, including alcohol.

### *Harassment*

AEN does not tolerate any form of harassment.

People are the foundation of our success, and all our people must be treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity

## Related Documents

- AEN Statement of Purpose
- Standards for Group Training
- Various Policies
- AEN Board Charter

GTO's are required to meet a range of state and federal legal obligations which are presumed in this Code. It is the responsibility of each organisation to ensure they are meeting these legal obligations. These obligations may include corporations law, rules of incorporation of associations, privacy legislation, equal opportunity, occupational Health and Safety legislation, financial and accounting standards, anti-discrimination legislation and other codes of ethics.

## Raising a business conduct concern

Complaints referred to the AEN Board in connection with the Code will be heard firstly and finally by the Board and no appeals will be considered. Should a matter be before some other jurisdiction the Board will not precede with the matter until it is fully heard in that other jurisdiction.

### Potential Complaints

A complainant might include:

- member of the public,
- industry stakeholder,
- government department,
- apprentice, parent/guardian, teacher, school, RTO, GTO
- employer,
- a GTO staff member,
- another Association Member,
- another person or organisation.

Complaints addressed to the Association will be required to:

- be provided in writing;
- identify the complainant and the issue to be addressed;
- where possible contain substantiating information;

### Complaint Process

In every case the complainant will be given written confirmation of receipt of a properly documented complaint.

On receipt of a complaint the Executive Director will assess the merits of the matter and prepare a report for the next meeting of the Board recommending that the complaint be addressed, investigated or dismissed. Where a matter is deemed critical the Executive Director may call an extraordinary meeting of the Board.

Following advice from the Board the Executive Director will continue with an investigation and/or write to the complainant outlining the Board's decision.

The Executive Director may be directed to further investigate a matter which could involve interviewing the parties, taking statements from witnesses and conducting enquiries necessary to provide facts for the Board's consideration.

The materials collected will be presented to the Board for consideration. Members against whom complaints are made will be provided with copies of the complaint and invited to address the Board to present their case and answer any questions the Board may have.

The Board may direct the Executive Director to engage and independent third party with the requisite expertise (particularly in the area of disputes and complaints settlement) to guide and assist the Board.

### Written complaints can be addressed to:

AEN Board  
c/o AEN Executive Director  
Level 3, 478 Albert Street  
East Melbourne VIC 3002  
Tel: 03 9639 3955 Fax: 03 9639 4377 Email: [gary@aen.org.au](mailto:gary@aen.org.au)

### Breaches of the Code

Where a breach of the Code or a complaint against a member is upheld the Board may take any of the following actions.

*Warning:* The Board will contact the member concerned warning them of the deemed inappropriate action/s and provide offers of assistance to improve the problem practice.

*Improvement:* As above the Board will contact the member concerning the issue of complaint, offer assistance but also require that evidence of improvement be provided in a set timeframe.

*Suspension:* Where a member fails to act to rectify or improve their practice the Board may suspend the member for a period – suspension would involve loss of all membership entitlements (for a set period of time)

*Expulsion & Naming:* Where the breach of the Code is deemed sufficiently serious the Board may contact the member concerned informing them that as of a certain date they are no longer a member of the Association and that the AEN website and other publications will note that they are no longer a member of AEN.