



# Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics

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Together we are Reshaping the world

one **Coaching Conversation** at a time

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# Introduction and Purpose

Welcome to our Professional Code of Conduct for coaching professionals. This code serves as a guiding light, ensuring that our members uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and ethical conduct in their coaching practice.

## The Universal Coaching Alliance Code of Professional Conduct

UCA Members affirm their dedication to maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and ethical conduct in coaching by adhering to this Code of Conduct.

**Professionalism** is paramount, as members commit to conducting themselves with integrity, adhering to ethical standards, and respecting the coaching profession. Continuous improvement is embraced, with members actively seeking feedback, reflecting on their practice, and striving for growth. Confidentiality is sacrosanct, with members maintaining strict confidentiality regarding client information and refraining from disclosure without explicit consent.

**Competence** is continuously cultivated as members strive to enhance their skills and knowledge through ongoing professional development, ensuring top-quality service to clients. Integrity is non-negotiable, with members acting honestly, and transparently, and in all professional dealings while respecting boundaries and avoiding conflicts of interest.

**Respect** is fundamental, as members treat all stakeholders with dignity, empathy, and cultural sensitivity. Establishing and maintaining clear boundaries with clients ensures professionalism and focus on client growth. Accountability is key, with members taking responsibility for their actions and decisions and addressing concerns promptly and effectively.

**Legal and ethical compliance** is imperative, with members adhering to all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical guidelines governing coaching practice. \*

**Community contribution** is valued, with members positively contributing to the coaching community, sharing knowledge, supporting colleagues, and upholding the profession's reputation and integrity.

# The Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors and Supervisors

The Universal Coaching Alliance has aligned with the [Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Supervisors and Mentors](#).

The Code aligns with the content and requirements set out in the Professional Charter for Coaching and Mentoring. The Charter, drafted in accordance with European law, is registered on the dedicated European Union database, which lists self-regulation initiatives in Europe.

The Code is intended as a guidance document rather than a legally binding one that in detail spells out what a member can and cannot do. The Code sets the expectation of best practice in coaching, mentoring, and supervision promoting the development of professional excellence. Its purpose is to:

- Provide appropriate guidelines, accountability, and standards of conduct for all our members.
- Set out how our members are expected to act, behave and perform when working with coachees, mentees, supervisees (from now on to be called 'clients') and interacting with fellow practitioners, sponsors, stakeholders, and other professionals.
- In conjunction with our respective bodies' professional competences, guide our members' development and growth in the profession.
- Serve as a guide for individuals who do not identify themselves as a professional coach, mentor or supervisor, but apply coaching, mentoring, or supervision skills in their work.
- Be used as a basis of any complaints or disciplinary hearings and actions within the respective bodies' complaints procedures.

## The Code of Ethics

The Code is arranged into five sections and covers the bodies' general expectations of professional behaviour and conduct as well as the list of all the membership bodies that have signed up to this Code of Ethics:

1. Terminology
2. Working with Clients
3. Professional Conduct
4. Excellent Practice
5. Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics

# 1. Terminology

- a) For reasons of brevity this Code where appropriate refers to:
  - a. Coachees, mentees, supervisees, and students as "clients"
  - b. Coaches, mentors, supervisors, and trainers/training providers as "practicing members" or "members".
  - c. Coaching, mentoring, and supervision work as "professional work."
  - d. Coaching, mentoring, and supervision as "profession".
- b) The signatories to this Code acknowledge that the terms "profession" and "professional" are being used for activities that are not under statutory regulation but are being increasingly professionalised and self-regulated.
- c) The signatories to this Code acknowledge that the titles "coach", "mentor" and "supervisor" are not protected and may be used by anyone in the field of practice, member or not member of a professional body.
- d) Each signatory will define exactly which of its members and other stakeholders are expected to abide by this Code (who are hereafter collectively referred to as the "members").
- e) For a proper understanding of this Code, members should be aware of their own professional body's definitions and terminology for the precise use of keywords e.g., coach, coaching, client, member, mentor, mentoring, sponsor, supervisor, supervision, training, and technology.

## 2. Working with Clients

### Context

- 2.1 When professionally working with clients in any capacity members will conduct themselves in accordance with this Code, committed to delivering the level of service that may reasonably be expected of a practising member.

### Contracting

- 2.2 Before they start working with a client, members will make this Code available and explain and make explicit, their commitment to abide by this Code. Members will also make their clients and sponsors aware of their respective bodies' complaints procedures.
- 2.3 Before starting work with a client, members will explain and strive to ensure that the client and sponsor know and fully understand, the nature, terms, and conditions of the coaching, mentoring, or supervision contract, including financial, logistical, and confidentiality arrangements.
- 2.4 Members will use their professional knowledge and experience to understand their clients' and sponsors' expectations and reach an agreement on how they plan to meet them. Members will also seek to take into account the needs and expectations of other relevant parties.

- 2.5** Members will be open and transparent about the methods they use and willing to share information with clients and sponsors about the processes and standards involved.
- 2.6** Members will ensure that the duration of the contract is appropriate to achieve the client's and sponsor's goals and will actively work to promote the client's independence, self-reliance and sense of empowerment.
- 2.7** Members will seek to ensure that the setting in which any coaching, mentoring, supervision, or training takes place offers appropriate conditions for the client's learning and reflection and therefore a higher likelihood of achieving the goals set in the contract.
- 2.8** Members should be guided by their client's interests and at the same time raise awareness and responsibility to safeguard that these interests do not intentionally harm those of sponsors, stakeholders, wider society, or the natural environment. \*

## Integrity

- 2.9** Members will be suitably qualified to work with their chosen client group and honestly represent their relevant experience, professional qualifications, memberships, and certifications/accreditations to clients, sponsors, stakeholders, and fellow practitioners.
- 2.10** In communication with any party, members will accurately represent the value they may provide as a coach, mentor, or supervisor. \*
- 2.11** Members will ensure that no false or misleading claims are made, or implied, about their professional competence, qualifications, or accreditation in any published, promotional material, or otherwise. Members will attribute ownership of work, ideas, and materials of others to the originator and not claim it as their own.
- 2.12** Members will disclose any conflict of interest and act within applicable law and not in any way encourage, assist or collude with client conduct that is dishonest, unlawful, unprofessional, or discriminatory.

## Confidentiality

- 2.13** When working with clients, members will maintain the strictest level of confidentiality with all client and sponsor information unless the release of information is required by law.
- 2.14** Members will have a clear agreement with clients and sponsors about the conditions under which confidentiality will not be maintained (e.g., illegal activity, danger to self or others) and gain agreement to that limit of confidentiality where possible unless the release of information is required by law.
- 2.15** Members will keep, store and dispose of all data and records of their client work including digital files and communications, in a manner that ensures confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in their client's country regarding data protection and privacy.
- 2.16** Members will inform clients that they are receiving supervision and identify that the client may be referred to anonymously in this context. The client should be assured that the supervision relationship is itself confidential.

**2.17** If the client is a child or a vulnerable adult, members will make arrangements with the client's sponsors or guardian to ensure an appropriate level of confidentiality in the best interests of the client, whilst also complying with all relevant legislation and safeguarding practices.

## Inappropriate interactions

**2.18** Members are responsible for setting and maintaining clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern all physical and virtual interactions with clients or sponsors.

**2.19** Members will strictly avoid pursuing and refrain from engaging in any romantic or sexual relationships with current clients or sponsors.

## Conflict of interest

**2.20** Members will not exploit a client or seek to gain any inappropriate financial or non-financial advantage from the relationship nor use the client's personal, professional or other data, without their consent.

**2.21** To avoid any conflict of interest, members will clearly distinguish a professional relationship with a client from other forms of relationships.

**2.22** Members will remain vigilant to potential conflicts of interest—whether commercial or personal—that may arise during the professional relationship. They will address such conflicts promptly and transparently with the client or sponsor. Where a conflict cannot be managed in a way that safeguards the client's best interests, the member will withdraw from the relationship to prevent any detriment.

**2.23** Members will consider the impact of any client relationships on other client relationships and discuss any potential conflict of interest with those who might be affected.

## Ending professional relationships and on-going responsibilities

**2.25** Members will respect the client's right to end the engagement at any point in the process, subject to the provisions of the coaching, mentoring, or supervision service agreement.

**2.26** Members will encourage the client or sponsor to terminate the coaching, mentoring, or supervision engagement if it is believed that the client would be better served by a different form of professional help.

**2.27** Members will prepare clients for the ending of the coaching assignment in the case that the member is unexpectedly unable to complete; this may include having a coaching continuity plan.

**2.28** Members are required to have a provision for the transfer of current clients and their records in the event of the termination of practice.

**2.29** Members understand that their professional responsibilities continue beyond the end of the professional relationship. These include:

- Maintenance of agreed confidentiality of all information relating to clients and sponsors
- Safe and secure maintenance of all related records and data that complies with all relevant laws and agreements that exist in their country regarding data protection and privacy
- Avoidance of any exploitation of the former relationship, which could otherwise call into question the professionalism or integrity of the member or the professional community
- Provision of any follow-up that has been agreed to.

## 3. Professional Conduct

### Maintaining the reputation of the profession

3.1 Members will behave in a way that positively reflects upon and enhances the reputation of the coaching profession, ensuring that the use of technology is aligned with professional standards.

3.2 Members will demonstrate respect for the variety of practices used by members and other individuals in the profession and all the different ethically informed approaches to coaching, mentoring, and supervision, including the use of data technologies and AI.

### Acting Responsibly

3.3 Members will abide by their respective bodies' statements and policies.

3.4 Members will take a respectful approach, using affirming language, which embraces and explores individual differences.

3.6 Members will monitor their spoken, written, and non-verbal communication and approaches for implicit bias or discrimination.

3.8 Members will engage in professional development activities that contribute to increased self-awareness in relation to inclusion, diversity, technology, latest developments in changing social and environmental needs.

### Breaches of professional conduct

3.9 Members will challenge and offer support to any person they consider to be acting outside of their professional code of ethics, and, if necessary, notify the professional body.

3.10 Members must cease practising if subject to an arrest or criminal investigation and notify their professional body with immediate effect.

3.11 Members accept that any breach of the code that is upheld in any formal procedure may result in sanctions, including loss of accredited status and/or body membership.

### Legal and statutory obligations and duties

3.12 Members are obliged to stay up to date with and adhere to:

- All relevant statutory and regulatory requirements in the countries in which their professional work takes place.
- Safeguarding legislation including when working with children, young people or vulnerable adults, and take account of guidance.
- The relevant organisational policies, procedures and take account of guidance about the work context.

**3.13** Members will have the appropriate professional indemnity insurance to cover their coaching, mentoring and supervising work for the countries in which they operate and where such indemnity insurance is available.

## 4. Excellent Practice

### Ability to perform

**4.1** Members will operate within the limit of their professional competence. Members should refer the client to a more experienced or suitably qualified practicing member where appropriate.

**4.2** Members will be fit and healthy enough to practice. If they are unsure whether they are able to practice safely for health reasons, they will seek professional guidance or support.

### On-going supervision

**4.3** Members will engage in regular contracted and consistent supervision with a suitably qualified/experienced supervisor and peer supervision with a level of frequency that;

- is appropriate to their coaching, mentoring or supervision practice
- is relevant to the supervisee's coaching context
- meets the requirements of their professional body and level of accreditation
- provides evidence of their engagement in supervision.

### Continuing professional development

**4.4** Members will actively participate in reflective practice and continuing personal professional development (CPPD) activities and provide evidence thereof.

**4.5** Members are expected to contribute to the professional coaching community that is appropriate to their level of expertise.

**4.8** Members will systematically reflect on and evaluate the quality and relevance of their work and role through feedback from clients, sponsors and stakeholders, and other CPPD activities, to improve their practice.

# 5. Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics – for Coaches, Mentors, and Supervisors

The Global Code of Ethics is an overarching ethical framework for the signatories and does not cover complaints procedures or every potential ethical issue.

Instead, it devolves responsibility for overall governance to each signatory to develop and apply specific policies and procedures that reflect the range of ethical nuances relating to diversity of practice and local or specific contexts.

Any such additions will not contradict the essence of the Code, nor carry an obligation for other co-signatories to adopt. These additions may be shared by signatories as part of on-going collaborative exchanges between professional bodies.

Signatories to the Global Code of Ethics will not become involved in any complaint that relates to another signatory organization. Any such complaint should be taken directly to that organisation. For more detail about each code signatory including membership, accreditation, standards, governance, and complaints procedures, please visit the signatories' relevant websites.

The current signatories to the code can be found here

<https://www.globalcodeofethics.org/signatories/>

# Adaptations and Amendments to the Global Code

February 2024

## Insertion:

**3.11 Members must cease practising if subject to an arrest or criminal investigation and notify their professional body with immediate effect.**

## Amendments:

**3.11 (Now 3.12 in this document)** Members are obliged to stay up to date and comply with:

- All relevant statutory requirements in the countries in which their professional work takes place.
- Safeguarding legislation when working with children or vulnerable adults.
- The relevant organisational policies and procedures of the work context.

**3.12 (Now 3.13 in this document)** Members will have the appropriate professional indemnity insurance to cover their coaching, mentoring and supervising work for the countries in which they operate and where such indemnity insurance is available.

**4.3** Members will engage in supervision with a suitably qualified/experienced supervisor and peer supervision with a level of frequency that is appropriate to their coaching, mentoring or supervision practice, the requirements of their professional body and level of accreditation, and have evidence of engagement in reflective practice.

## Amended to:

**4.3** Members will engage in **regular contracted and consistent** supervision with a suitably qualified/experienced supervisor and peer supervision with a level of frequency that is appropriate to their coaching, mentoring, or supervision practice, the requirements of their professional body and level of accreditation and have evidence of engagement in reflective practice.

**The above section to be completed once code is signed off.**