



## **Professional Designation Project - Comparison of Evaluation Ethics**

### **Introduction**

A comparison of 'ethics' was undertaken to explore how the *CES Guidelines for Ethical Conduct* compare to other jurisdiction's approach to this important issue for evaluation practice in Canada. Many evaluation organizations have embedded ethical issues into their Guidelines, as illustrated in the AEA Guiding Principles (below). Only in the Australasian Evaluation Society was a pure *code of ethics* found.

Shaded boxes or areas represent overall categories specified by each of the references. Australasian and AEA documents have been aligned to the CES guideline. Therefore, some items are repeated, as they contain elements of more than one of CES guidelines.

Substantively, the CES Guidelines for Ethical Conduct come out as somewhat less robust than the other two documents. Notably, there is no real focus or coverage of issues relating to public welfare and society at large. CES guidelines appear to operate at lower level, limiting issues of accountability to the project, fiscal and client management realms. The AES Code goes substantially further than either the CES or AEA Guiding principles. They include elements of ethical conduct related to the members' obligations to their professional association and evaluation colleagues.

This analysis was used to inform the Professional Designation project and reviewed by CES National Council in February 2008. It was agreed to use the current version of the Guidelines for Ethical Conduct in the professional designation project, supplemented by work underway on the development of CES standards and competencies.

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
	<b>Responsibilities to the Field of Evaluation and the Public</b>	
<b>COMPETENCE:</b> Evaluators are to be competent in their provision of service.	<b>Quality work:</b> 3. Members should undertake their evaluation work in accordance with appropriate standards of evaluation practice and a commitment to continuous improvement.  <b>Competence:</b> 4. Members should remain current, competent and rigorous in their practice of evaluation, and fairly represent their competence and experience to others.	<b>A. Systematic Inquiry:</b> Evaluators conduct systematic, data-based inquiries  <b>B. Competence:</b> Evaluators provide competent performance to stakeholders.
1. Evaluators should apply systematic methods of inquiry appropriate to the evaluation.		<b>A. Systematic Inquiry:</b> 1. To ensure the accuracy and credibility of the evaluative information they produce, evaluators should adhere to the highest technical standards appropriate to the methods they use.
2. Evaluators should possess or provide content knowledge appropriate for the evaluation.		<b>B. Competence:</b> 1. Evaluators should possess (or ensure that the evaluation team possesses) the education, abilities, skills and experience appropriate to undertake the tasks proposed in the evaluation.
3. Evaluators should continuously strive to improve their methodological and practice skills.	<b>Quality work:</b> 3. Members should undertake their evaluation work in accordance with appropriate standards	<b>B. Competence:</b> 4. Evaluators should continually seek to maintain and improve their competencies, in order to



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>I</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>II</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>III</sup>
	<p>of evaluation practice and a commitment to continuous improvement.</p> <p><b>Competence:</b> 4. Members should remain current, competent and rigorous in their practice of evaluation, and fairly represent their competence and experience to others.</p>	<p>provide the highest level of performance in their evaluations. This continuing professional development might include formal coursework and workshops, self-study, evaluations of one's own practice, and working with other evaluators to learn from their skills and expertise.</p>
<p><b>INTEGRITY:</b> Evaluators are to act with integrity in their relationships with all stakeholders.</p>	<p><b>Introduction of work:</b> 11. Members should follow due process when soliciting or offering work, and should not improperly solicit or offer work either directly or through an agent nor improperly reward any person for the introduction of work.</p>	<p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> Evaluators display honesty and integrity in their own behavior, and attempt to ensure the honesty and integrity of the entire evaluation process.</p>
<p>1. Evaluators should accurately represent their level of skills and knowledge.</p>	<p><b>Competence:</b> 4. Members should remain current, competent and rigorous in their practice of evaluation, and fairly represent their competence and experience to others.</p>	<p><b>B. Competence:</b> 3. Evaluators should practice within the limits of their professional training and competence, and should decline to conduct evaluations that fall substantially outside those limits. When declining the commission or request is not feasible or appropriate, evaluators should make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result. Evaluators should make every effort to gain the competence directly or through the assistance of others who possess the required expertise</p>
<p>2. Evaluators should declare any conflict of interest to clients before embarking on an evaluation project and at any point where such conflict occurs. This includes conflict of interest on the part of either evaluator or stakeholder.</p>		<p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 2. Before accepting an evaluation assignment, evaluators should disclose any roles or relationships they have that might pose a conflict of interest (or appearance of a conflict) with their role as an evaluator. If they proceed with the evaluation, the conflict(s) should be clearly articulated in reports of the evaluation results.</p> <p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 4. Evaluators should be explicit about their own, their clients', and other stakeholders' interests and values concerning the conduct and outcomes of an evaluation.</p> <p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 7. Evaluators should disclose all sources of financial support for an evaluation, and the source of the request for the evaluation.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 4. Evaluators should maintain a balance between client needs and other needs. Evaluators necessarily have a special relationship with the client who funds or requests the evaluation. By virtue of that relationship, evaluators must strive to meet legitimate client needs whenever it is</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
		<p>feasible and appropriate to do so. However, that relationship can also place evaluators in difficult dilemmas when client interests conflict with other interests, or when client interests conflict with the obligation of evaluators for systematic inquiry, competence, integrity, and respect for people. In these cases, evaluators should explicitly identify and discuss the conflicts with the client and relevant stakeholders, resolve them when possible, determine whether continued work on the evaluation is advisable if the conflicts cannot be resolved, and make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result if the conflict is not resolved.</p>
<p>3. Evaluators should be sensitive to the cultural and social environment of all stakeholders and conduct themselves in a manner appropriate to this environment.</p>	<p><b>Courtesy:</b> 5. Members should conduct themselves with courtesy and consideration towards all with whom they come into contact during the course of their work.</p>	<p><b>B. Competence:</b> 2. To ensure recognition, accurate interpretation and respect for diversity, evaluators should ensure that the members of the evaluation team collectively demonstrate cultural competence. Cultural competence would be reflected in evaluators seeking awareness of their own culturally-based assumptions, their understanding of the worldviews of culturally-different participants and stakeholders in the evaluation, and the use of appropriate evaluation strategies and skills in working with culturally different groups. Diversity may be in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, socio-economics, or other factors pertinent to the evaluation context</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> Evaluators respect the security, dignity and self-worth of respondents, program participants, clients, and other evaluation stakeholders.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 1. Evaluators should seek a comprehensive understanding of the important contextual elements of the evaluation. Contextual factors that may influence the results of a study include geographic location, timing, political and social climate, economic conditions, and other relevant activities in progress at the same time.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 6. Evaluators have the responsibility to understand and respect differences among participants, such as differences in their culture,</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
<p>4. Evaluators should confer with the client on contractual decisions such as: confidentiality; privacy; communication; and, ownership of findings and reports.</p>	<p><b>Confidentiality:</b> 9. Members should ensure responsible use of information obtained in the course of their evaluation practice, and respect confidentiality undertakings.</p>	<p>religion, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and ethnicity, and to account for potential implications of these differences when planning, conducting, analyzing, and reporting evaluations.</p> <p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 1. Evaluators should negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs, tasks to be undertaken, limitations of methodology, scope of results likely to be obtained, and uses of data resulting from a specific evaluation. It is primarily the evaluator's responsibility to initiate discussion and clarification of these matters, not the client's.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 2. Evaluators should abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding risks, harms, and burdens that might befall those participating in the evaluation; regarding informed consent for participation in evaluation; and regarding informing participants and clients about the scope and limits of confidentiality.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 3. Because justified negative or critical conclusions from an evaluation must be explicitly stated, evaluations sometimes produce results that harm client or stakeholder interests. Under this circumstance, evaluators should seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur, provided this will not compromise the integrity of the evaluation findings. Evaluators should carefully judge when the benefits from doing the evaluation or in performing certain evaluation procedures should be foregone because of the risks or harms. To the extent possible, these issues should be anticipated during the negotiation of the evaluation.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 3. Freedom of information is essential in a democracy. Evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders access to evaluative information in forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality. Evaluators should actively disseminate information to stakeholders as resources allow. Communications that are tailored to a given stakeholder should include all results that may bear on interests of that stakeholder and refer to any other tailored communications to other stakeholders. In</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
		<p>all cases, evaluators should strive to present results clearly and simply so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 4. Evaluators should maintain a balance between client needs and other needs. Evaluators necessarily have a special relationship with the client who funds or requests the evaluation. By virtue of that relationship, evaluators must strive to meet legitimate client needs whenever it is feasible and appropriate to do so. However, that relationship can also place evaluators in difficult dilemmas when client interests conflict with other interests, or when client interests conflict with the obligation of evaluators for systematic inquiry, competence, integrity, and respect for people. In these cases, evaluators should explicitly identify and discuss the conflicts with the client and relevant stakeholders, resolve them when possible, determine whether continued work on the evaluation is advisable if the conflicts cannot be resolved, and make clear any significant limitations on the evaluation that might result if the conflict is not resolved.</p>
<p><b>ACCOUNTABILITY:</b> Evaluators are to be accountable for their performance and their product.</p>	<p><b>Ethical conduct:</b> 1. When commissioning, conducting or reporting an evaluation, members should strive to uphold the ethical principles and associated procedures endorsed by the Society in the <i>Guidelines for the Ethical Conduct of Evaluations</i>.</p>	<p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 2. Evaluators should abide by current professional ethics, standards, and regulations regarding risks, harms, and burdens that might befall those participating in the evaluation; regarding informed consent for participation in evaluation; and regarding informing participants and clients about the scope and limits of confidentiality.</p>
<p>1. Evaluators should be responsible for the provision of information to clients to facilitate their decision-making concerning the selection of appropriate evaluation strategies and methodologies. Such information should include the limitations of selected methodology.</p>		<p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 1. Evaluators should negotiate honestly with clients and relevant stakeholders concerning the costs, tasks to be undertaken, limitations of methodology, scope of results likely to be obtained, and uses of data resulting from a specific evaluation. It is primarily the evaluator's responsibility to initiate discussion and clarification of these matters, not the client's.</p> <p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 6. If evaluators determine that certain procedures or activities are likely to produce misleading evaluative information or conclusions, they</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
		<p>have the responsibility to communicate their concerns and the reasons for them. If discussions with the client do not resolve these concerns, the evaluator should decline to conduct the evaluation. If declining the assignment is unfeasible or inappropriate, the evaluator should consult colleagues or relevant stakeholders about other proper ways to proceed. (Options might include discussions at a higher level, a dissenting cover letter or appendix, or refusal to sign the final document.)</p> <p><b>A. Systematic Inquiry: 2.</b> Evaluators should explore with the client the shortcomings and strengths both of the various evaluation questions and the various approaches that might be used for answering those questions.</p> <p><b>A. Systematic Inquiry: 3.</b> Evaluators should communicate their methods and approaches accurately and in sufficient detail to allow others to understand, interpret and critique their work. They should make clear the limitations of an evaluation and its results. Evaluators should discuss in a contextually appropriate way those values, assumptions, theories, methods, results, and analyses significantly affecting the interpretation of the evaluative findings. These statements apply to all aspects of the evaluation, from its initial conceptualization to the eventual use of findings.</p>
<p>2. Evaluators should be responsible for the clear, accurate, and fair, written and/or oral presentation of study findings and limitations, and recommendations.</p>	<p><b>Integrity:</b> 6. Members should practice with honesty and fairness.</p> <p><b>Truthfulness:</b> 7. Members should not knowingly make or prepare or certify as true any oral or written statement which is false, incorrect, misleading or incomplete.</p> <p><b>Acknowledgement:</b> 10. Members should acknowledge the work of others by appropriate citations and references.</p>	<p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 5. Evaluators should not misrepresent their procedures, data or findings. Within reasonable limits, they should attempt to prevent or correct misuse of their work by others.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 4. Knowing that evaluations may negatively affect the interests of some stakeholders, evaluators should conduct the evaluation and communicate its results in a way that clearly respects the stakeholders' dignity and self-worth.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 1. When planning and reporting evaluations, evaluators should include relevant perspectives and interests of the full range of stakeholders.</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
		<p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 2. Evaluators should consider not only the immediate operations and outcomes of whatever is being evaluated, but also its broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 3. Freedom of information is essential in a democracy. Evaluators should allow all relevant stakeholders access to evaluative information in forms that respect people and honor promises of confidentiality. Evaluators should actively disseminate information to stakeholders as resources allow. Communications that are tailored to a given stakeholder should include all results that may bear on interests of that stakeholder and refer to any other tailored communications to other stakeholders. In all cases, evaluators should strive to present results clearly and simply so that clients and other stakeholders can easily understand the evaluation process and results.</p>
<p>3. Evaluators should be responsible in their fiscal decision-making so that expenditures are accounted for and clients receive good value for their dollars.</p>		
<p>4. Evaluators should be responsible for the completion of the evaluation within a reasonable time as agreed to with the clients. Such agreements should acknowledge unprecedented delays resulting from factors beyond the evaluator's control</p>		<p><b>C. Integrity/Honesty:</b> 3. Evaluators should record all changes made in the originally negotiated project plans, and the reasons why the changes were made. If those changes would significantly affect the scope and likely results of the evaluation, the evaluator should inform the client and other important stakeholders in a timely fashion (barring good reason to the contrary, before proceeding with further work) of the changes and their likely impact.</p>
	<p><b>Public Interest:</b> 2. Members should consider the interests of the full range stakeholders in their evaluation work, including the broader public interest, and in particular, the potential impacts of differences and inequalities in society.</p>	<p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 3. Because justified negative or critical conclusions from an evaluation must be explicitly stated, evaluations sometimes produce results that harm client or stakeholder interests. Under this circumstance, evaluators should seek to maximize the benefits and reduce any unnecessary harms that might occur, provided this will not compromise the integrity of the evaluation findings. Evaluators should carefully judge when the benefits from doing the evaluation or in performing certain evaluation procedures should be foregone because of the risks or harms. To the extent possible, these issues should be anticipated during the</p>



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
		<p>negotiation of the evaluation.</p> <p><b>D. Respect for People:</b> 5. Where feasible, evaluators should attempt to foster social equity in evaluation, so that those who give to the evaluation may benefit in return. For example, evaluators should seek to ensure that those who bear the burdens of contributing data and incurring any risks do so willingly, and that they have full knowledge of and opportunity to obtain any benefits of the evaluation. Program participants should be informed that their eligibility to receive services does not hinge on their participation in the evaluation.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> Evaluators articulate and take into account the diversity of general and public interests and values that may be related to the evaluation.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 2. Evaluators should consider not only the immediate operations and outcomes of whatever is being evaluated, but also its broad assumptions, implications and potential side effects.</p> <p><b>E. Responsibilities for General and Public Welfare:</b> 5. Evaluators have obligations that encompass the public interest and good. These obligations are especially important when evaluators are supported by publicly-generated funds; but clear threats to the public good should never be ignored in any evaluation. Because the public interest and good are rarely the same as the interests of any particular group (including those of the client or funder), evaluators will usually have to go beyond analysis of particular stakeholder interests and consider the welfare of society as a whole.</p>
	<p><b>Reasonable criticism:</b> 8. Members should only use reasonable criticism and should not attempt to maliciously damage the professional reputation, practice or prospects of others in the field of evaluation.</p>	
	<p><b>Responsibilities to the Society and Fellow Members</b></p>	
	<p><b>The Society's reputation and objectives</b> 12. Members should at all times act in ways that maintain, promote and enhance the aims, objectives and reputation of the Society</p>	



**Professional Designation Project  
Crosswalk of Ethics**

CES GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL CONDUCT <sup>i</sup>	AUSTRALASIAN CODE OF ETHICS <sup>ii</sup>	AEA GUIDING PRINCIPLES <sup>iii</sup>
Covered in CES Policy	<b>Use of the Society's name</b> 13. In the course of their professional activities, members are entitled to state their membership of the Society, offices held, and awards received. Beyond this, any use of the name and logo of the Society, or claims of Society endorsement of activities and events, should only be made with the approval of the Board	
	<b>Diversity of interests</b> 14. Members have diverse backgrounds, and the range of their needs, interests and contributions should be respected.	
Covered in CES Policy & Canadian legislation	<b>Privacy of members</b> 15. Members should not disclose or allude to privileged information about other members without their express permission.	
	<b>Governance</b> 16. Members should utilise the resources of the Society with due care, and office bearers in the Society should act in accordance with the policies and role statements determined by the Board.	
	<b>Conflict of interest</b> 17. Members involved in making decisions for or providing advice to the Society should identify and declare any potential conflict of interest associated with such decisions or advice.	
	<b>Corporate social responsibility</b> 18. In establishing the Society's policies, members and the Board should have due regard to the interests of equity and equality in relation to environmental, social and financial issues.	

<sup>i</sup> Retrieved January 2008 from <http://www.evaluationcanada.ca/>

<sup>ii</sup> Adopted in December 2000, “*this Code is a statement of the values and principles which members uphold in their work in evaluation and in their membership of the Society. Through the Code, the Society aims to promote ethical evaluation practice, support member rights, and maintain the Society as the premier professional organisation within the field of evaluation in Australia and New Zealand.*” The Code covers responsibilities to the field of Evaluation and to the Public (#1 - #11) and responsibilities to the Society and Fellow Members (#12 - #18). The Code incorporates the Australasian Guidelines for Ethical Conduct of Evaluation approved in 1997. Retrieved January 2008 from <http://www.aes.asn.au/about/>

<sup>iii</sup> AEA Guiding Principles for Evaluators, *Long Form* used here. These were ratified by the AEA membership in July 2004. “*The principles are intended to guide the professional practice of evaluators, and to inform evaluation clients and the general public about the principles they can expect to be upheld by*”



## ***Professional Designation Project Crosswalk of Ethics***

---

*professional evaluators. Of course, no statement of principles can anticipate all situations that arise in the practice of evaluation. However, principles are not just guidelines for reaction when something goes wrong or when a dilemma is found. Rather, principles should proactively guide the behaviors of professionals in everyday practice.” Retrieved January 2008 from <http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciples.asp>*