

8 Regulations

8.1 Volunteer Code of Conduct at all Society Meetings

Purpose

The aim of this Code is to ensure SOE meetings are business-like, effective and conducted courteously and with civility. We also want our meetings to be enjoyable and allow everyone to participate.

All members are obliged to act in accordance with this Code and failure to do so may result in members being asked to leave the meeting immediately by the Chair.

Definitions

Meetings: Any meeting of the SOE, its Board, its Professional Sector Councils, its Standing Committees, its Regions and/or its Trading Subsidiary.

Members: Anyone invited to an SOE meeting (e.g., SOE members, SOE staff, external advisers etc).

Point of order: Any matter that is being covered, or decisions that have been taken, in a meeting that is not in accordance with the law, the SOE's constitutional rules (or those of its trading subsidiary) or previously agreed procedures and protocols.

Conduct

Members will:

- Make decisions in the best interests of the Society, not in their own interests.
- Acknowledge the Chair's responsibility and authority for ensuring meetings run effectively.
- Take equal responsibility for getting through the business of any meeting.
- Remain seated when speaking, unless otherwise agreed in advance.
- Treat each other with dignity and respect and not utter disparaging remarks about the motives or character of another.
- Keep calm and avoid shouting.
- Listen to each other's point of view and not carry-on private conversations or interrupt when another person is talking, except to raise a point of order.
- Avoid any language which might be offensive to members of the meeting, particularly avoiding any swearing or foul language.
- Not discriminate or make discriminatory comments on any grounds including race, gender, nationality, sexual persuasion, political or religious beliefs, marital status, disability or illness.
- Observe the SOE's policy on confidentiality and not discuss issues described as "confidential" with any person who was not a member of the meeting at which the confidential item was discussed.
- Treat the way any individuals have voted at meetings as confidential and not divulge this to persons outside of the meeting.
- Keep to the subject, deal with one subject at a time and not be unnecessarily repetitive.

- Avoid undermining any person who is presenting a matter to a meeting in an agreed form, by reiterating a personal view that has already been overruled by majority vote in a previous meeting.
- Declare any personal interest, financial or otherwise, in any matters discussed during a meeting and accept that it may be necessary for individual members to abstain from discussions and decisions on a particular item.
- Prepare for the meeting by reading all the papers in advance.
- Turn up to meetings on time or give apologies in advance to the Chair or Secretary if they are likely to be late or cannot attend.
- Agree a time limit for all meetings and always agree an extension or carry over business if the meeting will run over time.
- Abide by and support the decision of the meeting, as determined by a majority vote, even if the decision conflicts with the member's own personal view.

8.2 Membership Disciplinary Policy

As a licensed professional engineering institute (PEI) the Society has an obligation to uphold the highest standards of engineering best practice and behaviour. This is essential to ensure that the public are protected and to maintain public confidence in the integrity of the profession.

The Society has this code of conduct that all Members are expected to observe and adhere to. The code of conduct sets out the standards of behaviour that are expected of all members and also reminds members of their responsibility to establish and uphold standards of professional conduct. The code also reminds members regarding possible sanctions, including removal from membership, should a member be found to be in breach of the code of conduct.

The related disciplinary procedure sets out the process to be followed in the event that a complaint is received about the conduct of a member of the Society, or the Society becomes aware that the conduct of a member does not meet the standards required by the code of conduct or a member has been convicted of, or accepted a caution for, a relevant criminal offence.

8.3 Policy on Data Protection

The Data Protection Policy that all volunteers, directors and SOE staff must sign, is in line with regulations issued by the ICO (Information Commissioner's Office) and with the GDPR regulations.

The regulations are made available to all volunteers, directors and SOE staff. All must sign these to confirm they will abide by them. (See related operating procedure on the handling of personal data.)

8.4 Bribery Act & Anti Bribery Policy

The Bribery Act states it is illegal to offer, promise, give, request, agree, receive or accept bribes. The Society shall adopt an anti-bribery policy.

(See related operating procedure for SOE Anti Bribery Policy 2023)

8.5 Slavery Act & Modern Slavery Statement

The Society considers that there is no risk of modern slavery in relation to any operation or activities of the Society.

8.6 Policy on Confidentiality

The Society's policy is one of maximum openness towards its membership and the public. Access to information held by the charity will be restricted only to the extent that, and for as long as, is necessary.

Examples of subjects on which confidentiality is normally considered necessary are:

- Personal details of members (which are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act).
- Membership disciplinary matters, except for the outcome of proceedings.
- Staff personal and disciplinary matters (Personal details are subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act)
- Staff salaries and terms and conditions of employment.
- Details of negotiations with other bodies to the extent that premature disclosure may prejudice the outcome, or where the other party has good reasons for delaying disclosure.
- Commercially sensitive details of trading activities or negotiations.
- Policy options at an early stage of consideration, where disclosure may cause unnecessary concern, inhibit objective assessment by trustees in the best interests of the Society and thus prejudice the outcome.
- Information given to the Society on condition of confidentiality (subject to a legal or other wider imperative to breach the confidentiality).
- The Society is registered under the Data Protection Act.

8.7 Policy on Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an inclusive part of the Society's endeavours and is reflected in the standards and values of the organisation.

Policy fundamentals are: -

- To be respectful and treat others as they would want to be treated.
- To be inclusive and work together, to empower, to involve, to consult.
- To ensure that the Society's activities make a difference.
- To strive to be the best at what the Society does
- To support others to achieve their goals.

Policy Principles are: -

- Prevention: the Society will put sensible measures in place to prevent abuse, including the use of safe recruitment practices, promotion of safe working practice and promotion of awareness of safeguarding.

- Partnership: the Society will work in partnership with statutory, regulatory and other relevant organisations to ensure that safeguarding concerns are responded to appropriately.
- Empowerment: the Society will be person-centred and uphold rights in their activities.
- Accountability: the Society will be transparent in its approaches and recognise the need for continuous learning and improvement.

Roles and Responsibilities: -

All staff and volunteers working for the Society, irrespective of their role, have a part to play in safeguarding all who come in contact with the Society. Society staff will undertake training and must familiarise themselves with the Society's Policy on Safeguarding. Heads of department should ensure that their staff receive training and promote safeguarding discussion at team meetings. Volunteers shall receive briefings to keep them familiar with safeguarding issues and policy developments.

The Society Trustees (Directors) approve this Policy and have a duty of care to their charity, which includes taking steps to safeguard those at risk from abuse, managing risk and protecting the reputation of the charity. They will ensure that safeguarding is included in strategic plans, risk assessments, communications, and quality assurance processes.

Breaches of this Policy.

Breaches of this policy by an individual will render the person subject to the Society's appropriate disciplinary process for staff or a member.

8.8 Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy.

Why we have this policy:

- The Society is an inclusive organisation that is fully committed to the principles of fair treatment and to valuing diversity. The Society recognises that by encouraging and managing equality and diversity in our activities and by eliminating discrimination we can more effectively deliver our objectives and meet the needs of our membership, customers and staff.
- The Society provides services which embrace diversity and promote inclusion and equality of opportunity. The Society's goal is to ensure that its commitment, reinforced by its values, is embedded in its working practices with all volunteers, staff and other stakeholders.
- To reflect its commitment, the Society is one of many professional engineering institutions to have signed up to the Diversity in Engineering Concordat and pledge commitment to equality in the profession.

Who this policy applies to:

This policy applies to all volunteers and staff engaged in activities supporting and delivering the Society's objectives.

Statement of policy:

- The Society is fully committed to both the spirit and letter of the law in relation to equal opportunities and anti-discrimination.
- The Society's membership, volunteers, staff and those that it provides services for come from diverse backgrounds, with aspirations, needs and experiences. Products and services are open to all and designed to ensure that no individual or group is excluded from access.
- The principle of equal opportunities governs every aspect of the Society's activities including those supported by and delivered by volunteers. All current and potential volunteers, members, customers and other stakeholders will not receive any less favourable treatment on account of any of the following characteristics:
 - age
 - disability (physical or hidden)
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage or civil partnership status
 - race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins
 - religion or belief
 - gender
 - sexual orientation
 - pregnancy and maternity

Equality principles:

- There should be no discrimination, whether direct or indirect, because of any of the characteristics set out in paragraph 3.3 above.
- Discrimination may occur in the following ways:
 - Direct discrimination—this is treating someone less favourably because of a protected characteristic. An example of this is not allowing someone access to a service because of their gender or because they belong to a particular racial group.
 - Indirect discrimination—this is ostensibly treating people in the same way but in a way which adversely affects those with a protected characteristic. An example of this could be consistently to expect people to attend meetings in the evenings which could exclude those with child-care responsibilities.
 - Victimisation—this is treating someone less favourably because they have asserted their right not to be discriminated against because of a protected characteristic. An example of this would be treating a volunteer colleague differently because they had previously made a claim of discrimination.
 - Harassment—this is unwanted conduct, related to a protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for someone or violating their dignity.

- Harassment may also be of a sexual nature or may occur because someone has harassed the victim and the victim either rejects or submits to it and, because of that rejection or submission, that person treats the victim less favourably.

Expectations of volunteers:

- Volunteers will be perceived by members, the public and the Society's partners to be acting on behalf of the Society. This means that if they unlawfully discriminate, whether intentionally or not, whilst undertaking their roles, both the volunteer and the Society could be held legally responsible.
- Therefore all volunteers have personal responsibility for the practical application of the Society's equality policy, which extends to the treatment of members, employees, customers and other stakeholders.
- The principles set out in this policy apply in any Society -related context, such as at meetings or events, in any assessment or during interviews. Your behaviour reflects on the Society and accordingly, volunteers are expected to:
 - Treat everyone they come into contact with fairly and with respect.
 - challenge discrimination wherever it occurs and report any perceived infringement of this policy to a member of staff.
 - Promote an environment free from discrimination by removing unnecessary barriers, including attitudes (stereotyping, unconscious bias and prejudice), organisationally (e.g., inflexible or inappropriate policies, practices and procedures), and environmentally (e.g., using inaccessible venues or services).
 - View equality, diversity and inclusion as assets that help deliver the Society's vision of an inclusive organisation and meet the needs of its membership and society.
 - Where appropriate, seek out opportunities to encourage under-represented groups to participate and ensure the promotion of opportunities for them.
 - Encourage anyone associated with the Society to promote equal opportunities in the UK and throughout the world, whilst being aware of local laws and customs that may apply outside the UK.
 - Ensure that all services delivered on behalf of the Society are fairly and appropriately accessible.

What happens if you do not follow this policy:

- All volunteers, regardless of the country in which they undertake their activities, are expected to abide by this policy, which is based on the laws of the United Kingdom as well as on best practice.
- Discriminating against individuals has many consequences. Among them are:
 - Our charity may suffer from a lack of skills and experience that are useful to us as an organisation and in the work that we do.
 - If the Society is found guilty of discrimination it could be subject to fines or other legal consequences. Individuals have vicarious liability.

- The Society may suffer severe reputational damage. Other institutions and organisations we work with may refuse to work with us.
- Good people will not want to work for us.
- Any volunteer who is found to have committed an act of unlawful discrimination may be subject to disciplinary procedures. Allegations that are not made in good faith may also be considered as a disciplinary matter.

8.9 Policy on Sustainability

The Common Definition:

To meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs and to balance activities and economic growth with the effects they can have on the environment and the wider community.

Policy Aims:

- To create a living and working environment where we are aware of our day-to-day impact on the environment and work to minimise that impact.
- To foster greater understanding of sustainable issues within the membership and wider community.
- To manage our workplace in a sustainable and objective manner with respect to working and ethical practices and conditions for employees.

Use of Materials:

- Endeavour to minimise use of potentially toxic materials.
- Aim to source materials from sustainable origins.
- Maximise use of recycled and recyclable materials

Waste Management:

- Where packaging is used minimise pack size and material waste.
- Expand practice of materials segregation to allow increased recovery and recycling of waste materials.
- Promote appropriate waste management practices to stakeholders.
- Continuous research to gain a greater understanding of waste management mechanisms for the benefit of the Society and the community.

Energy/Fuel Consumption:

- Continuously identify ways of minimising energy consumption.
- Continually adopt fuel-efficient systems for office equipment.
- Promote energy management to employees and visitors.

- Promote the use of public transport for corporate travel.

Sustainable Development Targets:

Sustainable development targets may be management or performance related. Management targets relate to the development of the management system, either to enhance the existing mechanism or to enlarge it to cover new areas. Performance targets are linked to inputs and outputs, aiming to improve these figures by an appropriate and achievable amount year on year.

Management targets:

- To continually improve SOEs environmental performance and reduction of environmental impact.
- To improve and develop further mechanisms for internal and external communication relating to corporate environmental issues.
- To report regularly on corporate environmental management issues.

Performance targets:

- Aim to increase the recycling of office waste collected year on year thus reducing waste to landfill. An appropriate performance measurement mechanism to be decided by office staff following assessment of the local authority and independents recycling facilities.
- To review and record SOE office equipment and materials supplier's sustainability policies and the use of recycled materials in the production of new products which are used in SOE's offices. Where practical SOE's procurement policy shall favour recycled materials.

Review of SOE environmental policy and objectives.

The SOE environmental policy and objectives will be reviewed periodically by staff members from all departments. The staff will be responsible for:

- Monitoring the SOEs environmental objectives and sustainable development targets.
- Providing an internal forum for environmental and sustainability issues to be discussed.

8.10 Policy on Investments.

Charity Purpose and background.

SOE is a Registered Charity and firmly promotes safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable Operations Engineering for the benefit of everyone. SOE champions engineering's contribution to society and supports and encourages standards of competence and best practice with a view to promoting public safety.

SOE's charitable aims are:

To improve and elevate the technical and general understanding, knowledge, skill and competence of persons engaged or desiring to be engaged in Operations Engineering or in any related employment and the integrity and repute of the profession thereof;

To promote and encourage the advancement of science, technology and practice, and inventions and improvements, in the field of Operations Engineering and any other related branches of engineering, and the dissemination and exchange of ideas, information and knowledge thereof.

By means of the two aims above, but without prejudice to the generality thereof, to promote the safety, efficiency and environmental sustainability of Operations Engineering to the benefit of the community at large.

Reserves Policy.

The reserves policy of the SOE is to maintain sufficient free reserves to cover 18 months total expenditure. Free reserves consist of unrestricted funds less tangible fixed assets.

Investment Powers:

The Society has wide general investment powers set out in its Articles of Association.

Governance.

The responsibility for governance of the SOE investment fund and making decisions regarding investment strategy sits with the SOE Board of trustees.

Objectives:

1. To achieve a balanced return from income and capital growth while accepting a moderate degree of risk.
2. To maintain the real value of income in order to be even handed between present and future beneficiaries.
3. To maintain the real value of capital in order to potentially facilitate periodic capital withdrawal.

Time Horizon.

The SOE expect the investment fund to deliver income and capital growth on an ongoing basis until and unless the trustee board decide otherwise.

With this in mind, the time horizon is greater than 10 years.

Attitude to Risk and Capacity for loss.

The Trustees consider the Charity to have a medium attitude to risk (upper end of medium) and a medium capacity for loss.

The Trustees recognise the risks associated with investment in mainstream financial markets and accept this risk in return for the prospect of additional returns over longer periods of time. As such, they wish to remain largely invested at all times, subject to cash reserves being held as part of the investment management process and to cover liabilities. The investments of the Charity should be well diversified. All asset classes are available for use as deemed appropriate by the Investment Manager. These may include but is not limited to:

- **UK Equities:** Generally, exposure to UK equities will be via direct investments, although specific areas of the market (e.g., smaller companies) may be represented by collectives.
- **Overseas Equities:** Exposure to be achieved through a mixture of collectives and direct equities.
- **Fixed Interest:** When investing directly in corporate bonds (as opposed to through collectives), then only investment grade corporate bonds may be purchased.
- **Alternatives:** Hedge funds, structured products, infrastructure, property and others.

- **Ethical investment.**

The trustees have a neutral approach in relation to ethical investments and delegate this area of investment decision making to the appointed fund manager.

- **Benchmarks.**

Performance will be monitored in performance terms by reference to appropriate benchmarks, including the agreed tailored benchmark as below:

- **Asset Class.**

- The split in classes is not meant to be absolute and a margin either way is permissible if it makes commercial sense.
- UK Equities
- Overseas Equities
- Fixed Interest
- Alternatives
- Cash

Rathbones Investment Management

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Review.

This investment policy statement will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Budget, Audit and Risk Management committee and the Trustee Board of the SOE.