Code of Ethics for Higher Education

The Council of International Schools desires to promote the highest standards of ethical practice and professional behaviour in the recruitment and admission of students into institutions of higher education. Acceptance of these standards and a commitment to adhere to and practise them in all aspects of recruitment and admission is a condition of membership in CIS. Member institutions shall be assumed to hold responsibility for all individuals who act for or represent them in these activities, and that these individuals will at all times hold the welfare of potential and actual applicants to be of the utmost importance.

Publications, Marketing and Promotion

Promotional materials used with students shall be clear, accurate, and current, and should emphasize the educational programs and services available. Materials shall not, by commission or omission, provide false, incomplete, or misleading information.

Principles of Good Practice

Electronic and print versions of promotional materials should:

- be reviewed frequently to ensure they are consistent and that they objectively and truthfully reflect the programs and offerings of the institution
- provide enough candid and pertinent information that students unfamiliar with practices in higher education in a particular country may make informed academic judgments
- be sensitive to other cultures
- make it clear how information can be verified and/or additional information can be obtained

Member institutions shall exercise great caution when dealing with agents or third-parties and shall contract only with individuals or organisations whose practices and behaviours conform to the CIS Code of Ethics.

Principles of Good Practice

Direct cash payment to third parties on a per-admitted-student basis is not encouraged and institutions are urged to use great caution when using agents for recruiting students.

- Institutions using third parties in the recruitment process should:
- provide them with a copy of the CIS Code of Ethics and instruct them that they shall be bound by the Code
- monitor the actual practices of third parties to insure they operate in adherence with the CIS Code of Ethics

Non-discrimination

Member institutions shall not discriminate with regard to race, colour, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, political opinion, or disability. They will also endeavour to understand and protect the civil and human rights of all individuals.
Principles of Good Practice

Member institutions should:

- maintain a high degree of multicultural awareness and shall be knowledgeable about and adhere to all applicable laws and statutes with respect to non-discrimination
- periodically review practices, procedures, and actual results to assure that discrimination has not occurred and is not occurring

Institutional Policies and Programs

Member institutions shall establish appropriate policies governing foreign student recruitment, admissions, and support activities, specialized programs and curricula.

Principles of Good Practice

Institutional policies and programs dealing with students should:

- be documented
- deal with all aspects of recruitment, admission, financial aid and on-campus support
- be available for review by volunteers and third-parties acting on behalf of the institution
- make certain that appropriate information and support services are provided to students in order to ensure a smooth transition to a new educational and cultural environment

Professional Competency and Behaviour

Individuals shall be knowledgeable about the institution, its policies and programs, admission requirements, costs and fees, on-campus support, and other relevant factors that will impact a student's decision-making process. (This applies to professional staff, faculty, alumni, current students, volunteers and third parties.)

Principles of Good Practice

- Institutional representatives shall:
- be educated in all aspects of their institutions or the institutions they represent
- be provided with accurate and current statistics about the institution
- be provided with instructions where and how to get additional information or answers to questions they cannot handle

Individuals shall act at all times in the best interest of students or prospective students and shall offer advice and counselling in order to provide information in a manner consistent with this principle.

Principles of Good Practice

As official representatives of an institution, dealing with students may require counsel on many levels. Representatives should:

- be polite, honest and candid in their interaction with others
- refrain from offering information outside their area of competence or authority

Individuals shall maintain high standards of professional conduct, act with integrity, and in a manner that will contribute to the positive image of CIS and the member institution.
Principles of Good Practice
When traveling abroad or interacting with an international community, representatives should:
- demonstrate awareness, sensitivity to and respect for other educational systems, values and cultures
- appropriately distinguish, in both written and/or oral public statements, between personal opinions and those representing CIS, their own institutions, or other organisations

Individuals who act on behalf of an institution shall represent their credentials, purposes and position or affiliation with the institution clearly and accurately, and shall use their office, title, and professional associations only for the conduct of official business.

Principles of Good Practice
It is important to:
- clearly convey the role and responsibility held by anyone in direct contact with a prospective student
- make no promises or assertions with respect to consideration for admission, placement, or award of financial aid that are not consistent with existing policy or within the authority of the institutional representative.

Individuals shall conduct themselves with due respect to relevant legal and regulatory factors, and official policies, and shall be sensitive to other educational systems and cultures.

Principles of Good Practice
Institutional representatives shall:
- be provided copies of the CIS Code of Ethics and counseled about and/or be provided with any other codes, laws and practices they will be expected to follow

Individuals shall behave in a respectful and courteous manner when dealing with all professional colleagues or other member institutions.

Principles of Good Practice
Ethical behaviour should:
- be accompanied by respect and courtesy to others in the profession

Professional behaviour includes:
- showing respect for the diversity of viewpoints found among colleagues
- refraining from unjustified or unseemly criticism of fellow members, other institutions, and other organisations
- making certain when participating in joint activities that collaborators receive due credit for their contributions
- using their office, title, and professional associations only for the conduct of official business

Individuals shall adhere to the CIS Code of Ethics when institutional practices conflict with the Code, or colleagues are observed to be in violation of the Code.

Individuals representing non-member institutions shall be required to agree to the follow the CIS Code of Ethics when participating in any CIS-sponsored event or program.

Principles of Good Practice
Anyone representing a CIS member institution should:
• attempt to bring inappropriate behaviour or a violation of the Code to the immediate
attention of any individual whose behaviour or institution whose practices appear to be in
violation of Code

Dealing with Complaints or Grievances

Any individual or group, whether a member of CIS or not, may file a complaint or grievance against
a CIS Higher Education Member for a perceived violation of the Code of the Ethics. The grievance
may be filed by telephoning or writing to the Director of any CIS Office or the Executive Director at
the Secretariat. Anonymous complaints will not be accepted.

Principles of Good Practice

Resolving complaints or grievances should:

• be done with the same degree of professionalism required for all other aspects of
  recruitment and admission

An individual or institution having received a complaint should:

• respond to the complaint in a timely fashion
• give credence to the opinions or positions taken by the complainant
• treat the complaint as a confidential matter
• resolve to carry the complaint process through to completion

Background Information

Ideas and thoughts for the CIS Code came after the review of the following documents:

• The Draft Code of Professional Standards and Ethics for Education Counselling Service
  subscribing institutions
• The Higher Education Liaison Officers Association Code of Practice
• The Principles of Good Practice in Institutional Advertising, Student Recruitment and
  Representation of Accredited Status of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
  Commission on Higher Education
• The Guidelines for the Recruitment, Admission and Support of International Students of the
  National Association for College Admission Counselling
• The Principles of Ethical Practice in Overseas Education Advising of the Overseas
  Educational Advisers Professional Educators Group of NAFSA: the Association of
  International Educators
• The Rights and Responsibilities for International Students and Institutions of the American
  Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO)
• The Code of Ethics of NAFSA: The Association of International Educators