

System Dynamics Society Code of Conduct (V4.2 1/28/19)

Professional conduct based upon ethical standards is an important consideration for experts in all fields. One hallmark characteristic of the membership organizations which represent established and respected professions is the adoption of a Code of Ethics or a Code of Professional Conduct. A Code of Conduct does not guarantee ethical or appropriate behavior. Rather, such Codes consist of aspirational guidelines for members in recognition of the responsibility of the field to uphold high ethical standards on behalf of society, our organizations, and the profession. The adoption of such a Code provides evidence that the organization recognizes its obligation to society and the public good beyond economic self-interest.

Preamble

As a global organization with a diverse membership spanning many fields and professions, the System Dynamics Society (“the Society” or “SDS”) recognizes its responsibility to promote high professional standards and integrity among its members, including current and aspiring practitioners, academics, and students. As part of that responsibility, the Society has crafted this Code of Conduct.

The Society intends the Code of Conduct to serve as a guide for the everyday professional conduct of individuals and organizations that practice system dynamics. This Code applies to all Society spaces and sponsored events, including technology-mediated places where members of the community interact (e.g., e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, electronic distribution lists, online forums, other social media channels, etc.).

Purpose and Application of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct offers a set of principles and standards to guide decision-making and conduct when presented with ethical issues in the application or development of system dynamics models and simulations, or related activities. This Code does not provide a set of rules for all situations. Members are expected to exercise good judgment and act in a professional manner, based on the individual facts and circumstances. In a given situation, individuals must apply informed judgement related to ethical decision making and professional conduct and should also consider how the issues would be judged in a peer-review process where the related principles and standards of the profession would be applied.

Members of the Society should take into consideration the principles and standards in this Code that are relevant to the situation. In addition to this Code, there are many other sources of information about ethical thinking and professional conduct that may be useful. For additional guidance, Members should consult the relevant literature on professional conduct and ethical decision-making and seek appropriate consultation when faced with complex dilemmas related to ethical decisions or professional conduct.

Code Violations

Membership in the System Dynamics Society is a privilege and is not a matter of right. A breach of ethics or professional conduct by any member reflects, directly or indirectly, upon all other members of the Society. Alleged violations of the Code are subject to a peer-review process. If the peer-review process determines that the conduct of a member constitutes violation of this policy, they may recommend that the Policy Council take disciplinary action, up to and including suspension or termination of membership in the Society, and/or participation in specific Society programs, services, or activities.

General Principles

As research and practice in the field of System Dynamics can impact society, with applications relating to health systems, public policy, business strategy, environmental policy, energy and water management, etc., members of the Society should abide by the following responsibilities:

1. SDS members should contribute to society and to human well-being, acknowledging that all people are potentially stakeholders in the models and simulations we produce, and the policy decisions which may result.
 - SDS members should take accountability for their actions and the greater impact of their work, avoiding negative consequences as much as possible, especially when those consequences are significant and unjust.
2. SDS members should be forthright about any circumstances that might lead to conflicts of interest or undermine the independence of their judgment.
3. SDS members should ensure the results of their efforts and their general conduct will respect diversity and not discriminate against or harass any individual or a group.

Professional Practice

Just as an SDS member's work influences their position within their organizations (universities, businesses, government and nonprofit agencies), it also relates to their association with the System Dynamics Society. To ensure SDS members conduct themselves in a professional manner, members must abide by the following guidelines.

1. SDS members must not misrepresent an organization's policies or procedures and should not speak on behalf of an organization unless authorized to do so.
2. SDS members must maintain strict adherence to proper professional practices during the development and reporting of research and work.
 - SDS members must be trustworthy and transparent when reporting the data and results of their work. Making misleading claims, falsifying data, or engaging in other dishonest conduct are violations of this code.
 - SDS members must always credit the creators of models, research work, publications, and other advancements in the field and respect copyrights, patents, trade secrets, license agreements, and other methods of protecting the intellectual property rights of others.
3. SDS members must be honest and trustworthy, being transparent regarding limitations of their work and their academic or professional qualifications.
 - SDS members should strive to achieve high quality in both the processes and products of professional work.

- SDS members must maintain high standards of professional competence, conduct, and ethical practice.
 - SDS members must know and respect existing rules, laws, and regulations pertaining to professional work.
 - SDS members should perform work only in areas of competence.
4. SDS members should engage in research and projects that result in the positive advancement of the field of System Dynamics.
- SDS members should accept and provide appropriate professional review.
 - SDS members should foster public awareness and understanding of System Dynamics.
 - SDS members should be inclusive of all colleagues.
 - SDS members should be tolerant and respectful of opinions, findings and perspectives that are different from their own.
5. At Society conferences, meetings and activities, SDS members should make it possible for true collaboration, creativity, innovation, and idea exchange to thrive and be committed to facilitating a welcoming and respectful community for all. The following expectations apply to all attendees, employees, sponsors, volunteers, speakers, and other participants at SDS-sponsored events:
- Be kind and considerate. Respect personal space and common courtesy rules for personal interaction.
 - Be mindful of others around you to ensure a great experience for your fellow participants.
 - Refrain from displaying any demeaning, harassing, aggressive, or intimidating materials or behavior.
 - Dress and behave in a professional manner.
 - Do not damage private or communal property, and obey the rules and regulations of the venue.

Sources:

- [Academy of Management \(AoM\) Code of Ethics](#)
- [American Philatelic Society Code of Ethics](#)
- [Association of Computing Machinery \(ACM\) Code of Ethics](#)
- [Esri Code of Conduct for Conferences and Community Spaces](#)

- [The Ethics Code Collection](#)
- [INFORMS Ethics Guidelines](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers Code of Ethics](#)
- [SDS Respect Builds Excellence Statement](#)