

Developing an Ethical Framework for all Geoscientists: AGI Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct

European Geophysical Union
Vienna; April 18, 2016

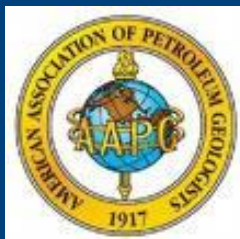
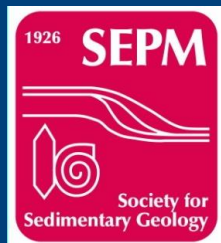
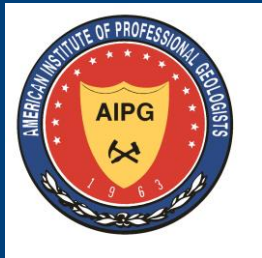
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AGI Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct

- Aspirational statement outlining overarching ethical principles that apply to all geoscientists
- First written in 1999; revised in 2015
- Developed through a consensus process in consultation with AGI's 51 member societies

AGI

- Founded in 1948
 - Organization of geoscience organizations
 - 51 member societies; 250,000 geoscientists
- Plus, international associates
affiliated organizations



What AGI Does

Serve our member societies
Represent the geosciences

- *Provide information*
- *Strengthen geoscience education*
- *Raise public awareness of the geosciences*
- ***A voice for shared interests in the geosciences***

1999 Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct

- Geological Society of America Presidential Meeting on professional ethics, 1997, identified need for a broad-based statement on ethics
- Emphasis on the professional aspects of the geosciences
 - Duties to the public and society, the environment, the geosciences, and the profession
 - Duties to employer, clients, students, colleagues and associates

Origin of Revision

- 2013 AGI Leadership Forum on *Ethics and the Geosciences*
- Developed *Consensus Statement on Ethics in the Geosciences*
- Action items included **develop and promote a Common Code of Ethics for geoscientists**



Ethics Committee

Name	Affiliation	Society
David Mogk (Chair)	Montana State University	NAGT
David Abbott	Consultant	AIPG
Robert Finkelman	UT, Dallas	IMGA
Joe Gillman	Missouri State Geologist	AASG
Linda Gundersen	USGS (Emeritus)	AGU
Denise Hills	Alabama Geol. Survey	AWG
Murray Hitzman	Colorado School of Mines	SEG
Edmund Nickless	Executive Secretary, GSL	GSL
Lee Phillips	UNC, Greensboro	CUR
Monica Ramirez	Front Range CC	AWG
Robert Tepel	Retired	AEG
Douglas Walker	University of Kansas	GSA

Revising the Guidelines: Process

- Committee developed draft Guidelines, 2014
- Circulated to all member societies for comment
- Committee reconvened to revise the draft Guidelines, March 2015
- **AGI Executive Committee unanimously approved the 2015 Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct; April 13, 2015**
- **Signed by 29 AGI member societies**

Intended Use of the Guidelines

- Aspirational framework that identifies ethical principles that should inform the professional conduct of all geoscientists
- Not binding on any AGI member organization or its members
- No regulatory or enforcement provisions
- May be used by member societies or geoscientists as appropriate for them

2015 Guidelines

These guidelines address common ethical topics across the geoscience community; the ethics statements of individual societies may expand beyond these guidelines.

Geoscientists play a critical role in ethical decision making about stewardship of the Earth, the use of its resources, and the interactions between humankind and the planet on which we live. Geoscientists must earn the public's trust and maintain confidence in the work of individual geoscientists and the geosciences as a profession. The American Geosciences Institute (AGI) expects those in the profession to adhere to the highest ethical standards in all professional activities. Geoscientists should engage responsibly in the conduct and reporting of their work, acknowledging the uncertainties and limits of current understanding inherent in studies of natural systems. Geoscientists should respect the work of colleagues and those who use and rely upon the products of their work.

In day-to-day activities geoscientists should:

- » Be honest.
- » Act responsibly and with integrity, acknowledge limitations to knowledge and understanding, and be accountable for their errors.
- » Present professional work and reports without falsification or fabrication of data, misleading statements, or omission of relevant facts.
- » Distinguish facts and observations from interpretations.
- » Accurately cite authorship, acknowledge the contributions of others, and not plagiarize.
- » Disclose and act appropriately on real or perceived conflicts of interest.
- » Continue professional development and growth.
- » Encourage and assist in the development of a safe, diverse, and inclusive workforce.
- » Treat colleagues, students, employees, and the public with respect.
- » Keep privileged information confidential, except when doing so constitutes a threat to public health, safety, or welfare.

As members of a professional and scientific community, geoscientists should:

- » Promote greater understanding of the geosciences by other technical groups, students, the general public, news media, and policy makers through effective communication and education.
- » Conduct their work recognizing the complexities and uncertainties of the Earth system.
- » Sample responsibly so that materials and sites are preserved for future study.
- » Document and archive data and data products using best practices in data management, and share data promptly for use by the geoscience community.
- » Use their technical knowledge and skills to protect public health, safety, and welfare, and enhance the sustainability of society.
- » Responsibly inform the public about natural resources, hazards, and other geoscience phenomena with clarity and accuracy.
- » Support responsible stewardship through an improved understanding and interpretation of the Earth, and by communicating known and potential impacts of human activities and natural processes.

Preamble

In day-to-day activities geoscientists should:

As members of a professional and scientific community, geoscientists should:

URL:

[www.americangeosciences.org/
community](http://www.americangeosciences.org/community)

Some Changes in Revised Guidelines

- Based on new scholarship in geoethics
- More focus on the responsibilities of geoscientists within society, not just within the profession
- Two components:
 - Individual responsibilities
 - Responsibilities as part of a professional and scientific community

Some Changes in Revised Guidelines

More emphasis on

- Societal context of the geosciences
- Importance of communication and education within and beyond the geoscience community
- Uncertainties associated with our understanding of complex natural systems
- Safe, diverse, inclusive workforce

“Geoscientists must earn the public’s trust and maintain confidence in the work of individual geoscientists and the geosciences as a profession.”

Implementing the Guidelines

- Promote informed understanding of the role of ethics in the geosciences
- Raise standards of professional practice
- Consensus statement regarding access and inclusion of individuals living with disabilities in the geosciences (finalized 2015; 24 member society signatories)

Next Steps

- **Raise awareness about the Guidelines**
 - Talks and sessions at conferences
- **Workshops on ethics**
 - Sponsoring workshop at Geological Society of America's annual meeting, 2016
- **AGI Leadership Forum 2016**
 - Addressing professional conduct/sexual harassment issues
- **Building the geoethics community and scholarship**
 - International Association for Promoting Geoethics
 - New book on geoethics from AGU/Wiley to be published in 2016
 - Teaching Geoethics Across the Geoscience Curriculum

Thank you

<http://americangeosciences.org>

View Guidelines for Ethical Professional Conduct at:

<http://www.americangeosciences.org/community>