

Global Professional and Ethical Standards

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What are the new global professional and ethical standards?

A. There are five standards:

- Act with integrity
- Always provide a high standard of service
- Act in a way that promotes trust in the profession
- Treat others with respect
- Take responsibility.

The new global standards aim to provide clarity and simplicity around what is expected from RICS members.

Q. Why are you introducing new professional and ethical standards?

A. RICS' increased global approach to standards and regulation provide the perfect opportunity to look at the ethical framework for the profession and how it will work best on a global scale. We have done so by undertaking extensive consultation globally and talking to experts in the field of ethics. This resulted in RICS Governing Council agreeing new global professional and ethical standards. It also agreed the production of supporting information, advice and guidance to assist members in meeting those standards and to make those difficult ethical decisions.

Q. Why are there now only 5 standards instead of the previous 12 ethical values?

A. The standards were developed after considerable consultation and discussion globally. The new standards cover everything that the previous 12 values covered, but do so in a much clearer way and they have been designed to be applicable globally.

Q. How do the professional and ethical standards link in with the RICS rules of conduct for members and firms?

A. The two really go hand in hand. Both the rules of conduct for members and for firms require respectively members and firms to act with integrity. The global professional and ethical standards go into more detail around what integrity and the other ethical standards mean. Not meeting the requirements of the rules of conduct or the ethical standards, or both, may lead to investigation and possible disciplinary action. There is an even bigger link here in that all members meet high standards set by the profession, in terms of entry standards, technical standards, regulatory standards and ethical standards. Meeting those standards and enforcing those standards is the professions promise of trust to the public.

Q. Are there any guidance materials to help me learn more about the new standards?

A. Yes. There are supporting levels of information available for each standard, including:

- A brief explanation of what each standard means
- Examples of the types of actions or behaviours that would demonstrate the standards and questions that members will wish to consider further information around some of the more frequent ethical areas that members may face. Such as conflicts of interest, raising concerns when it may appear standards are not being met or there is inappropriate behaviour, and the interplay between ethics, laws, rules, regulations, and entry, technical and regulatory standards.
- A range of case studies that illustrate each of the standards. These examples are real case studies we have collected and link to ethical issues that relate to different specialty areas within surveying and different geographical areas.

Q. Will you translate the standards into different languages for different world regions?

A. Yes, the standards will be translated into many languages including Simplified Chinese, French, German, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish and Russian.

Q. I always work in an ethical manner, why are the standards important to me?

A. By far the vast majority of members work in an ethical manner. It is only a very small percentage of members that have to go through RICS Regulatory processes. The new standards are not there to criticise members, quite the reverse, they are there to promote how members work and the high standards they meet on a day to day basis. With a membership that is approximately 180,000 strong (which includes approximately 80,000 students and trainees) globally it is important to have a set of professional and ethical standards that anchors the whole profession. It is also important to remember that members will be at different stages in their careers, areas of specialism and in different sized firms. The standards and supporting information are there to help members and provide appropriate guidance and advice.

Q. My firm has its own ethical standards for staff; do I still need to adhere to the RICS standards?

A. Yes you do. RICS' ethical standards are the standards for the whole profession. You may well be in a position where the firm you work for has ethical standards or values as well. In practice this shouldn't be a problem as it is difficult to see how there can be real conflict between the RICS standards and your firm's standards. You are likely to find similar words used, for example, integrity, respect for others etc. If there is a conflict then you should apply whatever is the higher test.

Q. Whilst it is right for RICS members to meet ethical standards, there are others in the market place that do not and aren't we just giving them an advantage here?

A. No. Acting ethically and doing business professionally has been shown to increase business. The majority of clients are more likely to place business with you or your firm. They are also more likely to promote your services to others if they know about the standards you work to and whether you behave in a professional and ethical manner.

Q. I am going through my Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) at the moment and have completed my work so far using the existing 12 ethical principles that were in place before the introduction of the new global and professional ethical standards. How does this affect me and what should I do?

A. Don't worry, there is going to be an orderly transition. Current APC candidates will not be affected by the introduction of the new ethical standards. All candidates must be assessed on ethics and the 'old' standards will be used for session one 2012. From 1 June 2012* candidates preparing for final assessment should refer to the new standards.

**European candidates: effective date 1 September 2012.*