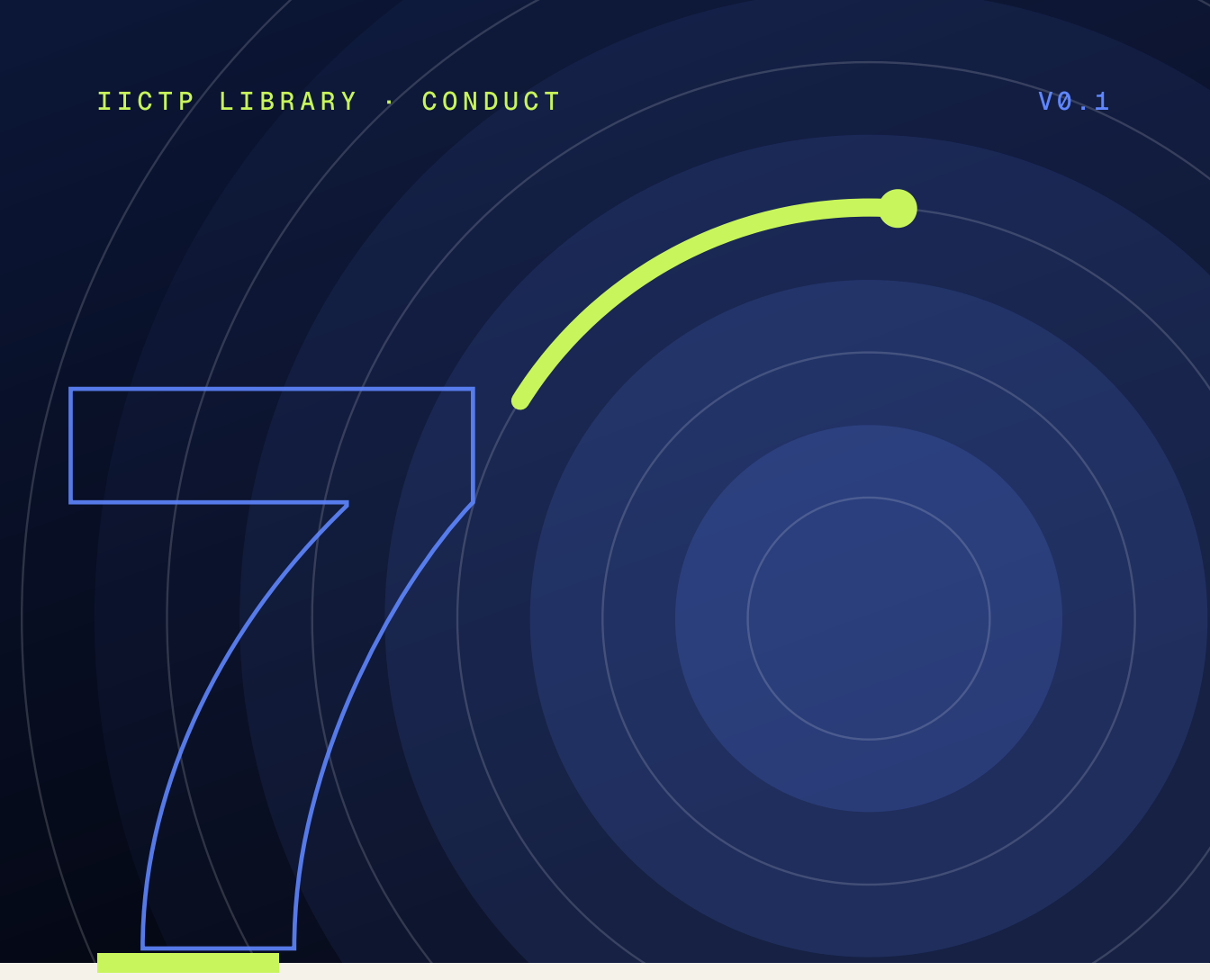

Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct

The seven canons proposed for every IICTP credential holder, the annual attestation, how a concern is raised, and how the TPBOK supports each canon.

International Insignia of Certified Technical Practitioners

22 October 2026

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Status. This is a draft, published to be criticised. Nothing in it is final. IICTP is a new independent credentialing body and is not ISO/IEC 17024 accredited. Products and organisations named are cited as examples or sources; no endorsement is implied.

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ABOUT THIS CODE

Purpose and status

The IICTP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is the set of seven canons proposed for every IICTP credential holder in good standing.

Every practitioner conferred with the Insignia signs the IICTP Canons of Ethics as a condition of holding it. This booklet reproduces the canons as published at iictp.org, and adds guidance on how each connects to the TPBOK.

> **Status: proposed, open for comment.** The canons, the attestation and the procedure for concerns are published as proposals. Comments are welcome at standards@iictp.org. This booklet follows the website: where they differ, the website is authoritative.

What this booklet contains

- The seven canons, in the words published on the website.
- The attestation holders make, and the annual renewal of it.
- Ethics in practice: the TPBOK's task on acting ethically, with a question to try.
- How a concern is raised and how it is handled.

THE CANONS

Seven rules holders will live by

Proposed for every practitioner in good standing. The “Related TPBOK tasks” lines are guidance added to this booklet. They are not part of the canons.

I Paramount safety of public life and infrastructure

A chartered practitioner holds the safety, health and welfare of the public above all else. If an employer or client commands the deployment of a system with unmitigated catastrophic failure modes, the practitioner is bound to withhold sign-off.

Related TPBOK tasks: D5-T04 (act ethically as a practitioner); D4-T10 (respond to incidents and learn from them).

II Algorithmic truth and formal verifiability

Practitioners never represent unverified probabilistic models or unproven machine learning outputs as formally verified safety logic in mission-critical environments.

Related TPBOK tasks: D3-T01 (explain how large language models behave, at the level needed to use them safely); D3-T03 (verify AI-generated code and content before relying on it); D3-T07 (evaluate AI features before and after release).

III Mandatory whistleblower duty

Knowledge of active concealment of high-consequence defects should be reported promptly to IICTP. IICTP will treat reports in confidence and will not take action against a holder for reporting in good faith.

Related TPBOK tasks: D5-T04 (act ethically as a practitioner); D5-T08 (build psychological safety and a learning culture).

IV Rejection of commercial fraud and bribes

No practitioner may accept a kickback, equity grant or commercial inducement meant to compromise the outcome of a safety audit or architectural review.

Related TPBOK tasks: D5-T04 (act ethically as a practitioner); D5-T10 (work with stakeholders on scope and trade-offs).

V Maintenance of active technical competence

Credential holders complete the three-year recertification cycle and submit the required Technical Development Units to stay active on the Public Verification Register.

Related: the three-year renewal cycle and Technical Development Units are explained in the certification handbooks.

VI Cryptographic integrity and key custody

Deliberately introducing backdoors, weakening cryptographic primitives or mismanaging private key material is a grave breach, and results in immediate revocation.

Related TPBOK tasks: D4-T02 (handle secrets safely); D4-T05 (apply least privilege and zero-trust networking).

VII Universal dignity and freedom from bias

Software architectures that govern public services must be free from discriminatory algorithmic skew, protecting human rights in every jurisdiction.

Related TPBOK tasks: D3-T10 (govern AI use responsibly); D3-T13 (prepare and govern training data).

THE ATTESTATION

The promise holders make

> *"I will not execute, certify, or conceal code that I know to be mathematically unsound, vulnerable to nation-state breach, or perilous to human life. I place my professional honor and the safety of the public above all corporate obedience."*

Each year, holders file a conflict-of-interest statement and reaffirm the canons. A holder who has not filed within 60 days of the request is suspended until they do.

ETHICS IN PRACTICE

Acting ethically as a practitioner

The TPBOK turns the canons into everyday practice. Principle P10 is "Act with integrity and keep it safe to speak up". Task D5-T04 says what that looks like at work.

D5-T04 Act ethically as a practitioner A

What the practitioner does. Acts honestly and responsibly toward users, the public, employers and colleagues, including when under pressure.

Core knowledge.

- **Codes of ethics.**
  - The ACM/IEEE-CS Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice (1999) sets out eight principles: the public, client and employer, product, judgement, management, profession, colleagues, and self. The public interest comes first.
  - The ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (2018) and the IICTP Code of Ethics express the same core.
  - IICTP credential holders agree to the IICTP Code.
- **Honesty about work.** Report real status, including risks and bad news. Do not mark work as done or tested when it is not. Do not claim others' work or credentials you do not hold.
- **Protect users and data.** Access only the data your task needs. Do not look at personal data out of curiosity. Report suspected breaches promptly.
- **Raise concerns.** When asked to do something unsafe, deceptive or unlawful, say so clearly, in writing if needed, and escalate through the proper channels (lead, ethics or compliance contact, whistle-blowing procedure). Disagreeing is not disloyalty.
- **Conflicts of interest.** Declare them: a vendor you have ties to, reviewing a friend's promotion case, outside work that competes with your employer.
- **Competence.** Take on work you can do or can learn to do safely, and say when you cannot.
- **Fairness and respect.** Treat colleagues with respect regardless of background. Harassment and discrimination are reported to the appropriate function, not han-

dled informally (see 5.1).

ATP level. Identify the ethical response in a scenario involving pressure on status, data access, or a conflict of interest.

Common mistakes. “Green” status reports for work that is red. Copying production personal data to a laptop “to debug faster”. Staying silent about a known safety issue because someone senior approved the release.

Try it

Question D5-T04 A

The day before a customer demo, a manager asks a developer to mark a feature as “Done” on the board so it appears in the demo report. The feature works on the developer’s machine, but its tests are failing in the pipeline. What should the developer do?

A	Mark it Done, since it works locally
B	Mark it Done and fix the tests after the demo
C	Explain that it does not yet meet the Definition of Done, report its actual state and what remains, and suggest how it could be shown honestly in the demo (for example, as work in progress)
D	Refuse to discuss it

Answer

Answer C

Honest status is an ethical duty and protects the decisions others will make from the report.

- **A** and **B** misreport the work.
- **D** gives up the chance to find a workable alternative.

Further reading

- ACM (2018). *ACM Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.*
- ACM/IEEE-CS Joint Task Force (1999). *Software Engineering Code of Ethics and Professional Practice.*
- IICTP. *Code of Ethics* (published on the IICTP website).

CONCERNS

Raising a concern and how it is handled

This is the procedure as proposed on the website.

Raising a concern should not cost you your career

IICTP does not offer legal representation or fund a defence. What it commits to is below.

- **Confidential handling.** Reports are handled in confidence and the reporter is not named without consent, unless the law requires it.
- **No retaliation by IICTP.** IICTP will not take action against a holder for reporting in good faith.
- **Ways to report.** Email standards@iictp.org. Do not include secrets or personal data you are not allowed to share.

Due process, then a public record

A four-stage process that protects the accused and the public alike.

1 **Complaint and first review**
A report is screened for credibility and for whether it falls within the code, and the holder is told what is alleged.

2 **Independent inquiry**
A panel with no conflict of interest examines the evidence.

3 **Right to respond**
The practitioner has 14 days to respond in writing, may be represented, and sees the evidence relied on before any decision.

4 Decision and record

Sanctions range from reprimand to suspension to revocation, with a route to appeal, and are recorded on the public registry where the rules allow.

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Part of the IICTP Library. Every book is free to download at iictp.org.

- Domain Guide 1: Architecture & Systems Design
- Domain Guide 2: Engineering Governance & Agile Delivery
- Domain Guide 3: Applied AI & Emerging Tech Integration
- Domain Guide 4: Infrastructure & Security
- Domain Guide 5: People Leadership in Engineering
- Illustrative Questions
- Glossary of Technical Practice
- Casebook

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