



Code of Conduct for Financial Aid Practitioners/Professionals

1. Preamble

FAPSA recognizes that institutional financial aid practitioners do not function in a vacuum or in isolation from their Institution's mission and Code of Conduct as prescribed by each Institution/organisation.

First and foremost, Financial Aid Practitioners accept an obligation to their individual institution, as defined and articulated by each institution, but further subscribe to this *Code of Conduct* that provides a framework for identifying conduct that is ethical and acceptable when rendering a service to all concerned, especially to the students, to manage the complexities of the student financial aid processes in a manner that demonstrates absolute integrity, honesty, professionalism, responsibility and accountability and striving for and maintaining credibility and all other positive attributes contributing toward sound ethical standards.

While financial aid practitioners cannot dictate institutional conduct, they must abide by their own professional standards to ensure ethical behaviour through established code of ethical conduct. Setting the minimum code of ethical standards and guidance is the most important core principle for self governance in any profession in order to assure the public of the profession's integrity. This is a responsibility we embrace.

Considering the importance and complexity of the tasks confronting financial aid practitioner and/or professionals, FAPSA has adopted this *Code of Conduct* to provide further guidance and acceptable ethical standards. The *Code of Conduct* is intended to help guide financial aid practitioners in carrying out these obligations, particularly with regard to ensuring transparency and accountability in the administration of the student financial aid, and to avoid the harm that may arise from actual, potential, or perceived temptations, misconduct and conflicts of interest.

We do this, cognisance of the fact that our primary objective or goal as financial aid practitioners and/or professionals is to help students achieve their educational potential by providing appropriate financial resources at our disposal.

Finally, every student financial aid practitioner/professional must continually be involved in training and professional development to ensure that he or she can provide effective and efficient service that is in strict compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

2. Code of Conduct

This *Code of Conduct* stipulates minimum standards of professional conduct for financial aid practitioners and/or professionals and is not an exhaustive list of such standards.

With this *Code of Conduct*, we therefore provide that the financial aid practitioner and/or professional shall:

- a) Be committed to do everything in his/her power to removing financial barriers for those who wish to pursue higher and further education;
- b) Make every effort to assist students in financial need;
- c) At all times, be conscious and mindful of the issues affecting students and advocate their interests at institutional and any other level;
- d) Give students all the necessary academic support possible in an effort to encourage students to aspire to and succeed in their chosen field of study;
- e) Be committed to assist them to effectively utilise the financial resources given to them to further their studies;
- f) Respect the dignity and protect the privacy of students, and ensure the confidentiality of student records and personal circumstances;
- g) Ensure equity by applying all the applicable rules, regulations and donor/sponsor conditions consistently across the institution's population of student financial aid applicants;
- h) Provide services that do not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, disability or age;
- i) Recognize the need for professional development and continuing education opportunities;
- j) Promote the free expression of ideas and opinions, and foster respect for diverse viewpoints within the profession;
- k) Commit to the highest level of ethical behaviour expected of individual in your position and refrain from conflict of interest or the perception thereof;
- l) Refrain from taking any action for personal benefit or taking any action/decision that is contrary to the laws and regulations of the Republic of South Africa or that may not be in the best interests of the students and Institution;
- m) Be objective in making decisions and advising your institution regarding relationships with any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid;

- n) Ensure that, at all times you provide information that is accurate, unbiased and does not reflect any preference;
- o) Refrain from soliciting or accepting anything that might be construed as bribe, in return for service or special favours from any entity involved in the provision of financial aid;
- p) Disclose to your institution, in such a manner as prescribed by your institution, any involvement with or interest in any entity involved in any aspect of student financial aid;
- q) Loyal execution of the policies of the Institution/Organisation/Association/Community Organisation as the employer of the day in the performance of his or her official duties as contained in all statutory and other prescripts;
- r) Maintain the highest level of professionalism in carrying out your responsibilities, reflecting a commitment to the Constitution and goals of FAPSA;

3. Jurisdiction

Any member of FAPSA, who is alleged to have violated the standards of the profession and the provisions of the Code, may be subject to disciplinary action by FAPSA.

3.1 Scope of Application

This Code applies to all officials and ordinary members of FAPSA. Officials are all Management Executive Committee members or any other official elected or nominated by FAPSA to carry out a particular mandate, as defined in the FAPSA Constitution.

3.2 Time

This Code applies to facts that have arisen after it has come into force. It also applies to previous facts if it is equally favourable or more favourable for the perpetrator of the facts and if FAPSA is deciding on these facts after the Code has come into force.

3.3 General rules for Officials

- 3.3.1 Officials are expected to be aware of the importance of their function and concomitant obligations and responsibilities. Their conduct shall reflect the fact that they support and further the principles and objectives of FAPSA, in every way and refrain from anything that could be harmful to these aims and objectives. They shall respect the significance of their allegiance to FAPSA by conducting themselves honestly, worthily, respectably and with integrity.
- 3.3.2 Officials shall show commitment to an ethical attitude while performing their duties. They shall pledge to behave in a dignified manner. They shall behave and act with complete credibility and integrity;
- 3.3.3 Officials may not abuse their position as part of their function in any way, especially to take advantage of their function for private aims or gains.

3.4 Eligibility and dismissal

- 3.4.1 Only those persons who demonstrate a high degree of ethics and integrity and pledge to observe the provisions of this Code without reservation are eligible to serve as officials.
- 3.4.2 Persons with a criminal record are not eligible if the offence is incompatible with their ability to perform their duties.
- 3.4.3 Officials who do not comply with this Code or severely fail to fulfil, or inadequately exercise, their duties and responsibilities, particularly in financial matters, are no longer eligible and shall be removed from office.

4. Enforceability

For purposes of fair enforcement of this *Code of Conduct*, FAPSA AGM or FAPSA Management Executive Committee may appoint an Ethics Committee to probe, adjudicate and take appropriate decision on behalf of FAPSA.

4.1 Jurisdiction of the Ethics Committee

- 4.1.1 The Ethics Committee shall judge cases that come under the jurisdiction of FAPSA.
- 4.1.2 FAPSA shall have jurisdiction over the conduct of FAPSA officials and members.

4.2 Disclosure

FAPSA shall accept complaints from any member or official of the organisation.

5. Application of the FAPSA Code of Conduct

- 5.1 The Ethics Committee may pronounce any of the disciplinary measures defined in the FAPSA Constitution and/or FAPSA *Code of Conduct*.
- 5.2 All organisational and procedural rules of FAPSA apply directly in the context of all proceedings conducted by the Ethics Committee, unless this Code of Conduct contains diverging rules to be applied in respect of the objectives and content of this Code.

6. Means of redress

- 6.1 The Ethics Committee shall judge cases that come under the jurisdiction of FAPSA.
- 6.2 An appeal may be lodged to the FAPSA Annual General Meeting against any decision passed by the Ethics Committee, unless the sanction pronounced is:
 - a) a warning;
 - b) reprimand;
 - c) a suspension for a period of less than a year (12 months);
- 6.3 In the case of an appeal lodged with the FAPSA AGM, the AGM shall appoint an Appeal Committee to adjudicate the appeal. Where necessary, only a maximum of 1 member from the Ethics Committee may serve in the Appeals Committee as an Ex-officio with no voting rights.

6.4 The decisions of the Appeals Committee is final subject to the decision ratified by the Annual General Meeting.

7. Declaration

I, as a Financial Aid Practitioner/professional and also as a part of institutional member/affiliate member/constituent member of FAPSA, unequivocally supports the principles and practices prescribed in this *Code of Conduct* and in the FAPSA Constitution and hereby declare that I will abide to the FAPSA Constitution and this Code at all times.

8. Adoption and enforcement

The FAPSA Annual General Meeting adopted this Code on.....

This Code comes into force on (adopted by the FAPSA AGM on