

# ACTO Code of Ethics

## INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Association of Coach Training Organization (ACTO) is a professional organization dedicated to promoting excellence in coach education. ACTO is composed of coach training schools and organizations, faculty and staff, and individuals with the purpose of enhancing human potential, diversity and inclusion, and ethical behavior as a priority in their pursuit of excellence in coach education. ACTO is dedicated to fair and just treatment to all people.

The ICF Code of Ethics and the Global Code of Ethics were used as a basis for the ACTO Code of Ethics.

## ACTO CORE VALUES

- **Integrity** – Consistency of actions upholding honesty and truthfulness.
- **Fairness** – Demonstrating and behaving in an impartial, inclusive manner taking into consideration individual and group diversity ensuring equity for all.
- **Accountability** – Taking ownership and accepting responsibility for promoting excellence in coach education with transparency and openness.
- **Ethical Behavior** – Treating all people with dignity, respect, and impartiality. Honoring individual rights and each person's uniqueness.

## I. DEFINITIONS

**Agent** (of a training organization) – Any person who is faculty, administrative support, supervisor, mentor, owner, contractor, or employee working at a coach training organization.

**Anonymity** – The condition of not being identified by name or identifiable features or characteristics.

**Coach Mentor** – An experienced, credentialed coach who provides professional assistance in achieving and demonstrating the levels of coaching competency demanded by the credential level sought by the coach-applicant and those seeking credential renewal.

**Coach Supervisor** – An experienced coach who serves as an inspiration and engages in reflective dialogue and collaborative learning for the personal and professional development of coaches.

**Coach Assessor** – Coaches who are trained on how to evaluate the level of coaching competency demonstrated.

**Coach Trainer and/or Educator** – A trained specialist in coaching theory, principles, and practice who teaches and prepares students for a coaching career or adding coaching competencies to another career.

**Coach Training Administrator** – A person responsible for operation of a coach training organization.

**Coaching Student** – A person who is committed to formally studying and learning the art and science of coaching and enrolled in coach training.

**Confidentiality** – Coaching information and discussion, including identity, shall be kept secret and/or private unless permission is received from the owner of the information. In coach training, the trainer asks each student to commit to protecting the confidentiality of the other students. *It is important to be aware that when coaching notes are kept on a device that is owned by a company or another or sent to a company-owned email, then those notes are not confidential. If we as trainers fail to address this, then we condone the lack of confidentiality.*

**Faculty** – The teaching or training staff who may also serve as mentors, supervisors, and/or assessors for a coach training organization.

**Sponsor** – An entity (including its representatives) paying for and/or arranging for coaching education or services to be provided.

**Stakeholder** – A person who has an interest or investment in coach training or education.

**Staff** – All administrative and support personnel employed or contracted by a coach training organization.

**Diversity and Inclusion** – The active recognition, promotion, celebration, and acceptance of all individual or group differences. The broad list shared is the following: Racial Identity, Gender Identity, Cultural Heritage, Socio-economic Status, Physical Appearance, Physical Ability, Geographical Location, Education, Religious Creed or None.

**Diversity:** Honoring the unique essence of each individual and being mindful that person comes to us within a context. As coaches and coach trainers, we are called upon to truly honor diversity in all human forms, including race, ethnicity, cultural heritage, gender, identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, class, socio-economics status, religion, and more.

**Inclusion:** Means inviting engagement, taking a principled stand to always be inclusive (never exclusive), welcoming and honoring the diversity of the human experience into the coaching experience and arena. Inviting. Learning. Growing in our own understanding. Welcoming all into coaching. Believing that we are better when we include all people fully and wholeheartedly.

**Cultural Humility** – Recognize, understand, accept, and value the uniqueness of each person and group and behaving congruently.

## II. ACTO STANDARDS OF ETHICAL CONDUCT

### Section A. Professional Conduct at Large

#### As a member of ACTO, I:

1. Act in accordance with the ACTO Code of Ethics in all interactions, including coach training, coach training administration, coaching, coaching appraisals, coach mentoring, and coach supervisory activities.
2. Recognize and abide by the applicable laws and regulations of each country, municipality, and local governing body, and ICF.
3. Uphold the ethical standards of ACTO and the coaching profession in a manner that reflects positively on the profession of coach training; be respectful of different approaches to coaching and coach training and treat our coaching and coach trainer colleagues and colleagues in other professions with honor and respect.
4. Behave in alignment with ACTO values.

5. Embrace diversity and inclusion by respecting the unique and intrinsic worth of the students, staff, trainers, administrators, sponsors, and stakeholders. Show respect for thoughts, ideas, and opinion of others. Accept all individual and group differences as stated in the Definitions section.
6. Strive to become aware of biases that could have an impact in the coaching interactions, including during training and coaching.
7. Act to increase the level of cultural humility and encourage others to build their cultural humility.
8. Provide a safe and supportive atmosphere for coaching students and coaches to learn, excel ethically, and be professional coaches of the highest caliber.
9. Strive to be objective when sharing feedback: listen, understand, and respect the other person's perspective to address the conversation empathetically.
10. Uphold fair and impartial practices in all professional activities taking into consideration diversity and inclusion as mentioned in the definitions section.
11. Inform members of the organization of their responsibilities established by this Code.
12. Agree that ACTO member information is confidential and its use is prohibited for mass emailing, spam, any publicity, or other use without prior written authorization from ACTO.
13. Treat people with dignity, respect, and compassion to foster a trusting work environment.
14. Commit to taking the appropriate action with students, coaches, coach trainers, coach mentors, and/or supervisors and/or contact ACTO, to address or inquire about any ethics violation or possible breach of ethics as soon as I become aware. Undertake the following steps as appropriate:
  - Review ethical concern with a Coach Mentor or Coach Supervisor to discern possible next steps.
  - Contact ACTO if appropriate.
  - Contact ACTO to file a complaint.
15. Respect all member coach training schools and educational organizations.
16. Commit to learning and incorporating best practices to promote continuous professional development of coach education and training.
17. Comply with copyrights; obtain written permission prior to using copyright material and give full attribution for any and all intellectual property that is used from coach training schools and organizations, trainers, ACTO, and others. Violations could be considered a legal matter and ACTO will uphold the actions of the court.
18. Make only accurate verbal and written statements about what is offered or can be expected from our coach training organization.
19. Truthfully represent coaching qualifications, expertise, experience, training, certifications, credentials, and accreditations.
20. Work within my professional and personal limits, competence, culture, and experience. Recognize any personal challenges that could impair, conflict with, or interfere with my professional performance in my role as a Coach Trainer. Promptly seek relevant professional assistance and take appropriate action, which could include a leave of absence or termination.
21. If I become aware of inappropriate behavior of another agent report it in accordance with the training school or organization's Ethical Complaint policies and procedures or to a Coach Training Administrator. If the Coach Training Administrator is involved or fails to act, report it directly to ACTO.

22. Present clear and transparent written contracts to prospective students, faculty members, and/or staff before they begin an assignment, including the ACTO Code of Ethics and any additional Ethical Code of the organization.
23. Develop, administer, and advocate policies and procedures that foster fair, consistent, and equitable treatment for all encompassing diversity and inclusion as per the definitions section.
24. ACTO members agree and abide by the ethical and legal decisions undertaken by ACTO.

## **Section B. Professional Conduct with Students and Clients**

### **As a member of ACTO, I:**

25. Encourage respectful communication for the diverse opinions of others in the exchange of feedback and ideas.
26. Commit to an environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunities and prohibits unlawful or unethical discriminatory practices, including harassment.
27. Understand that all relationships among coaches, trainers, student, clients, agents, and others associated with ACTO are (or must be) be professional, free of prejudice and harassment, and striving to address possible biases.
28. Honor and respect each person's personal boundaries. Set clear, appropriate, and culturally sensitive boundaries that govern any physical contact. Recognize it is inappropriate for any agent of a coach training program to knowingly begin a sexual relationship with a current or active student. Remain aware and report any such sexual relationships between current or active students and agents. [\*Click here for ACTO's Harassment Policy\*](#)

## **Section C. Confidentiality/Privacy**

### **As a member of ACTO, I:**

29. Have clear agreements between the coach training organization and students that addresses when there could be a need to break confidentiality and need to share information pertaining to a student, such as:
  - a. Potential or illegal activity.
  - b. Pursuant to valid court order or subpoena or as required by law.
  - c. Imminent or likely risk of danger to self, others, or property.
30. Ensure anonymity when sharing real examples during training, both of the individuals and the conversations undertaken.
31. Maintain, store, and dispose of any records, including electronic files and communications, in a manner that promotes confidentiality, security, and privacy, and complies with any applicable laws, agreements, and industry standards. Address the reality that many internal coaches think it is acceptable to keep coaching notes on company computers which can then be accessed by others and this violates confidentiality.
32. Maintain the confidentiality of students' records beyond the conclusion of each student's coach education in accordance with local laws, releasing the information only with a student's written permission or as required by law. Exceptions: Records of completion of

- individual courses for verification purposes by professional organizations. Programs and certifications are considered public so they may be shared with those seeking verification.
33. Maintain the anonymity of students' personal information that may be revealed outside of student records, including but not limited to conversations with an instructor, supervisor, or mentor, participation in classroom discussions or group supervision or mentoring, or participation as client or coach in a coaching demonstration, role play, or practice session.
  34. Obtain consent and have an agreement for both audio and visual recordings that are shared with others, in accordance with local laws and regulations and the policy and procedures of professional coach organizations.

#### **Section D. Conflicts of Interest**

##### **As a member of ACTO, I:**

35. Openly disclose any conflicts with my student(s), colleague(s), coach training administrator(s), or support staff, and offer to recuse myself when I become aware of a conflict or potential conflict of interest.
36. Demonstrate transparency and be open to disclose all potential and existing conflicts of interest regarding the organization, agents, or myself, and take the appropriate action, including recusing myself if it is appropriate or required.
37. Disclose payment or anticipated payment for referrals to all parties involved or impacted.
38. Provide consistent and equitable services when teaching, mentoring, coaching, or supervising regardless of the form or amount of compensation or purchase of additional services.
39. Have written policies on conflict of interest within my organization.
40. Commit to maintaining integrity in my position as a professional Coach Trainer to positively and honorably contribute to the profession.
41. Evaluate coaching student performance to the best of my abilities, knowledge, and expertise in a fair and just manner, to empower the student to be accountable for their own results.

#### **Section E. Continuing Development**

##### **As a member of ACTO, I:**

42. Teach Coaching and Coaching Ethics in a manner that provides information for students to be aware of and know how to address ethical challenges.
43. Commit to life-long learning as a coach and a coach trainer; be knowledgeable and forthright about my strengths and areas for development; develop new skills and competencies; and be responsible for my personal and professional development.
44. Promote the sharing of coaching knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
45. Honor, acknowledge, and credit the efforts and contributions of others; refrain from representing others' work as my own.
46. When conducting or reporting research do so within recognized scientific standards and applicable subject guidelines, with the necessary consent and approval of those involved, with an approach that protects participants from any potential harm, and in compliance with the applicable laws of the nations in which the research is conducted.

47. Seek understanding and education about social diversity, systemic equality, systemic power, systemic racism, sexism, heterosexism, and other forms of systemic oppression, and how they show up in the coach training process.
48. Engage in continual professional development; continuously expand my knowledge base; improve my competence and practice; maintain awareness of new coaching approaches and of current scientific and professional information in the coaching profession. Participate in ongoing education, workshops, training, supervised experience, and/or having a coach training supervisor or mentor.
49. Work continually for personal development, self-knowledge, and emotional, physical, social, and spiritual health and well-being. Seek deeper cultural, emotional, and social awareness and understanding of myself as a racial and cultural being. Know and own my dominant and marginalized social-group identities and how they impact my behavior.

## **Section F. Professional Responsibility to Community and Society**

### **As a member of ACTO, I:**

50. Act with awareness of the cultural filters which affect my view of the world, respect cultures different from my own, and work at being sensitive to cross-cultural and multicultural differences and their implications.
51. Apply this ACTO Code of Ethics in a global context.

## **III. PLEDGE OF ACTO MEMBERS**

As an ACTO member, I pledge to acknowledge and agree to honor, comply with, and practice the ACTO Code of Ethics and standards with everyone with whom I engage with in the profession of coaching.

If this Pledge of Ethics or any part of the ACTO Code of Ethics is breached, I agree to adhere to an Ethical Conduct Review Process, and I recognize that ACTO may hold me accountable for any breaches. I further agree remedies and/or sanctions may be applicable. This may include:

- a. Suspend ACTO Membership.
- b. Remedies for educational purposes.
- c. Publication of the breach of ethics.
- d. Sharing such breaches with other coaching related professional organizations.

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