

The Landscape Institute Code of Practice



Introduction

As a professional organisation constituted under a Royal Charter, the Landscape Institute (LI) seeks to protect, conserve and enhance the natural and built environment for the benefit of the public through the promotion of landscape architecture. It places a strong emphasis on the integrity, competence and professionalism of its members, and therefore requires them to act in accordance with a professional Code of Practice.

This Code sets out the standards of professional conduct expected of all members of the Landscape Institute, irrespective of grade or membership level. Where an individual is approved to join the Landscape Institute as a member, approval is conditional upon the individual's acceptance to be bound by the requirements of this Code.

Global Ethical Principles

This Code has also been designed to align with the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) Global Ethical Principles. The aim of these principles is to ensure and promote global ethical practice, public confidence in the landscape profession, and environmental wellbeing. Landscape architects who are members of national associations that belong to the IFLA would be required to act in accordance with these principles. However, it is understood that different national associations and countries will adopt the use of the phrase "landscape architect" according to their own requirements and translation from the English term.

In the Landscape Institute's context, the definition of landscape architect has a wider connotation captured in the description of "landscape professional". This includes landscape architects, technicians, scientists, planners and managers, urban designers, garden designers, place managers, parks managers, academics, and those who give professional advice within the landscape sector.

Layout

Each rule of the Code of Practice is set out as per the following example: “R1” to indicate Rule 1. Rules are mandatory and compliance is required. Each rule is followed by the relevant IFLA Global Ethical Principle/s to which it is linked, indicating how the LI Code of Practice

has been developed in alignment with the Global Ethical Principles. This is then followed by guidance, indicated by “g” – for example, R1g. Mandatory requirements use the word “must” and guidance and best practice advice uses the word “should”.

Breach

Evidence of a breach of this Code by a member will in most cases trigger a review between the Landscape Institute and that member. Members will be supported towards compliance and the Landscape Institute will provide advice where necessary to enable its requirements to be met. However, where a repeated or serious breach occurs, the Landscape Institute reserves the right to undertake a full investigation, to revoke membership, and/or permanently disbar the individual.

Review

This Code will be reviewed every three years.

The Rules

- 1** You must deliver landscape services in ways which promote sustainable development and the environmentally responsible use of resources.
- 2** You must deliver landscape services in a manner consistent with the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and must not unlawfully discriminate against others.
- 3** You must uphold the reputation and dignity of the landscape profession and that of the Landscape Institute.
- 4** You must ensure that your landscape business is managed properly and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.
- 5** You must have appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance covering relevant landscape services.
- 6** You must only provide services you are competent to deliver.
- 7** You must undertake CPD in accordance with the Landscape Institute's requirements.
- 8** You must aim to deliver the safest, highest quality landscape service, consistent with your professional obligations, in the public interest and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.
- 9** You must ensure there is an appropriate process in place to deal promptly and effectively with complaints about the landscape services you provide.
- 10** You must avoid conflicts of interest where possible, and ensure they are declared and managed where they arise.
- 11** You must act with integrity in your relationship with clients, other professionals, the public, and the Landscape Institute.



The Rules – in detail

RULE 1

You must deliver landscape services in ways which promote sustainable development and the environmentally responsible use of resources.

Linked to Global Ethical Principles 1 and 2.

Principle 1: Landscape professionals promote conservation and enhancement of the environment and quality of life for now and future generations.

Principle 2: Landscape professionals recognise the issue of climate and biodiversity emergency and practice in a manner consistent with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

R1g

- a) Landscape professionals have responsibilities to the character and quality of the environment. Landscape professionals should seek to manage change in the landscape for the benefit of both this and future generations and should seek to enhance the diversity of the natural environment, enrich the human environment, and improve them both in a sustainable manner. This will mean considering the impact on the environment, people, place, and nature in all aspects of landscape activities and in landscape projects before work takes place. In some cases, this will take the form of a full, formal, environmental impact assessment. In other cases, the assessment will be less formal and landscape professionals should use their professional judgement. Such assessment should include considering the impacts on the environment as a whole (both positive and negative). Such assessment should include consideration of any activity that could mitigate or remove detrimental impact, where this is identified.
- b) “People, place and nature” includes the cultural and social heritage of place as well as the environmental place. Landscape professionals should take time to understand the cultural and social history of places to understand the impact of landscape work.
- c) Landscape professionals understand the issues raised by the global climate and biodiversity crises and how these impact on their work. They understand that working in the public interest means working to reduce negative impacts on the environment. Landscape professionals should undertake an impact assessment, in the context of the climate crisis, for work they intend to undertake. Such an assessment should include consideration of any activity that could mitigate or remove detrimental impact, where this is identified. It should also include consideration of any activity that would actively combat climate change.
- d) Landscape professionals understand and are committed to the principles of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 and the environmentally responsible use of resources both in their organisations/businesses and in the provision of professional advice. This may be demonstrated through the use of sustainable procurement policies, understanding carbon impacts, and involvement in government/ society initiatives linked to the UN SDG.

The Rules – in detail

RULE **2**

You must deliver landscape services in a manner consistent with the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion and must not unlawfully discriminate against others.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 3.

Principle 3: Landscape architects work collaboratively with and are respectful of others and do not in their provision of landscape services unlawfully discriminate.

R2g

- a)** Landscape professionals should show commitment to greater equity, diversity and inclusion and should ensure that services are delivered without prejudice or discrimination. Services should be open to all eligible clients and landscape professionals should be mindful of the protections in place for protected characteristics. Where there is relevant legislation, services must be delivered in a way which is compatible with such legislation. Where appropriate, reasonable adjustments to enable people of varied abilities and identities to access landscape services should be made. Individual LI members should ensure they know and understand the legal requirements in this area relevant to their place of practice. Equality law is different in different countries and therefore some activities which would not be unlawful in one country may be unlawful in others. Landscape professionals are strongly encouraged to deliver services in a way that respects the diversity of the communities they serve, and that exceeds the obligations of the law where possible.
- b)** Landscape professionals should be respectful of the cultural and social heritage and community cultures present in the places where landscape services are being delivered. Respect for different cultural identities and traditions is important.
- c)** Landscape professionals should actively seek out a diversity of viewpoints in any engagement or consultation relating to landscape work. This includes ensuring a cross section of the affected community is consulted and that representatives of relevant communities are engaged.

The Rules – in detail

RULE 3

You must uphold the reputation and dignity of the landscape profession and that of the Landscape Institute.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 4.

Principle 4: Landscape architects comply with national and international law.

R3g

- a)** Landscape professionals must behave in a professional manner and act with integrity. This means acting in accordance with relevant national and international law.
- b)** Examples of behaviour which may bring the profession into disrepute include but are not limited to:
 - i. Being convicted of an indictable offence or sentenced to imprisonment in respect of any offence.
 - ii. Being made the subject of a bankruptcy order, or failing to pay a judgement debt.
 - iii. Being party to communications likely to be construed as defamatory or discriminatory.
 - iv. Mismanagement of professional finances.
 - v. Delivering landscapes services knowingly in contradiction to their professional opinion.
 - vi. Making statements in the course of delivering landscape services which they know to be misleading or otherwise discreditable to the profession.
 - vii. Any breach of the rules in this Code of Practice.
- c)** Landscape professionals must inform the Landscape Institute as soon as practicable if they:
 - i. are declared bankrupt;
 - ii. are the director of a company that has been wound up (other than for amalgamation or reconstruction purposes);
 - iii. make an accommodation with creditors (including a voluntary arrangement);
 - iv. fail to pay a judgement debt;
 - v. are convicted of an indictable offence or are sentenced to imprisonment in respect of any offence;
 - vi. are made the subject of an order of a court disqualifying landscape professionals from acting as a company director; or
 - vii. are disqualified from any other professional body.
- d)** Failure to inform the Landscape Institute of R3gc i-vii above within a reasonable timeframe may result in membership being revoked.
- e)** Landscape professionals should not take as a partner or as a co-director, any person to whom any of R3gc i-vii above apply.
- f)** Complaints or concerns about the Landscape Institute, including the way it has provided a service, behaved, or made a decision, must follow the Institute's complaints handling procedure.

The Rules – in detail

RULE 4

You must ensure that your landscape business is managed properly and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 4.

Principle 4: Landscape architects comply with national and international law.

R4g

- a)** Where landscape professionals hold monies belonging to a client or third party, landscape professionals should record its receipt. Client money should always be held in an interest-bearing account in a bank or similar institution separately from any personal or business account. Client money should be held in a designated “client account”, the bank being advised that all money held in it is held as client money and that the bank is not entitled to combine the account with any other account or to exercise any right of set-off or counterclaim.
- b)** Landscape professionals should only withdraw money from a client account to make a payment to or on behalf of a client, or on the client’s written instructions. Unless otherwise agreed by the client, landscape professionals should pay any interest (or other benefit) accruing to the client. Landscape professionals should deal with creditors and debtors in conformity with best practice and the law, and should maintain adequate business records of costs and expenses.
- c)** Landscape professionals should not undertake professional work in the absence of a written agreement. Undertaking work refers to the duty arising when there is an agreement or a contract is entered into and continues throughout the term of the agreement or contract. Agreements for the delivery of landscape services should cover as a minimum:
 - i. the scope of the work;
 - ii. the allocation of responsibilities;
 - iii. any limitation of responsibilities;
 - iv. intellectual property rights;
 - v. the fee or method of calculating it;
 - vi. any provisions for termination; and
 - vii. any special provisions for dispute resolution.
- d)** Contractual changes should be recorded in writing.
- e)** Landscape professionals should ensure that any personal data (data which can identify an individual) is held securely by the business and that data breaches are reported to clients and the relevant authorities as required by law.
- f)** Landscape professionals should protect the confidentiality of clients’ affairs and personal information as well as ensuring the privacy of relevant others. Confidential information may only be disclosed to others with written consent or other lawful authority.
- g)** Landscape professionals must respect the intellectual property rights and copyright of others as required by law.

The Rules – in detail

RULE **5**

You must have appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance covering relevant landscape services.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 4.

Principle 4: Landscape architects comply with national and international law.

R5g

- a)** If the landscape professional is operating their own practice (sole trader, partnership or company), they need to maintain professional indemnity insurance to cover all landscape work undertaken by or on behalf of the practice.
- b)** If the landscape professional is an employee, they should use all reasonable endeavours to determine if the cover being maintained by their employer is appropriate.
- c)** For the purposes of this Code of Practice, appropriate Professional Indemnity Insurance should be provided, and where possible, that cover should be on a full civil liability basis, with “run off” cover and a minimum level of indemnity appropriate for the work being undertaken by the practice. If there is any doubt in respect of the cover, the landscape professional should ensure that matters are discussed with their insurance advisers.

The Rules – in detail

RULE

6

You must only provide services you are competent to deliver.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 5.

Principle 5: Landscape architects are committed to continuing professional development and ensure they only provide services they are competent to deliver.

R6g

Landscape professionals should always seek out relevant professional advice where necessary and should never undertake work or provide advice where they are not fully competent to do so.



The Rules – in detail

RULE 7

You must undertake CPD in accordance with the Landscape Institute's requirements.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 5.

Principle 5: Landscape architects are committed to continuing professional development and ensure they only provide services they are competent to deliver.

R7g

- a) Landscape professionals must undertake CPD as set out in the LI's CPD Policy.
- b) Landscape professionals should actively promote CPD for others. Members who employ, manage, or are otherwise professionally responsible for other members should actively promote and support CPD to those members.
- c) Landscape professionals must keep a record of all CPD undertaken in accordance with the LI's CPD Policy.

The Rules – in detail

RULE 8

You must aim to deliver the safest, highest quality landscape service, consistent with your professional obligations, in the public interest and in accordance with relevant legal requirements.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 6.

Principle 6: Landscape architects deliver quality landscape services and clients and/or the public are able to provide feedback or raise issues about service.

R8g

- a) Landscape work can be hazardous and therefore safety should be a key consideration for those delivering landscape services. Landscape professionals should be familiar with legislation relevant to their role within the landscape profession.
- b) In considering the health and safety implications of any piece of work, an adequate risk assessment should be undertaken, followed by the design of control measures that bring the risk of harm within acceptable limits. Considering, evaluating and mitigating risk is fundamental to the quality delivery of landscape services.
- c) Some examples of unsafe practice for various roles within the landscape profession include:
 - Landscape designer:** failing to assess risks and control measures during construction phase and establishment; bad design of a retaining wall, slope or handrail that later collapses, injuring someone; over-estimating their ability to design structures such as footbridges or pergolas and failing to get relevant input e.g., from a structural/civil engineer.
 - Landscape manager/contractor:** failing to assess and manage risks generally; failing to undertake inspections e.g. of play equipment for safety, trees for disease/safety, lakes for the presence of blue-green algae; not ensuring contractors/employees are suitably trained and use equipment safely. There are lots of obvious potential dangers with equipment such as mowers, brush cutters, and chainsaws, as well as some less obvious ones, such as Hand-Arm-Vibration-Syndrome (HAVS) with power tools.
- Practice head/supervisor:** poor development or operation of organisational policies, e.g. failure to have a lone working policy on site, not ensuring staff are suitably trained/qualified for role or activities, not ensuring policies are being followed, e.g. with a disciplinary system. Practice heads and supervisors are usually responsible for the safety of their staff, as landscape professionals will often visit sites such as active quarries, waste disposal sites, construction sites, working woodland, derelict sites, wetlands, coast, mountain tops, etc.
- d) In delivering a high-quality service, landscape professionals should ensure they follow their business's quality assurance procedures and processes and undertake work in a timely manner with due care, skill and diligence.

The Rules – in detail

RULE 9

You must ensure there is an appropriate process in place to deal promptly and effectively with complaints about the landscape services you provide.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 6.

Principle 6: Landscape architects deliver quality landscape services and clients and/or the public are able to provide feedback or raise issues about service.

R9g

- a)** Landscape businesses should have a publicised, written procedure for the prompt and courteous handling of complaints about the services landscape professionals provide. A named individual should be responsible for responding to complaints, which in the case of a firm or company should be a director or partner. Where appropriate, landscape professionals should consider offering alternative means of dispute resolution such as mediation or conciliation. Landscape professionals should handle complaints at every stage courteously, sympathetically and in a timely manner. Depending upon your responsibility within your business you should ensure that you raise any concerns about the appropriateness or otherwise of processes to deal effectively with complaints.
- b)** All complainants should be informed (via an organisational complaints policy or process) that they have recourse to the Landscape Institute if complaints are not satisfactorily resolved at local firm/entity level. The Landscape Institute will only respond to such complaints where the internal process has been exhausted and clients should be made aware of this.
- c)** Promptly in this context would mean within a “reasonable time” such that the complainant would receive an update or the outcome of their complaint within 28 days. Receipt of all complaints should be acknowledged within 7 days.
- d)** Landscape professionals should respond within the Landscape Institute’s stated deadlines to all correspondence from the LI in relation to any complaint made about them or their firm. Failure to do so may be considered a breach of this code as per Rule 9.

The Rules – in detail

RULE 10

You must avoid conflicts of interest where possible, and ensure they are declared and managed appropriately where they arise.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 7.

Principle 7: Landscape architects uphold the integrity of the landscape profession and are honest and transparent in their relationship with their national body/regulator.

R10g

- a)** A conflict of interest can arise where an individual or entity's impartiality may be undermined due to the possibility of a conflict between that person's self-interest and their professional interest or the public interest. A conflict may also occur where an individual or entity's responsibility to another limits that person or entity's ability to discharge its responsibility to a third party.
- b)** Where an actual or perceived conflict of interest arises in the course of a landscape professional's work, they should ensure that this is clearly logged in writing. Landscape professionals should ensure that clients and/or other relevant parties are informed. Where a conflict arises a landscape professional may decide to withdraw from the situation, remove the source of conflict, or obtain the agreement of the parties concerned to the continuance of the engagement. However, a conflict of interest may be so substantial as to prevent a landscape professional from entering into or continuing work, even with the other party's knowledge and consent. In such cases landscape professionals should always withdraw.
- c)** When two or more clients, whose interests may be in conflict, both request the services of a landscape professional then that individual should usually not act for both unless they are able to manage the work to ensure that the interests of one client do not adversely affect the other.



The Rules – in detail

RULE 11

You must act with integrity in your relationship with clients, other professionals, the public, and the Landscape Institute.

Linked to Global Ethical Principle 7.

Principle 7: Landscape architects uphold the integrity of the landscape profession and are honest and transparent in their relationship with their national body/regulator.

R11g

- a) Landscape professionals must be honest, transparent and responsive in all aspects of the work. Landscape professionals should understand that honesty and transparency is key to the integrity of their practice and the profession.
- b) Landscape professionals must not offer or accept bribes in the course of their professional landscape business. A register of hospitality, given and received, should be kept where this is required by law. If a landscape professional is given, or receives, any introductory or referral fees these should always be disclosed to their prospective client/s.
- c) Response to information requested by the Landscape Institute must be truthful and should be provided within a reasonable timeframe e.g., requests for information in relation to CPD or other LI Code requirements.
- d) Landscape professionals should respond fully to reasonable requests from the Landscape Institute within the LI's stated deadlines. Where such a response is not possible, they should advise the Landscape Institute of the reasons for this and request extra time to respond. Requests for information include but are not limited to:
 - i. CPD returns / log requests.
 - ii. responses/requests for further information in relation to complaints made about landscape professionals.
 - iii. information about conflicts of interest and associated registers.
 - iv. information about compliance with this Code.
 - v. firm/entity Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) monitoring returns.
- e) Landscape services should be advertised in a manner which is truthful and accurate to the best of the landscape professional's knowledge. Landscape professionals should not make untruthful or misleading statements. They should not make claims about other professionals or those delivering landscape services. Landscape professionals may reference their own specialism and expertise, where relevant.
- f) Advertisements should conform, as appropriate, to the Advertising Standards Authority (or other relevant advertising regulator) standards.
- g) If a landscape professional becomes aware that another Landscape Institute member or landscape professional has a contract for services in place, they should not attempt to gain that contract.

Glossary of Terms

Client/s

The contractual party who has appointed the landscape professional, where relevant, and all the stakeholders in a landscape project or task with whom the landscape professional has to engage.

Client money

Money held or received for or from a client that is not money owing to the landscape business or landscape professional.

Civil liability

The legal responsibility for a payment to an aggrieved third party, due to the violation of a civil law, tort, or a breach of contract.

Conflict of interest

A situation or potential situation in which a landscape professional's impartiality may be undermined due to the possibility of deriving personal benefit from actions or decisions made in their professional capacity.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The ongoing process of professional growth and skills development throughout a landscape professional's career. It is a commitment to maintain professional competence, knowledge and relevance in landscape practice.

Global Ethical Principles

A set of global ethical principles for the landscape profession developed to promote ethical practice across the global landscape professional community.

IFLA

International Federation of Landscape Architects.

Landscape business

An organisation that employs landscape professionals or delivers landscape services.

Landscape professional/s

Corporate member(s) of the Landscape Institute (Associate, Technician, Academic, Academic Fellow, Chartered, and Fellow).

Landscape services

The work of a landscape professional for clients and/or an employer.

LI stated deadlines

Deadlines set out by the Landscape Institute in other relevant documentation or policies.

Must

A mandatory requirement for landscape professionals.

Professional Indemnity Insurance

Insurance protection against claims for alleged negligence or breach of duty arising from an act, error or omission in the performance of landscape services.

Professional work

The work undertaken by a landscape professional.

Should

An expectation or best practice advice for landscape professionals. If a landscape professional departs from this, they should only do so for justifiable good reason.

Sustainable development

Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Considers economic, social and environmental sustainability.



IFLA Global Ethical Principles

Principle 1:

Landscape architects promote enhancement of the environment and quality of life for now and future generations.

Principle 2:

Landscape architects are respectful of others and do not in their provision of landscape services unlawfully discriminate against others.

Principle 3:

Landscape architects comply with national and international law.

Principle 4:

Landscape architects are committed to continuing professional development and ensure they only provide services they are competent to deliver.

Principle 5:

Landscape architects deliver quality landscape services and clients and/or the public are able to provide feedback or raise issues about service.

Principle 6:

Landscape architects uphold the integrity of the landscape profession and are honest and transparent in their relationship with their national body/regulator.

Principle 7:

Landscape architects recognise the issue of climate and biodiversity emergency and employ sustainable development practices.



