

ACHA Ethical Framework Policy and Procedures

Approved 12.11.19

1. Purpose

- a. The American College of Healthcare Architects (ACHA) is dedicated to the highest standards of:
 - i. Professionalism
 - ii. Integrity
 - iii. Competence
- b. The ACHA is also a healthcare specialty architecture certification body, which carries additional ethical obligations:
 - i. Professional Excellence
 1. Study, apply and share knowledge;
 2. Proactively bring relevant information and research available to clients, colleagues and the public;
 3. Advance the body of knowledge and research;
 4. Serve the public in matters of healthcare planning, design, delivery and efficacy.
 - ii. Human Dignity
 1. Simultaneous respect and advocacy for patients, staff, and the public – all of whom may encounter and depend on the environments designed by ACHA architects, regardless of their abilities to voice specific needs.
 2. Uphold Human Rights in all their Professional Endeavors.
 - iii. Health and Wellbeing
 1. Advocate for society's health and wellbeing interests beyond specific project goals;
 2. Share the implications of specific project decisions on social factors affecting human and environmental health.
- c. Although not directly connected, the ACHA Ethical Framework will rely upon the American Institute of Architect's Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct as a foundational document for the general practice of architecture upon which this healthcare specialty resides.

- d. As such it has adopted the posture of “Ethics in All Things”, meaning that decisions by the College corporately and its certificants individually will be processed through the filters of the ACHA Ethical Framework.
- e. This document will remain a living document informed by on-going research and precedents.

2. Form

- a. This Ethical Framework will aspire to:
 - i. Address the specific qualities of architectural practice in the healthcare specialty;
 - ii. Remain non-directive and non-prosecutorial, because of its reliance on statutes, laws, and applicable Codes of Ethics of sister organizations;
 - iii. Not duplicate other applicable Codes of Ethics but will rely upon the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct for the general practice of architecture;
 - iv. Create and sustain a dialogue about higher orders of professional conduct;
 - v. Maintain an ongoing contextual understanding and ethical consistency with other professions in the healthcare domain;
 - vi. Address implications of current social mores at their intersection with the practice of healthcare architecture annually by the ACHA Board of Regents.
- b. The Ethical Framework shall rely upon the basis of professional conduct by the following:
 - i. Federal, state, and local statutes and laws;
 - ii. Jurisdictional licensure boards;
 - iii. The American Institute of Architects Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.
- c. Expectations.
 - i. Due to the reliance upon others for prosecution of certain alleged unethical behaviors, the ACHA will follow protocol outlined below in item 3. Procedures for any potential actions by ACHA concerning a Certificant.
 - ii. Since the intent of this Ethical Framework is to continually reach higher levels of professional conduct, it will rely upon a system of rewards and recognitions to encourage a higher order of professional conduct.
 - iii. The College, through acknowledgment of a Certificant’s qualifications, shall present the organization and its Certificant as meeting the highest standards of professionalism within the healthcare design profession.

3. Procedure

- a. Aspiration:

- i. The College will regularly review relevant research by others on ethics in healthcare architecture for the purpose of actively exploring research, cases, implications of social mores, etc., in order to remain relevant to society and professionally authoritative.
- ii. Such research will be publicly catalogued in an ACHA-controlled medium (such as its website) in order to inform future cases and serve as a reference for those practicing healthcare architecture.
- iii. The ACHA will create a tri-annual taskforce to study the emerging body of research, etc., and make recommendations to the Board of Regents for any potential adjustments to this Ethical Framework Policy and Procedures.
- iv. Any revisions will be reviewed by competent legal counsel to protect the ACHA, its certificants, and confirm compliance with applicable civil laws.
- v. This taskforce will also evaluate and publish cases of exemplary higher and better professional conduct to illustrate and inspire better general conduct.

b. Potential Violations:

- i. The ACHA will not actively seek out infractions or violations. If a potential violation to ACHA bylaws by a Certificant is brought to the attention of the ACHA, it must be addressed to the Executive Director, or if it relates to the Executive Director, any member of the Executive Committee, who will refer the matter to other members of the Executive Committee not directly related.
- ii. Upon receipt, the complaint will be vetted for clarity and accuracy, and will be presented to the ACHA President and Executive Director, unless the matter relates to either.
- iii. The ACHA President will immediately convene the Ethics Committee. The ACHA Policies and Procedures document prescribes the process for forming the Ethics Committee.
- iv. The members of the Ethics Committee will be protected by appropriate liability insurance against actions due to their service, and such insurance will be paid by the ACHA.
- v. The Ethics Committee will immediately review the complaint, and in consultation with ACHA legal counsel, confirm facts and suspicions without bias.
 - 1. Evidence of an alleged violation will be initially assembled by the person or organization bringing the charge.
 - 2. Such evidence will be reviewed by the Ethics Committee, who may at its own discretion, choose to require additional evidence, pose specific questions of the aggrieved, call witnesses, and gather testimony, etc., all for the purposes of confirming probable cause for further investigation.

3. The Ethics Committee has the primary authority to determine whether a violation of the Code has occurred and, if so, what penalty (as described elsewhere herein) should be imposed. In doing so, it must follow a process designed to protect the rights of both the complaining party, the certificant who is the subject of the complaint, and the integrity of both the process and the ACHA.
4. If the Ethics Committee finds that a violation has occurred, its decision may, with reasonable cause, be appealed to the ACHA's Board of Regents. The Board may approve the Ethics Committee's decision or, in certain cases, dismiss the complaint.

- vi. As a matter of information, the AIA has a rigorous investigative and judicial procedure on its National Ethics Council [website](#), which may or may not apply to the qualities of any particular case brought to the ACHA. The intent of this Ethical Framework is to not create a burdensome investigative process but gather information necessary to refer a case to others that have the internal apparatus to investigate and prosecute. The Ethics Committee chair shall notify the ACHA President and Executive Director of their review of the complaint, and recommendation for any action required by ACHA.
- vii. If the Ethics Committee determines that the case merits action, the Ethics Committee will categorize the offense as one of the following:
 1. A minor infraction, such as a first offense of inappropriate use of the ACHA credential;
 2. A repeated minor infraction;
 3. A clear violation of the spirit and letter of this aspirational framework;
 4. An offense that merits recommendation of notification to the individual that ACHA considers the offense to be cause for removal from the organization.
- viii. Based on the severity of the case, the Ethics Committee will recommend to the ACHA President and Executive Director that the ACHA proceed with its own direct action, or refer to the judgement of a jurisdictional licensure Board or professional organization, and ACHA may initiate one of the following actions:
 1. Admonition, a non-public, yet authoritative warning;
 2. Censure, the public, reprimand for an infraction or violation;
 3. Suspension, the public prevention of use of the ACHA credential, removal from directory, disassociation for a prescribed period;
 4. Termination, the public expulsion from the ACHA, prevention of use of the ACHA credential, removal from directory, and disassociation.

Termination will also include the stripping of any and all ACHA awards and recognitions.

- ix. The Ethics Committee shall maintain case records in order to ensure consistency in process and outcome.
- x. All proceedings are confidential, as shall be the imposition of an admonition. However, all other penalties shall be published.
- xi. The Board of Regents, with the recommendation of the Ethics Committee, may reinstate a suspended or terminated certificant as a result of an ethical violation if the cause for such suspension or termination has been removed, corrected, or otherwise remedied. An applicant for reinstatement must meet the eligibility standards for initial certification in the College in effect at the time of reinstatement.
- xii. Due to the active nature of this Ethical Framework, on-going public dialog will inform future concepts and frameworks. As such, the Board of Regents will support this on-going public dialog.
- xiii. Because of the insistent nature of the “Ethics in All Things” policy, the ACHA shall provide an on-line educational program on the subject of ethics.

4. Implementation

- a. The ACHA conducts itself within a posture and culture that maintains its high ethical standards. Furthermore, it requires affirmation of that Ethical Framework by those engaging with the College at major touchpoints, including:
 - i. Candidacy Application (setting the stage for the meaning of higher ethical professional conduct);
 - ii. Certification Application (demonstrating not only competence but high ethical professional conduct);
 - iii. Annual Certification Renewal (re-affirming competence and high ethical professional conduct);
 - iv. Fellowship Application (re-affirming high ethical professional conduct);
 - v. Lifetime Achievement Award Application (affirming high ethical professional conduct);
 - vi. Engaging in business arrangements with organizations representing an alliance with the College, confirming that both associations aspire at least to the ACHA’s Ethical Framework.
- b. The expectation of complying with this ACHA Ethical Framework will be clarified in all correspondence and public notices related to these touchpoints.

5. Amendment

- a. The Ethical Framework is incorporated into the ACHA By-laws, which may be amended under the same procedures as are necessary to amend the ACHA Bylaws.

APPROVED